

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 4 May 2012

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Play and Leisure Action Plan

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in relation to the Play and Leisure Action Plan and its omission from the key commitments within the draft Programme for Government, to detail (i) where leadership, responsibility and accountability for the Play and Leisure Policy and Implementation Plan resides; (ii) for an update on the business case and spend for 2011/12; and (iii) the timescale for the Implementation Plan.

(AQW 8952/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister): The Play and Leisure Implementation Plan is listed in the draft Programme for Government as a Priority 2 building block. OMDFM led the Plan's development and is responsible for 22 of its Actions. As officials are currently costing options for delivering the actions, no OMDFM expenditure was incurred during 2011-12. The other 15 Actions are the responsibility of other departments. The Plan runs to 2016.

Supporting Life's Journeys Programme

Mr Campbell asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their assessment of the Supporting Life's Journeys Programme in assisting voluntary groups that are working with people in hard-to-reach communities to access education programmes designed to help them gain employment.

(AQW 9219/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are aware of the work that Supporting Life's Journeys programme undertakes in regard to mentoring and befriending.

Such programmes can play a supporting role with the disadvantaged, lonely or vulnerable when they need help most.

Child Poverty Act 2010

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how they will deliver their commitments under the Child Poverty Act 2010 given the expected impact that the Welfare Reform Bill will have on families and children.

(AQW 9773/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: A report to the Assembly on the Executive's efforts to address child poverty in the context of the child poverty strategy is imminent. This report will be the first annual report as required by the Child Poverty Act 2010.

The strategy – Improving Children's Life Chances – has set the context for a robust Action Plan to which all departments will contribute. We continue to co-ordinate efforts to optimise the response of the public sector to the growing demands to support children in light of present financial circumstances.

The Coalition Government's Welfare Reform Bill became law on the 8 March 2012. The Minister for Social Development will now bring forward his proposals for a Welfare Reform Bill to give effect locally to the proposed changes. Whilst it is too early to assess the potential impact of the Welfare Reform Bill on families and children here, we are aware that some have concerns at this stage.

Tackling disadvantage is a key priority for the Executive and is an essential element in our draft Programme for Government. We have therefore included in the Programme for Government a commitment to establish an advisory group, to assist us in alleviating hardship including any implications of the Coalition Government's Welfare Reform Programme.

We will be asking the Group to explore the scope available to ease and lessen poverty and to reduce financial hardship. We have also asked them to take account of the likely prospects for economic growth.

We have asked the Group for particular advice on the impact on individuals and families who are living on benefits or who are dependent on low wages. Alleviating hardship is a key priority for the Executive and we look forward to receiving the advice of this Group over the coming months.

China's Record of Human Rights Abuses

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what concerns were raised with Liu Yandong, during her visit to Northern Ireland, in relation to China's record of human rights abuses.
(AQW 10357/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Madam Liu Yandong visited Belfast to strengthen university, cultural and economic links with China as part of its process to strengthen its relationship with other countries.

Human Rights issues were discussed during private meetings with Madam Liu.

Landslide Incident in the Marlborough Terrace Area of Londonderry

Mr Allister asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 9750/11-15, why their Department did not take similar action in respect of the landslide at Linen Fields, Huntly Road, Banbridge.
(AQW 10556/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: No similar action was requested, at that time, in respect of that incident.

Proposals for Legislation

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) what proposals for legislation, subject to Executive approval, they have introduced or intend to introduce between April 2012 and March 2015; (ii) the anticipated timescale for the introduction of each Bill; and (iii) the intention of each Bill.
(AQW 10649/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We have already stated our intention, subject to the agreement of the Executive, to bring forward three Bills during the current Assembly mandate.

On 29 September last year, we announced that we will be introducing legislation in the Assembly to confer statutory powers on the Inquiry and Investigation into Historical Institutional Abuse.

On 18 January this year, we announced that we had asked our officials to prepare the necessary legislation to abolish the Department for Employment and Learning and transfer its functions.

Finally, our commitment to progress legislation to extend age discrimination legislation to the provision of goods, facilities and services is contained in the Programme for Government.

The Programme also contains our commitment to introduce any legislation necessary to implement any agreed changes to post-2015 structures of Government, and this will be confirmed in due course.

Other requirements for primary legislation relating to OFMDFM responsibilities may arise during this mandate and these will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Equality Commission

Mr McDevitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the costs incurred by the Equality Commission in relation to the cases which it supported against the Policing Board (396/04 FET) and against the Department for Social Development (164/08 FET).

(AQW 10750/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We have asked the Chief Executive of the Equality Commission to respond directly to you as we do not have a role in determining which cases to support or the quantum of that support. Under Article 45 of the Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, where an individual who is an actual or prospective complainant or claimant applies to the Equality Commission for assistance, the Commission shall consider the application and may grant assistance if it thinks fit to do so. That decision is within the Commission's discretion, subject to the matter falling within one of the prescribed statutory grounds and in line with its Policy for the Provision of Legal Advice and Assistance.

Opening of the Regenerated Ebrington Barracks, Foyle

Mr P Ramsey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 7923/11-15, to detail the costs of opening Ebrington Barracks in Derry, broken down by (a) service provider; and (b) all other associated costs.

(AQW 10756/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: An Events Management company was procured by Ilex through an open competition in line with Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) protocol to manage the opening of the Ebrington Parade Ground. The Events Management company appointed the service providers for the opening ceremony. OFMDFM does not therefore hold the information requested.

Ilex Urban Regeneration Company Limited's One Plan

Mr Eastwood asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 9876/11-15, (i) why the business case for the Maritime Museum building, as part of the Urban Regeneration Company Limited's One Plan, is only being developed now, given that building should have commenced in the final quarter of the 2011/12 financial year; and (ii) what funding has been secured for the project.

(AQW 10792/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:

- (i) The Maritime Museum, and associated Archive and Genealogy facility, is an initiative led by Derry City Council in partnership with Ilex, and seeks to build on the potential of the Ebrington site and current museum provision within the city. A feasibility study for the project was commissioned by Derry City Council and Ilex and this was completed in November 2010. In 2011, Derry City Council identified funding to procure consultants to commence a full business case. A draft of this business case is due for consideration by Council officials in consultation with relevant partners in May 2012.
- (ii) In March, Derry City Council secured a Stage 1 pass of £1.5m from Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) Tourism Development Scheme. The project partners have also worked closely with Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and a funding application will be submitted to HLF in June 2012 to secure part of the outstanding funding requirement. Ilex has also identified resource of £2m from within its capital programme to support the development of the project, subject to business case approval. Securing the necessary funding remains a key priority for all partners, before the project can commence.

Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People

Mr Agnew asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail what was discussed at the April 2012 meeting of the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People and the actions arising from the meeting.

(AQW 10800/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Ministerial Sub-Committee scheduled to take place on 25 April was postponed. Junior Minister Bell and Junior Minister Anderson have arranged bi-lateral meetings to discuss issues affecting children and young people with Ministerial colleagues.

Housing on the St Patrick's Barracks Site, Ballymena

Mr Swann asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 10369/11-15, to detail (i) the reasons for the delay in finalising the business case; (ii) when the business case will be completed; and (iii) when the transfer of assets to the Department for Social Development will occur.

(AQW 10844/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The St Patrick's Barracks site was gifted to the Northern Ireland Executive with the intention that proceeds from the sale of the site would be used to defray exceptional pressures associated with the devolution of policing and justice functions. The site was received by OFMDFM under the terms of the Strategic Investment and Regeneration of Sites (NI) Order 2003 (SIRS Order).

In order to ensure that the sale of the former military houses at St Patrick's Barracks to the Department for Social Development (DSD) for use as social housing would achieve maximum value for the Executive, it was necessary to carry out a rigorous business case, taking account of both monetary and non-monetary aspects. Good governance processes required that the business case was reviewed and approved at a high level in OFMDFM and in addition the SIRS Order requires that financial approval for the sale is also given by DFP.

The business case is complete and all financial approvals required have been received. We are currently considering all aspects of the proposed sale and will make a final decision on whether to proceed with the sale of the properties to DSD.

First Legislative Counsel

Mr Dallat asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they approved the potential salary of £205,000 for the position of First Legislative Counsel.

(AQO 1787/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The post of First Legislative Counsel is a key position and was advertised at the existing salary range £98,059 – £205,000.

An appointment has now been made and salary is confirmed at the minimum of the scale, that is £98,059.

Social Investment Fund: Zones

Mr McDevitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when they expect the finalised Social Investment Fund zones to be published.

(AQO 1789/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Over 500 people were engaged through the public consultation on the Social Investment Fund (SIF). Whilst we were pleased that so many people took the time to get involved and voice their opinion on how SIF should operate, it did present us with several options for moving forward, all of which require careful consideration.

The most consistent issue raised during the consultation was the geography of the proposed zones and we fully appreciate the importance of finalising the zones to enable us to progress to delivery. However, we have tried to balance the desire to make the Fund as inclusive as possible with an emphasis on targeting resources so they are not diluted to the point of having minimal impact.

We must get this right if the Fund is to make a real difference to the communities experiencing poverty and deprivation.

We are intending to bring an Executive paper on final policy proposals to colleagues shortly.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Rural Development Programme

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many sports clubs in each cluster area have received funding through the Rural Development Programme in each of the last three years.

(AQW 10342/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill (The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development): The Rural Development Programme does not provide funding to sports clubs. However, where such an organisation wishes to promote a project that benefits the wider rural community and which is separate from their primary activity, this may be considered for funding.

In the last three years, five such projects were funded. The breakdown of those projects by cluster area was:

Financial year	Cluster	No. of projects
2009-10	Nil	Nil
2010-11	GROW	1
	NER	1
2011-12	SWARD	1
	GROW	1
	ARC NW	1

Agricultural Shows

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why she plans to attend only eight out of the twelve agricultural shows that are taking place in Northern Ireland this year.

(AQW 10405/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department is unable to attend every local agricultural show that takes place in the north in any one year due to budgetary and staff constraints. However, over a period of three years, my Department will have a presence at all the agricultural shows on at least one occasion and will have a presence each year at the largest show in each county. I personally plan to attend as many shows as my diary permits.

Agricultural Shows

Mr Hussey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the future opportunities for farmers to meet with departmental officials at agricultural shows, and how effective such meetings will prove.

(AQW 10406/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In 2011 my Department participated at eight local agricultural shows, the Ploughing Championships, the RUAS Winter Fair and Balmoral Show. We plan to exhibit at a similar number of shows this year.

I fully recognise the contribution made by local Agricultural Shows to the agri-food industry and rural communities. With almost 61,000 visitors to the eight local shows DARD attended last year, they provided an important forum for my officials and the delivery agents for elements of the Rural Development Programme, to meet with a wide range of customers. Staff evaluations of the DARD exhibits at local shows have indicated that they are an effective means of meeting with farmers.

It enables my Department to promote key aspects of our work such as the Rural Development Programme, the Countryside Management Scheme and CAFRE's Development Service.

Rural Community Network

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the funding provided to the Rural Community Network in the (i) 2009/10; (ii) 2010/11; and (iii) 2011/12 financial years.

(AQW 10430/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Funding provided by my Department to the Rural Community Network (RCN) in the financial years 2009/2010 was £461,800; 2010/2011 was £314,040.36 and 2011/2012 was £275,835.21.

Regional Infrastructure Support Programme

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the level of funding that has or will be transferred from her Department to the Department for Social Development to contribute to the Regional Infrastructure Support Programme and the timescale for the transfer of funds.

(AQW 10431/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The proposed maximum level of funding to be transferred from my Department to the Department of Social Development (DSD) as a contribution to the Regional Infrastructure Support Programme is £400K to the end of the current CSR period in March 2015. My officials are currently in discussions with DSD officials regarding the final quantum and timescale for the transfer of funds.

Cost of Producing Consultation Documents and Official Reports

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what was the cost to her Department of producing (i) consultation documents; and (ii) official reports in the 2010/11 financial year.

(AQW 10439/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The cost of producing consultation documents was £3,581. The costs for producing official reports were £12,212.

The above figures exclude staff costs. The Department does not routinely collect information on staff costs associated with the production of consultation documents/official reports.

Guidance on the Use of Rivers by Farmers

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 9541/11-15, why environmental studies have not been conducted on the impact of farming practices, including the use of farm vehicles in and along rivers, given the importance of good environmental practice in relation to Single Farm Payments.

(AQW 10458/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Whilst no environmental studies have been carried out, my Department encourages good environmental practice in and along rivers through guidance contained in the Code of Good Agricultural Practice for the Prevention of Pollution of Water, Air and Soil (The Code). The Code aims to provide

guidance, to those claiming Single Farm Payment, and other direct payments, which will help them meet the environmental requirements of Cross Compliance conditions. Pages 101 – 102 of The Code provide guidance on various aspects of the management of waterways. This includes the prevention of soil erosion to minimise polluting sediment and the need to reduce contamination by faecal micro organisms. A full copy of the Code can be found at:

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

Single Farm Payment Scheme

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 9542/11-15, to detail the number of (i) farms that are recorded and inspected; (ii) inspections that are carried out annually for compliance with the Single Farm Payment scheme; and (iii) breaches that were found during the inspections.

(AQW 10459/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill:

- (i) A total of 37,854 claims to Single Farm Payment (SFP) were received by my Department for 2011. The European Union regulations governing the administration of the SFP scheme require that all Paying Agencies, including my Department, to inspect at least 5% of all such applications received in any given year to ensure that only eligible land is being claimed. In addition, at least 1% of claims are also subject to on-farm checks by the relevant Competent Control Authorities to verify compliance with the Cross-Compliance provisions as relevant to that farm business.
- (ii) During the 2011 SFP scheme year, a total of 3,311 farm businesses were the subject of an on-farm inspection. These inspections covered both land eligibility and Cross-Compliance requirements as detailed in the relevant EU regulations.
- (iii) With regards to the number of breaches that were found during these inspections, information in this respect is not yet available for the 2011 scheme year, but will be notified by my Department to the European Commission in accordance with Article 84 of the European Council Regulation 1122/2009 in July of this year.

Assistance to Groups in Rural Areas that Work for People with Learning Disabilities

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, when deciding on the eligibility criteria for assistance to groups in rural areas that work for people with learning disabilities, whether there are any stipulations regarding the services and offices being seen to be open and available to all sections of the rural community within the catchment area of the service provider.

(AQW 10474/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Through Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme, delivered by the Councils Clusters, and the Tackling Rural Poverty and Isolation programmes there are opportunities for rural groups to access support. In light of that, my Department does not offer grant assistance specifically on a competitive basis to groups in rural areas that work with people with learning disabilities and therefore have not taken any such decisions on eligibility criteria.

Rural Development Programme

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what consideration she has given to the impact on projects within the Rural Development Programme should capital spending by councils be halted in the run up to the implementation of the Review of Public Administration, given the effect that this halt would have on match funding.

(AQW 10541/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Axis 3 funds are provided to improve the economy and quality of life in rural areas and are available not only to local councils but to the private sector, third sector and non-departmental public bodies and indeed to Farm Families for Farm Diversification.

As you may be aware, Local Action Groups in consultation with their council clusters are reviewing their implementation plans and will shortly be seeking applications for 'Strategic Projects'. I fully expect that any contractual commitments entered into by councils in relation to such projects will be fully honoured. However, there is much competition for funds across the Rural Development Programme and as I have already said I will do whatever is necessary to ensure these funds are invested in rural areas and that money is not returned to Europe.

Chairpersons of the Local Action Groups under the Rural Development Programme

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to what extent the chairpersons of the Local Action Groups under the Rural Development Programme are remunerated.

(AQW 10548/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Chairpersons of Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme Local Actions Groups (LAGs) serve in a voluntary capacity. They receive no remuneration for their service in the LAG.

As members of a LAG (including serving as chairperson) Social partners may be reimbursed for incurred expenses such as travel, subsistence and childcare costs.

Cod Recovery Plan

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what steps her Department has taken to ensure that the needs of the Irish Sea fleet are considered in the implementation of the Cod Recovery Plan.

(AQW 10614/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Cod Recovery Plan gives Member States the responsibility for allocating fishing effort to its vessels that fish within the Cod Recovery Zone with certain types of fishing gear. When management measures are taken to avoid catching cod or more selective fishing gears are used our vessels are given more days at sea in recognition of their reduced impact on cod mortality. The local industry together with Seafish, scientists from AFBI and DARD officials are now working on a project to identify a highly selective fishing gear for the Nephrops fleet which will exempt those vessels from the days at sea restrictions imposed by the Cod Plan. That means that the net must be capable of reducing the cod catch to below 1.5%. The outcome of those trials will be known in early June. I am sure that given the involvement of local fishermen the very best solution will be found – one that will contribute to the objectives of the Cod Plan but be suitable and easily used by our fleet.

Cod Recovery Plan

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the outcome of the review of the Cod Recovery Plan.

(AQW 10615/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Last year the Commission asked its Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) to examine how the Cod Recovery Plan was working. The outcome was a detailed technical report which, in summary concluded that with the information available it was not always possible to assess the impacts of the plan since the Plan has only been in place for 2½ years. But STECF concluded that the Plan was not achieving the desired reductions in the fishing mortality for Cod and that effort control was not an effective means to deliver this.

Following discussions with the Commission in the latter part of last year there was an expectation that it would bring forward a revised plan in the spring. At a recent meeting between Member States, STECF and the Commission in March 2012 it became clear that that would not be the case. During the meeting Member States made suggestions for interim changes to the CRP. The Commission is considering these and other matters and it is understood that it will bring forward proposals for amendments to the Cod Recovery Plan in September 2012.

Problems Faced by the Emergency Services Regarding Domestic Properties in Rural Areas

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action she is taking to alleviate the problem being faced by the Emergency Services regarding domestic properties in rural areas not displaying their allocated house number.

(AQW 10744/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: This is obviously an important issue for the emergency services in rural areas. It is the responsibility of Local Government to enforce this issue and my Department has no remit, however, I would support any call for domestic properties to display their allocated house number.

I would be happy to write to Council Chief Executives to remind them of their responsibilities.

Maximising Access in Rural Areas

Mr Brady asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the purpose of the Maximising Access in Rural Areas project as part of her Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Framework.

(AQO 1814/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: The Maximising Access in Rural Areas project is an initiative based on the premise that visiting people in their own homes and using a "personal touch" encourages them to avail of services and grants which they would not otherwise have known about or had the wherewithal to apply for. The evidence gathered from the original pilot and from phase one of this project, which saw over 4,000 household visits completed between before March 2011, strongly supports this approach.

Using grassroots information the project seeks, in the next 3 years, to identify the most vulnerable 12,000 households across all of the 286 rural super output areas in the north. Trained enablers will visit these households, complete a detailed household and personal assessment and provide a range of information to occupants regarding regional and locally available services. From the information gathered the IT system being used will compile a list of grants, benefits or services that householders may be entitled to and these will in turn be automatically referred to various partner agencies and departments for immediate processing. These referrals will be followed through until such times as the householder receives the grant benefit or service they are entitled to. A second home visit will take place for those households that received a referral.

Common Agricultural Policy

Mr Molloy asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the proposals she presented to the EU Commission on the Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy.

(AQO 1815/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I met with Georg Haeusler, Head of Cabinet for Agriculture Commissioner Dacian Cioloș, to discuss my response to the Commission's legislative proposals on CAP Reform on 19 April. As you will be aware, this response was prepared after a public consultation and takes due account the views of stakeholders. I was determined this should be a constructive response and our approach was to offer amendments or suggestions to make the Commission's proposals more focused and workable.

In particular, I discussed the detail of my suggestions for a smooth and orderly 10 year transition towards a flat rate support regime. With simplification in mind, I suggested combining the Basic and Greening Payments into a single payment. I also presented my proposals to simplify greening so that it is more focused and easier to administer, while avoiding potentially negative and unintended consequences.

In addition, I offered an alternative and much simpler approach to the active farmer test, based on past production activity, which will refocus support on active farmers at the outset. And importantly, I stressed the need for sufficient regional flexibility to permit us to adequately address local needs.

The discussion on CAP reform proposals are still at an early stage, but we should see some movement from the Commission over the coming months and I am very pleased to have had this opportunity for positive engagement at this stage. I intend to build on this and further meetings with Members of the European Parliament are planned in the coming weeks.

Dog Breeding

Mr A Maskey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the regulation of dog breeding establishments.

(AQO 1816/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: My Department's 12-week public consultation on the proposed Welfare of Animals (Dog Breeding Establishments) Regulations closed in January this year. That consultation issued to over 2,000 stakeholders, including dog breeders, specialist interest groups, councils and the general public, and provided the opportunity to comment on the proposals contained in the draft Regulations.

A substantial number of responses were received to the consultation and my officials are currently analysing these. The commercial breeding of dogs is a legitimate business both here and across these islands and I do not intend to place any unnecessary burden on small, medium or large scale breeders. I will fully consider all the relevant issues raised in the consultation responses before deciding on the final detail of the draft Regulations. However, I can assure members that sufficient powers will be included in the Regulations to allow action to be taken to improve the conditions in any sub-standard breeding establishments.

The ARD Committee will have an opportunity to consider the draft Regulations in May and the Regulations will be laid in the Assembly in June for debate under the draft affirmative resolution procedure before the summer recess.

Dairy Industry: All-island Discussions

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what discussions have taken place on an all-island basis in relation to the dairy industry after 2013.

(AQO 1817/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: In answering your question I assume that you are referring to the ending of EU milk quotas in 2015.

The ending of milk quotas will pose a number of challenges for the dairy sector. In anticipation of this we supported a Dairy Competitiveness Study to help the industry in its strategic decision making processes so that we have a sustainable dairy sector with a structure to enable it to compete globally post 2015. Furthermore, an Implementation Group, chaired by Dairy UK (NI) has begun to take forward the Study's recommendations.

I am pleased to say that the dairy sector has demonstrated continued growth and resilience in the current difficult economic climate. I believe that the sector has the potential to grow further and to exploit opportunities arising from the expansion in world population. However, the sector's future sustainability hinges on it following a market-led approach. The key is to grasp these opportunities and that is why we are establishing an Agri-Food Strategy Board to develop a longer term strategic vision. I look forward to the dairy sector's positive engagement to help set challenging but achievable targets up to 2020. In so doing we will take account of the south's Food Harvest 2020.

On an all-island basis, the dairy sector faces many of the same challenges and opportunities. Where we have areas of common interest I believe that it makes sense to work together. In particular I believe there would be potential benefits to an all-island approach to the marketing of local products rather than the approach being taken by the south's industry-led National Dairy Council which seeks to encourage consumers to purchase milk of southern origin only. We have more to gain if we work together to make in-roads to new markets rather than competing in the smaller domestic market.

Rural Areas: Demographic Change

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she will establish an inter-departmental working group to address the demographic changes in rural areas with ageing populations.

(AQO 1818/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I have no plans to establish an inter-departmental group to look at this particular issue, however I am aware of the challenges facing rural communities both now and in the future.

On the issue of demographic changes and ageing population in some rural areas this can present challenges in relation to provision of services - such as transport and health and social care - where the less concentrated population of rural areas often requires a different approach.

However, I think we shouldn't just see challenges in an ageing population, we should also see the opportunities. Many of the older people I meet are a fantastic resource in their local communities. They are well placed to help others because they understand the needs of rural dwellers and there are many examples of projects throughout the north where highly motivated older people's projects and groups actually deliver services for other older people in their communities.

I hope to soon be in a position to publish the Executive's Rural White Paper Action Plan which aims to address a wide range of rural issues and challenges and will help to ensure the future sustainability of our rural communities.

The Rural White Paper Action Plan is an inter-departmental initiative and is the first to focus solely on rural issues and to include commitments by all government Departments. An Interdepartmental Committee on Rural Policy comprising of senior officials from all government departments will play a lead role in monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan.

Marine Bill: Commercial Fishing

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in light of the current consideration of the Marine Bill, whether she can give an assurance that the interests of our commercial fishing sector will be protected and upheld.

(AQO 1819/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Consultation with the fishing sector on marine plans, new marine developments and marine conservation zones is vital to ensure that those areas most important to our fishing sector are secured. My Department has stressed this point to the Department of the Environment throughout the development of the Marine Bill.

Responsibility for marine planning, the licencing of many marine activities and any future proposals for marine conservation zones, ultimately lies with the Department of the Environment and my Department will work with the fishing industry to provide the evidence needed to justify protection of our most important fishing grounds within the future marine planning system.

Rural Development Fund: Administrative Costs

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the proportion of Rural Development Funding that is spent on the administrative costs of the clusters.

(AQO 1820/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: I realise that administration costs are high but I am confident that the current review of implementation plans and proposals to admit strategic projects will enable JCC's to bring their administration expenditure back into synchronisation with their approved budgets.

Schmallenberg Virus

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the current position in relation to Schmallenberg Disease.

(AQO 1821/11-15)

Mrs O'Neill: Since Schmallenberg virus was first detected in Northern Europe in November 2011 significant effort has been made at European Commission level to gain a greater understanding of the disease and its impact. As a result of this work, it is now strongly believed that biting midges are responsible for spreading the disease. The number and frequency of reported cases in affected areas supports the theory that the cases are the result of infection during the vector active period last year.

As at 20 April, the disease has been detected in 249 holdings in southern England. It is believed that the disease arrived there as a result of infected midges being blown across the Channel from mainland Europe. Defra has confirmed that all of the affected counties lie within the area that is believed to be at risk from such incursion.

There have been no reported cases here. My Department's position remains that animals, particularly pregnant animals, imported from regions where Schmallenberg virus has been actively circulating pose the highest risk of introduction of the infection to the north. Incursion by infected midges is considered to be a negligible risk unless the virus becomes widespread in the west of Britain.

My Department has considered what contingency arrangements are most appropriate here and our policy is to carry out targeted surveillance on cases that meet the clinical signs of the disease.

The European Commission regards the disease as having a low impact and as such has no plans to introduce any movement restrictions or to make the disease notifiable. In these circumstances, given what is known about the disease the best way to keep Schmallenberg virus out of the north is for those importing animals to source stock responsibly.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Press Guidelines

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 9655/11-15, when she sent her memo on press guidelines to the arm's-length bodies.

(AQW 10337/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín (The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure): The Minister wrote to each of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure arm's-length bodies on the 23 February 2012.

Cost of Producing Consultation Documents and Official Reports

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what was the cost to her Department of producing (i) consultation documents; and (ii) official reports in the 2010/11 financial year.

(AQW 10440/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín:

- (i) The Department incurred costs of £5,289 in producing consultation documents in the 2010/11 financial year.
- (ii) The Department incurred costs of £2,560 in producing official reports in the 2010/11 financial year.

Arts Council Budget

Mr Ó hÓisín asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much of this year's Arts Council budget has been allocated to Community Arts in (i) Derry City; and (ii) the North West area; and whether the allocations were equality proofed.

(AQW 10513/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: As this is only the first month of the current financial year, any figures provided would not represent a full and accurate picture of funding allocated to Community Arts in Derry and the North West area. Can I suggest that you write to me again in August, or directly to the Arts Council, when most funding decisions will have been made.

The Arts Council does not equality proof allocations however it periodically carries out a spatial mapping exercise of all of its grants in order to assess geographical distribution.

Proposals for Legislation

Mrs McKeivitt asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) what proposals for legislation, subject to Executive approval, she has introduced or intends to introduce between April 2012 and March 2015; (ii) the anticipated timescale for the introduction of each Bill; and (iii) the intention of each Bill.

(AQW 10650/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: I intend to bring forward proposals for an Irish Language Bill to the Executive Legislative Programme 2011 – 2015.

An Irish Language Bill will set out to protect and enhance the language, increase the numbers of Irish speakers and increase provision of government and local government services in Irish.

Commercial Licences on Lough Neagh

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether she is considering limiting the number of commercial licences on Lough Neagh until accurate data exists on fish stocks.

(AQW 10728/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: There are already certain restrictions in legislation on who may be granted a commercial licence for Lough Neagh and the length of net that may be licensed.

As Lough Neagh is a private fishery, any proposals to change regulations to restrict the number of commercial licences further on Lough Neagh would have to be done in consultation with the holder of the legal title to the fisheries and in the context of EC law.

I am not currently considering introducing further restrictions on the numbers of commercial licenses available for Lough Neagh

Hollywood Library and Donaghadee Library

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much money has been spent on (i) Hollywood Library; and (ii) Donaghadee Library in each of the last five years.

(AQW 10860/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Responsibility for the management of libraries in the north of Ireland passed to Libraries NI in April 2009 thus my Department does not hold financial spend information prior to this period.

Libraries NI has provided me with the following information in relation to the consolidated spends on (i) Hollywood Library and (ii) Donaghadee Library for the subsequent three financial years:

(I)

Donaghadee	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Revenue	132,653	115,218	101,613
Capital	0	0	0
Total**	132,653	115,218	101,613

(II)

Hollywood	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Revenue	263,442	250,932*	192,205
Capital	0	153,737	16,301
Total**	263,442	404,669	208,506

* note that Hollywood recurrent spend for 10/11 excludes a one off redundancy payment because this distorts the trend and also could be traceable to the individual concerned.

** Note the Revenue spend only covers those costs directly coded to the location and mainly covers frontline staff costs and premises costs. It does not include stock which is coded centrally or management costs.

Funding for the Sport of Cycling

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the funding provided in each of the last three years to organisations which promote the sport of cycling.

(AQW 10871/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Sport NI is responsible for the distribution of funding for sport in the north of Ireland. Over the last three financial years, Sport NI has allocated the following funding to Cycling Ulster towards the development of all cycling disciplines:

2009/10	£178,066
2010/11	£183,444
2011/12	£152,514
Total	£514,024

This includes funding through Sport NI's Athlete Support Programme to assist a number of talented cyclists develop their full potential.

Promoting the Sport of Cycling

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what measures her Department is taking to promote the sport of cycling.

(AQW 10872/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Cycling Ulster is the governing body of cycling sport and therefore responsible for promoting the sport of cycling. Sport NI however, which is responsible for the distribution of funding for sport in the north of Ireland, has provided £514,024 in the last three financial years to assist Cycling Ulster in developing and promoting all cycling disciplines. Furthermore Sport NI has provided a range of advice and guidance to Cycling Ulster and its athletes on matters including governance and modernisation of the sport, talented athlete support, club development, coaching and marketing support.

No to Salmon Nets Group

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure when the No to Salmon Nets Group will receive further information in relation to monitoring and enforcement, following the recent announcement that there will be no commercial netting taking place in 2012.

(AQW 10948/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: DCAL Inland Fisheries Group staff have responded to a number of specific e-mail queries raised by representatives of the No to Salmon Nets Group. All queries have been responded to and DCAL has no record of the No to Salmon Nets Group requesting further information on monitoring and enforcement activities undertaken in relation to commercial netting.

Salmon Inland Fisheries Forum

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the current membership of the Salmon Inland Fisheries Forum.

(AQW 11029/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The current membership of the Salmon and Inland Fisheries Forum is detailed in the table below:

Name	Stakeholder group
Robert Murtland	Unaffiliated angler
Michael Crilly	Unaffiliated angler (current Chair)
Allan Kilgore	Affiliated angler
Jack Tisdall	Affiliated angler
Gary W Houston	Affiliated angler
Robert J Haughey	Affiliated angler
Patrick Close	Commercial Fisheries
Francis G Conlon	Commercial Fisheries
Vacant	Other Representatives of Commercial Fishermen
Patrick McNeill	Other Representatives of Commercial Fishermen
Hugh Edward J Montgomery	Fishery Owners and Operators
Martin McNeill	Fishery Owners and Operators
David Laughlin	Landowners
John McWilliams	Landowner (with riparian rights)
Paul Johnston	Fishery Management Interests
Dermot Curran	District Councils
Mark P Horton	Environmental Non-Government Agencies
John Morton	Fish Merchants
Vacant	Erne Fishermen

The Department has placed a public advertisement inviting applications for a representative of commercial fishermen operating on Lough Neagh. The closing date for applications is 8 May 2012.

Department of Education

Draft Education Bill

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Education for his assessment of the potential impact that the Draft Education Bill could have on Boards of Governors, particularly in relation to their roles in recruitment and staffing.

(AQW 10433/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): The draft Bill was circulated to the Executive on the 6 March 2012 and awaits Executive approval.

It would be inappropriate for me to comment on the detail of the draft Bill ahead of Executive approval. However the draft Bill honours the Heads of Agreement as published by the Office of First Minister and deputy First Minister on the 16 November 2011

Education and Skills Authority

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Education, given that the legislation to introduce the Education and Skills Authority will alter the responsibilities of the Boards of Governors in grant-aided schools, for his assessment of the benefits that this will have for the education sector.

(AQW 10475/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The draft Bill was circulated to the Executive on the 6 March 2012 and awaits Executive approval.

It would be inappropriate for me to comment on the detail of the draft Bill ahead of Executive approval. However the draft Bill honours the Heads of Agreement as published by the Office of First Minister and deputy First Minister on the 16 November 2011

Mobile Classrooms

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education how many additional mobile classrooms have been provided to primary schools in the Ballymena Borough Council area in each of the last four years.

(AQW 10523/11-15)

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

Financial Year	Additional Mobiles
2008-09	2
2009-10	3
2010-11	0
2011-12	1

Pre-School Places in the Upper Bann Area

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Education what plans he has to meet the current demand for pre-school places in the Upper Bann area.

(AQW 10546/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The SELB PEAG have advised that in the Upper Bann area 94 funded places in the statutory and voluntary/private sector remained available at the end of Stage 1 of the Pre-School Admissions. Additional places have been allocated to the voluntary/private sector for Stage 2 of the Process. In addition the Department is currently considering a number of Development Proposals for the establishment of additional statutory nursery provision in the Portadown area.

Cost-Effectiveness of Away-Days and Team-Building Exercises

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 9948/11-15, what priority is given to value for money when assessing the effectiveness of away-days and team-building exercises.

(AQW 10579/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In undertaking away-days and teambuilding exercises the Department of Education is fully committed to ensuring value for money in terms of money spent and staff time.

Refurbishment and Repairs at Portadown College

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 10278/11-15 and AQW 10265/11-15, whether he has made any assessment of the long-term cost effectiveness of the on-going repair work at Portadown College compared with the cost of a new building.

(AQW 10581/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Portadown College is a controlled school. It is the responsibility of the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) to undertake minor capital and maintenance works as required to maintain the integrity of the school building. The SELB has confirmed that the works carried out in the 2010-11 and 2011-12 financial years included the refurbishment of the Art/Design accommodation to facilitate the delivery of the curriculum. The Maintenance spend included general planned maintenance, statutory requirements and Health & Safety work.

Previously identified new build projects such as Portadown College will be critically assessed alongside all other potential projects as part of the ongoing area planning process. This will determine how potential projects will contribute to the overall infrastructure needed in an area and, if identified as a priority within the area plan, might be taken forward

The Board was meeting its responsibilities in ensuring that the integrity of the building was maintained and completing essential statutory and Health and Safety work. It would therefore be inappropriate to carry out an assessment of the costs of such work at Portadown College in comparison to any potential major capital project which may be announced as an outcome of the area planning process.

Protestant Church Schools in Counties Donegal, Monaghan, Cavan, Leitrim and Louth

Mr McKay asked Minister of Education to list the Protestant church schools in counties Donegal, Monaghan, Cavan, Leitrim and Louth which are within the remit of the cross-border survey that he is undertaking jointly with the Dublin Government's Minister for Education and Skills.

(AQW 10605/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have been advised by the Department of Education and Skills in the south that the following primary schools within 6 miles of the border and post-primary schools within 12 miles of the border, which have a Church of Ireland or Presbyterian ethos, will fall within the scope of the cross border survey.

Post-primary schools

- Royal School, Cavan, Co Cavan
- Dundalk Grammar, Dundalk, Co Louth
- Monaghan Collegiate, Corlatt, Co Monaghan
- The Royal and Prior School, Raphoe, Co Donegal

Primary schools

- Monaghan Model, Monaghan, Co. Monaghan
- Drunacrutin N S, Drumacrutin, Co Monaghan

- Kilbarron N S, Kilbarron, Ballyshannon, Co Donegal
- Clontibret N S, Clontibret, Monaghan, Co Monaghan
- Ballyconell Central N S, Ballyconnell, Co Cavan
- Fairgreen N S, Belturbet, Co Cavan
- Robertson N S, Ballintra, Co Donegal
- Moville N S, Moville, Co Donegal
- Raphoe Central N S, Raphoe, Lifford, Co Donegal
- S N Domhnach Mor, Castlefin, Lifford, Co Donegal
- Monreagh N S, Monreagh, Carrigans Lifford, Co Donegal
- Dun Dealgan N S, Jocelyn Street, Dundalk, Co Louth

Development Plans for Nursery Schools

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) how many development plans for nursery schools have been submitted to his Department in the last five years; (ii) how many were successful; (iii) the locations of the approved development plans; and (iv) the rationale for accepting or refusing each development plan.

(AQW 10660/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Since January 2007 there have been 58 development proposals published for the establishment of new nursery schools or nursery units attached to existing primary schools.

Of these proposals 32 were approved, 17 were not approved, 2 were withdrawn and decisions on the remaining 7 are still pending.

Details of the proposals, including the locations, are provided in the table below.

School	Date of Publication	Approval Status
Moir Primary School (401-6104)	27/03/07	Approved
Ballynahinch Primary School (401-1567)	01/05/07	Approved
Millennium Integrated PS, Saintfield (406-6644)	01/05/07	Approved
Scoil an Droichid, Belfast (104-6641)	05/07/07	Approved
Blythefield Primary School, Belfast (101-6207)	20/12/07	Approved
King's Park PS, Craigavon (501-1124)	08/01/09	Approved
Windmill Integrated Primary School, Dungannon (506-6554)	29/01/09	Approved
Christian Brothers' Primary School, Armagh (503-1110)	26/02/09	Approved
Fairhill Primary School, Dromara (501-6599)	26/02/09	Approved
Hollywood Nursery School (411-0030)	03/03/09	Approved
Gaelscoil Eadain Mhoir, Londonderry (204-6644)	04/03/09	Approved
Bunscoil an tSleibhe Dhuibh, Belfast (104-6593)	24/09/09	Approved
St Patrick's PS, Dungannon (503-2678)	17/12/09	Approved
St Francis' Primary School, Lurgan (503-6633)	17/12/09	Approved
Millington Nursery School, Portadown (511-6189)	17/12/09	Approved

School	Date of Publication	Approval Status
Gaelscoil Ui Neill - New Irish Medium Nursery Unit Coalisland (504-6637)	17/12/09	Approved
St Colman's Primary School, Annaclone, Banbridge (503-6061)	17/12/09	Approved
Drumnamoe Nursery School, Lurgan (513-6631)	17/12/09	Approved
Gaelscoil Ui Dhocartaigh, Strabane (202-6638)	10/05/10	Approved
Gaelscoil na gCrann, Omagh (204-6677)	10/06/10	Approved
St Anthony's Primary School, Craigavon (503-1184)	26/08/10	Approved
Dundonald Primary School (401-1587)	07/09/10	Approved
St Paul's Nursery School (113-6302) and St Paul's Primary School, Belfast (103-6624)	05/11/10	Approved
Gaelscoil an Chaistil, Ballycastle (304-6653)	08/11/10	Approved
Clough Primary School, Ballymena (301-0834)	15/11/10	Approved
Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain, Belfast (104-6596)	02/12/10	Approved
Ballymoney Nursery School (311-6034)	06/12/10	Approved
Orchard County PS, Portadown (501-6658)	21/04/11	Approved
Drumadonnell PS, Ballyroney (501-6616)	21/04/11	Approved
Waringstown Primary School, Craigavon (501-1598)	21/04/11	Approved
St Patrick's PS, Mayobridge (503-1697)	21/04/11	Approved
Tonagh Primary School Lisburn (401-0885)	28/11/11	Approved
Waringstown Primary School (501-1598)	29/03/07	Not Approved
Oakwood Integrated Primary School, Dunmurry (406-6611)	09/06/09	Not approved
Cranmore Integrated PS, Belfast (106-6580)	11/06/09	Not Approved
All Childrens Integrated Primary School, Newcastle (405-6541)	15/09/09	Not Approved
St Anne's Primary School, Belfast (103-0868)	20/11/09	Not Approved
Tandragee Nursery School (501-1116)	17/12/09	Not approved
St Colmans Primary School, Lambeg (403-3307)	12/01/10	Not approved
Braniel Primary School Belfast (401-1683)	26/01/10	Not approved
Woodburn Primary School, Carrickfergus (301-0696)	13/05/10	Not Approved
Randalstown Primary School (301-0816)	24/02/11	Not Approved
Currie PS, Belfast (101-0063)	03/03/11	Not Approved
Gaelscoil Eanna, Glengormley (304-6685)	14/03/11	Not Approved
Bunscoil Bheanna Boirche, Castlewellan (404-6648)	22/03/11	Not Approved
St Mary's PS, Banbridge (503-6043)	21/04/11	Not Approved
St Francis of Assisi PS, Keady (503-6610)	26/05/11	Not Approved

School	Date of Publication	Approval Status
Gaelscoil na Mona, Turf Lodge, Belfast (104-6671)	02/06/11	Not Approved
Cranmore Integrated PS, Belfast (106-6580)	07/07/11	Not approved
St Comgalls Primary School, Antrim (303-0832)	19/02/07	Withdrawn
St Colmcilles PS (203-6053), Loreto Convent PS (203-2537) Omagh	22/02/07	Withdrawn
Bocombra PS, Portadown (501-6138)	21/04/11	Pending
Seagoe PS, Portadown (504-6137)	21/04/11	Pending
Portadown Integrated PS (506-6553)	21/04/11	Pending
Edenderry Nursery School Portadown (511-0021)	05/09/11	Pending
Primate Dixon PS, Coalisland (503-6590)	15/12/11	Pending
Bronte Primary School Banbridge (501-6612)	16/02/12	Pending
Iveagh Primary School Rathfriland (501-1611)	16/02/12	Pending

Each proposal is considered on its own merit taking account of the local context and all the pertinent issues. The overriding rationale for the decision when considering proposals for nursery units is the level of existing pre-school provision within an area. The Department's target level of pre-school coverage in an area is 90% and the policy is not to displace good quality pre-school provision already in existence, with pre-school provision in an alternative setting.

Places at Preferred Primary Schools

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education how many children did not secure a place at their preferred primary school in each of the last five years, broken down by Education and Library Board area.

(AQW 10661/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Over the last five years, the vast majority of applicants for primary 1 admission (on average over 98%) were placed in their first preference school.

With respect to the less than 2% who were not placed in their first preference school, each year the Department ensures that there are sufficient primary school places available within each category of school and in each area. As a result, in each of the last five years every child has obtained a place in a primary school in accordance with a preference nominated by their parents and, therefore, there are no children who remain unplaced.

Places at Preferred Primary Schools

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education how many children have not secured a place at their preferred primary school for the 2012/13 academic year. broken down by Education and Library board area.

(AQW 10662/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: As at 25 April a total of 79 children had not been placed in a primary school in accordance with a preference expressed by their parent(s) for admission in September 2012. Broken down by Education and Library Board area the number of unplaced children is as follows:-

Belfast Education and Library Board	16
Western Education and Library Board	8

North Eastern Education and Library Board	9
South Eastern Education and Library Board	28
Southern Education and Library Board	18

Children Attending Education Other Than At School

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of children attending Education Other Than At School in the South Eastern Education and Library Board area, broken down by location.

(AQW 10696/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The best place for children and young people to be educated is in school. It is recognised, however, that for some young people a school placement cannot be sustained and that Education Other Than At School provision may be necessary to meet their educational and other needs. Responsibility for making this provision rests with the relevant Education and Library Board.

The South-Eastern Education and Library Board has advised of the following position as at 25 April 2012:

Location	No of Pupils
Home tuition	77
Pupil Referral Unit at Ardmore Special School	12
Pupil Referral Unit at Longstone Special School	12
Lisnasharragh (Castlereagh)	15
Downpatrick	6
Holywood	15
Lagan Valley Education Centre	24
Beechcroft and Groomsport Intensive Support Learning Units	27
Total	188

Education Other Than At School at Lisnasharragh, Belfast

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of children from the North Down area attending Education Other Than At School at Lisnasharragh, Belfast.

(AQW 10697/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I understand from the South-Eastern Education and Library Board that 5 young people who reside in the North Down/Ards area attend Education Other Than At School at Lisnasharragh, Belfast.

Education Other Than At School

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of looked after children attending Education Other Than At School, broken down by Education and Library Board area.

(AQW 10698/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Education and Library Boards have advised that they are currently aware of the following numbers of looked after children in Education Other Than At School:

Education and Library Board	No. of looked after children attending Education Otherwise Than At School
Belfast	19
Western	16
North-Eastern	15
South- Eastern	29
Southern	9

Education Other Than At School: Statemented Children

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of pupils who have been statemented in each Education Other Than At School system, broken down by Education and Library Board area.
(AQW 10699/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I understand from the Education and Library Boards that the position on 26 April 2012 is as follows:

Education and Library Board	No of pupils with statements in EOTAS
Belfast	75
Western	54
North-Eastern	22
South- Eastern	50
Southern	46

Distance Criterion used by Some Primary Schools in East Belfast

Mr Douglas asked the Minister of Education, in relation to the distance criterion used by some primary schools in the East Belfast area to determine admission for September 2012, to detail for each relevant school the furthest distance from home to school that a child will travel.
(AQW 10711/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education does not hold the information requested. The Department does not hold personal information relating to pupils applying for primary schools. This information may be available from the schools in question.

P1 Places in the North Down Area

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how many P1 places are available in the North Down area for the 2012/13 academic year.
(AQW 10766/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The number of P1 places available is defined by a primary school's admissions number. Across the North Down constituency there were 1,121 places available at the start of the 2012/13 primary admissions process. The primary admissions process concluded with the issue of placement letters to parents on 18 April 2012. On 25 April 2012 there were 111 places available to any applicants who may still require a P1 place in the North Down area for September 2012. This figure may change from day to day between now and September 2012.

P1 Places in the North Down Area

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how many children have not been allocated a P1 place in the North Down area for the 2012/13 academic year.

(AQW 10767/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: On 25 April 2012 five children from the North Down area seeking P1 places remained unplaced following the conclusion of the primary admissions process. One further child resident outside the North of Ireland at the time of the process expressed a preference for primary schools all of which are located within Bangor and that child also remained unplaced.

The South Eastern Education and Library Board endeavours to arrange placements for all children in the area who find themselves in this position at schools which have places still available. The position regarding unplaced children in any area is fluid and may change from day to day.

Nursery School Places in the North Down Area

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how many nursery school places are available in the North Down area for the 2012/13 academic year.

(AQW 10768/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: In the North Down area there are 78 full-time and 104 part-time nursery school places available for the 2012/13 academic year as follows:-

	Full-Time	Part-Time
Bangor Central Nursery School	26	52
Hollywood Nursery School	0	52
Trinity Nursery School	52	0
Totals	78	104

Pre-school places are also available at nursery units attached to some primary schools, and at non-statutory voluntary/private providers.

Nursery School Places in the North Down Area

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how many children, whose parents applied, have not obtained a nursery school place in the North Down area for the 2012/13 academic year.

(AQW 10769/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information sought relates to the admissions process for places in pre-school education for the 2012/13 academic year. This is a two stage process which is currently ongoing. Statistics will not be available until after the process is completed on 1 June 2012.

Applications for Places at Special Schools

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Education whether his Department is anticipating an influx of applications for places at special schools, given that under the special educational needs proposals 50 percent of children who are statemented will experience a reduction in the level of the support they currently receive.

(AQW 10773/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: It is not the case that the proposals from the Review of SEN and Inclusion seek to remove the provision that a statemented child in mainstream currently receives. It is rather that the same supports required to meet the needs of some children will be made available in a more straightforward and less bureaucratic manner than through a statutory assessment. The ELBs will continue to be required to make available supports to the school and the pupil at level 1 of the new framework. The

ELBs currently have a duty to educate children with special educational needs in ordinary schools; I do not propose to change this duty. On the basis that ELB supports would continue to be provided, I do not anticipate an influx of applications for places in special schools.

Irish-Medium Schools

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how much each Irish-medium school has paid to landlords for leasing or renting premises in each of the last three years.

(AQW 10780/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: On 13 January 2012, the Department issued Circular 2012/01 which outlines the circumstances and clarifies the conditions under which rental costs for accommodation and sites at grant-aided schools may be met, as provided for under the Common Funding Scheme for all grant aided schools.

The Department is currently working with schools to gather the supporting documentation considered necessary for the payment of rent. When all supporting documentation has been received and the level of rent agreed, the Department will advise the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) as funding authority, to make the appropriate payments.

As part of this exercise the Department will be requesting details from the ELB's of any rent which they have already paid so that this can be cross referenced against any new claims for rent. Until this exercise is complete, I am unable to confirm how much each school has been paid for rent in each of the last three years.

Irish-Medium Schools

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what mechanisms his Department has in place to ensure that Irish-medium schools are operating in premises that are fit for purpose.

(AQW 10781/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department is committed to ensure that accommodation needs in Irish medium schools are addressed.

When a school proves viability and is vested in the schools estate, all potential projects in an area will be critically assessed as part of the area based planning process to determine how they will contribute to the overall infrastructure needed.

For those schools in the early stages of development and where accommodation is being rented, my Department will assess the condition of accommodation at the outset to ensure that it is fit for purpose and of a suitable standard.

In addition to this my Department has already provided Iontaobhas na Gaelscolaíochta with £2m funding to set up an Accommodation Fund to address very serious accommodation deficiencies and needs for developing schools in the sector.

Suspension of the Teachers' Negotiating Committee

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education to outline the reasons for the suspension of the Teachers' Negotiating Committee and what action he intends to take to remedy the situation.

(AQW 10782/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Both the Management Side and the Teachers' Side of the Teachers' Negotiating Committee (TNC) have agreed to adjourn the Joint Working Party and associated sub-groups pending the resolution of differences within the Teachers' Side. The TNC has not been suspended and the Joint Working Party is scheduled to meet again on 8 May 2012.

Changes to GCSEs and A Levels

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what are the potential implications for the examination system if the United Kingdom Government implements major changes to GCSEs and A Levels in England and Wales.

(AQW 10783/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I will always seek to ensure that qualifications offered here are portable, comparable and meet the needs of all our young people. It remains vital that all qualifications must be recognised and valued by employers and higher education institutions. Young people here must never be disadvantaged in relation to the qualifications they seek to acquire.

In relation to GCSEs, I consulted widely on changes proposed by Michael Gove in England and decided that schools are best placed to make crucial decisions in the best interests of their pupils. That is why I decided to continue to support both a unitised and linear route.

In relation to GCE A Levels, the implications are potentially very significant and consequently, I will want to talk to a wide range of relevant stakeholders before deciding on any proposed changes, and their appropriateness here. I will also be meeting with Ministerial counterparts here and in England, Scotland and Wales to discuss all aspects of any proposed changes.

Education is a matter for the locally accountable governments, both here and in Wales, and I will continue to make evidence-based decisions on the nature and pace of change on critical areas of education such as GCSEs and A Levels.

School Improvement Policy – Every School a Good School

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education, in the light of the commitment in the 'School Improvement Policy – Every School a Good School' to develop an added value approach when measuring pupil achievement, what progress has been made in this area since the publication of the policy.

(AQW 10784/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: One of the key aims of Every School a Good School (ESaGS) – a Policy for School Improvement is to increase the proportion of young people attaining at or above the expected levels at each Key Stage. The policy also identifies the importance of assessing and recognising progress made by pupils on an individual level.

The new assessment arrangements being introduced from 2012/13 for Communication and Using Maths, and from 2013/14 for Using ICT, include an expectation that, as well as achieving the expected level by the end of each Key Stage, pupils will progress by at least one level between each Key Stage. By capturing the progress made by pupils between each Key Stage, the new assessment arrangements will provide a measure of 'value-added'. In addition, it may be possible to separate out progress made by, for example, pupils with Free School Meals Entitlement.

School Inspection reports published by the Education and Training Inspectorate also provide a measure of 'value-added' by providing a qualitative, in-depth assessment of a school's provision, taking account of the context within which the school operates.

The Department is currently reviewing the existing commitment in Every School a Good School (ESaGS) – a Policy for School Improvement to develop a Contextual Value Added (CVA) measure. We have learned from international experience which has pointed up the complexities of developing a robust and credible CVA measure.

Private Finance Initiative Contract

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Education, in relation to each currently active Private Finance Initiative contract in each Education and Library Board, to detail (i) the contract start and expiry date; (ii) the name and address of the business holding the contract; and (iii) the nature of each contract.

(AQW 10787/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: There are a number of Private Finance Initiative contracts currently active within the Education and Library Boards, details of which are contained in the table below.

Public Private Partnership / Private Finance Initiative contracts in the schools' sector typically have an operational phase of 25 or 30 years, which begins on the first day of operation of a school, following construction. The table provides the date of contract signature and the start and end date of the operational phase of each contract.

PPP / PFI contracts in the schools' sector are let on a Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Maintain basis, commonly known as a DBFOM contract. In some of the PFI contracts, catering and cleaning is the responsibility of the PPP Operator; in other instances these services have been retained by the Education and Library Board.

Education and Library Board	(i) Contract signature date (ii) start and expiry date of operational phase of contract	(ii) the name and address of the business holding the contract	(iii) the nature of each contract
BELB: Wellington College, Balmoral High School and Regional Training Unit PFI Pathfinder Project	5 19 Oct 2000 (ii) Jan 2002 to Jan 2027	Northwin (Balmoral and Wellington) Ltd. 5 Ballygowan Road, Hillsborough, Co. Down BT26 6HX	DBFOM (inclusive of cleaning and catering services)
BELB: Belfast Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) Phase 1 PFI Project (covering Orangefield Primary School, Grosvenor Grammar School, Ashfield Girls High School, Belfast Model School for Girls, Belfast Boys' Model School and Ballysillan Youth Club)	(i) 10 Mar 2008 (ii) May 2009 to Apr 2039	Amey Belfast Schools Partnership PFI Co Ltd. The Sherard Building, Edmund Halley Road, Oxford, OX4 4DQ	DBFOM (cleaning and catering services retained by BELB)
SEELB: Bangor Academy & Sixth Form College and Nendrum College, Comber PPP Project	(i) 01 Sep 2006 (ii) Feb 2008 to Feb 2038	Bangor Nendrum School Services Ltd. Epsilon, Windmill Hill Business Park, Whitehill Way, Swindon SN5 6NX	DBFOM (cleaning and catering services retained by SEELB)
SEELB: Tor Bank Special School, Dundonald	(i) 14 Mar 2011 (ii) Oct 2012 to Oct 2037	Tor Bank School Education Partnership Ltd. c/o Bilfinger Berger PI Ltd, Ground Floor, Quay Gate House, 15 Scrabo Street, Belfast, BT5 4BD	DBFOM (cleaning and catering services retained by SEELB)

Education and Library Board	(i) Contract signature date (ii) start and expiry date of operational phase of contract	(ii) the name and address of the business holding the contract	(iii) the nature of each contract
SELB: Drumglass High School, Dungannon PFI Pathfinder Project	(i) 01 Jul 1999 (ii) Sep 2000 to Sep 2025	Semperian 118 North Main Street, Carronshore, Falkirk FK2 8HU	DBFOM (inclusive of cleaning and catering services)

Cover for Teachers who were Engaged in Examination Work

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Education to detail the cost of providing cover for teachers who were engaged in examination work for which they were remunerated, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 10788/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department does not hold this information. The Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) has provided the information in the table below.

Overall Substitution Cover Costs for Teachers Engaged in Examination Work.

Financial Year	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
Costs	£544,142	£541,150	£519,161

Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Education how much the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment has paid to teachers involved in all aspects of examination work, including setting and marking papers, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 10789/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The table below details how much the council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment has paid to teachers involved in all aspects of examination work, including setting and marking papers, in each of the last three years.

Year	Total Inc Expenses
2008-2009	£5,063,187
2009-2010	£5,525,420
2010-2011	£5,496,307

Source: CCEA

Note: figures provided exclude 2011/12 as these are not finalised until June 2012.

Future of Dunmurry High School

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education when he will make a decision on the future of Dunmurry High School and to outline the reasons for the delay.

(AQW 10794/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The development proposal for the closure of Dunmurry High School was published by the South Eastern Education & Library Board on 13 December 2011 and the statutory 2 month consultation period ended on 13 February 2012.

As you are aware, I announced my decision on 25 April that Dunmurry High School should close.

Dromore Central Primary School

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education how his Department intends to spend the 2012/13 capital build budget; and whether any priority provision has been made for Dromore Central Primary School.
(AQW 10795/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The total gross capital budget for my Department in 2012/13 is £104.1m, and is required to cover investment in transport, ICT, youth, early years, minor works and committed major works, as well a number of other capital requirements.

The department's capital allocation is a substantial reduction against figures previously indicated under ISNI2, and this has had a significant impact on taking forward plans to modernise the schools estate. I am continuing to examine the approach to capital investment to ensure that we invest strategically in the schools' estate as we migrate to an area-based approach.

As you will be aware in September 2011, I commissioned the five Education and Library Boards (ELBs) working in close conjunction with the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools and other sectors to co-ordinate a strategic area planning exercise based on each ELB area to shape the future pattern of education delivery.

To date I have received, from all Boards, draft area plans for Stand Alone Special Schools and draft area plans for post-primary provision. Primary area plans will be submitted by end June 2012. My officials are considering these plans against Departmental policies and are currently engaged in dialogue through the Area Planning Coordination Group that has been established.

Previously identified projects, such as that for Dromore Central P.S., will be critically assessed alongside all other potential projects as part of the area planning process to determine how they will contribute to the overall infrastructure needed and may re-emerge if identified as a priority to support the area plan.

I am not in a position at this time, therefore, to comment on any specific school or potential project or what capital builds may be considered. There is, however, a need to ensure that we continue to invest strategically in the schools' estate. When appropriate, I will announce future plans for capital investment.

P7 Pupils in the North Down Area

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education, for each of the last five years, to detail (i) the number of pupils in P7 in each primary school in the North Down area who transferred to post-primary schools; and (ii) of these, how many obtained a place at a grammar school.
(AQW 10819/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Information relating to Year 7 enrolments is provided in Table 1. Information regarding destinations of Year 7 pupils has only been available to the Department since 2010 and has been provided in Table 2 below, for those pupils who transferred during the last two academic years.

TABLE 1**YEAR 7 PUPILS ENROLLED IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE NORTH DOWN CONSTITUENCY 2007/08 – 2011/12**

School name	Year 7 enrolment 2007/08	Year 7 enrolment 2008/09	Year 7 enrolment 2009/10	Year 7 enrolment 2010/11	Year 7 enrolment 2011/12
Ballyholme Primary School	92	87	85	81	77
Ballymagee Primary School	58	59	59	60	58
Ballyvester Primary School	12	10	14	14	10
Bangor Central Primary School	79	82	78	80	71
Bloomfield Primary School	43	54	54	40	36
Clandeboyne Primary School	39	35	20	22	23
Conlig Primary School	10	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Connor House Preparatory School	18	21	22	19	n/a
Crawfordsburn Primary School	15	45	32	22	39
Donaghadee Primary School	59	44	46	52	49
Glenraig Integrated Primary School	30	29	27	38	31
Glenlola Collegiate	11	9	9	14	9
Grange Park Primary School	52	49	52	52	52
Hollywood Primary School	61	58	59	51	48
Kilcooley Primary School	16	16	11	17	7
Kilmaine Primary School	86	87	84	88	85
Millisle Primary School	19	21	14	26	16
Rathmore Primary School	51	54	57	71	66
Redburn Primary School	11	9	9	12	7
St Anne's Primary School, Donaghadee	9	4	5	4	5
St Comgall's Primary School, Bangor	43	36	45	49	35
St Malachy's Primary School, Bangor	44	39	55	38	45
St Patrick's Primary School, Hollywood	36	39	32	34	32
Sullivan Upper School	28	27	28	27	26
Towerview Primary School	51	56	59	43	46

TABLE 2**YEAR 7 PUPILS ENROLLED IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE NORTH DOWN CONSTITUENCY WHO SUBSEQUENTLY TRANSFERRED TO A GRAMMAR POST-PRIMARY SCHOOL IN 2010/11 AND IN 2011/12**

School name	Pupils who transferred to a Grammar school in 2010/11	Pupils who transferred to a Grammar school in 2011/12
Ballyholme Primary School	68	61
Ballymagee Primary School	29	25
Ballyvester Primary School	7	*
Bangor Central Primary School	31	40
Bloomfield Primary School	6	11
Clandeboyne Primary School	*	5
Connor House Preparatory School	19	17
Crawfordsburn Primary School	15	6
Donaghadee Primary School	18	27
Glencraig Integrated Primary School	21	29
Glenlola Collegiate	8	14
Grange Park Primary School	37	39
Hollywood Primary School	36	26
Kilcooley Primary School	0	0
Kilmaine Primary School	48	53
Millisle Primary School	6	7
Rathmore Primary School	26	28
Redburn Primary School	*	0
St Anne's Primary School, Donaghadee	0	*
St Comgall's Primary School, Bangor	29	27
St Malachy's Primary School, Bangor	15	14
St Patrick's Primary School, Hollywood	25	28
Sullivan Upper School	27	25
Towerview Primary School	27	18

Source: NI school census**Note:**

- 1 Figures have been provided for all pupils who could be traced using the Unique Pupil Number in the following year.
- 2 Figures in Table 2 relate to Year 7 pupils in previous academic year.
- 3 '*' denotes fewer than 5 pupils

Primary Schools: Nursery Intake

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education how many primary schools currently have a larger nursery intake than their capacity for P1 intake.

(AQW 10820/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: For the 2011/12 school year 44 primary schools have an approved nursery unit enrolment that is larger than the capacity (ie approved admissions) number for the school's P1.

Admission to a particular pre-school setting will not guarantee admission to any primary school, but some schools may choose to use attendance at a particular pre-school setting in their admissions criteria. This practice was considered in the recent Review of Pre-School Admissions Arrangements, announced in January 2012. It is the Department's intention to issue guidance to primary schools ending the use of this criterion as part of admissions criteria and amend the relevant legislation accordingly.

P1 Intake for Towerview Primary School, Bangor

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education, for each of the last five years, to detail the (i) P1 intake; and (ii) cap on P1 intake for Towerview Primary School, Bangor.

(AQW 10821/11-15)

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

Year	P1 Intake	Cap on P1 intake
2011/12	51	46 (rising to 51)
2010/11	48	46 (rising to 51)
2009/10	41	46 (rising to 51)
2008/09	42	58 (rising to 60)
2007/08	55	58 (rising to 60)

The "Cap on P1 intake" is defined by the school's admissions number, and for primary schools this number has a lower limit, rising to an upper limit which may apply provided the school does not exceed its enrolment number which defines the school's approved intake across all year groups.

The intake figures quoted are for admissions via the normal competitive admissions process which directly relate to the school's admissions number. They therefore exclude any supernumerary admissions as a result of either a statement of special educational need, a direction to admit issued by an admissions appeal tribunal, or a direction to admit under a School Attendance Order.

The school's admissions number reduced in 2009/10 as a result of a new school building which contained fewer classrooms.

Intake at Towerview Primary School, Bangor

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what is the cap on intake at Towerview Primary School, Bangor, for September 2012.

(AQW 10822/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Towerview Primary School may admit up to 46 pupils in September 2012, a limit defined by the school's published admissions number which is set by the Department following consultation with the school.

Primary schools are permitted to exceed their admissions number in any given year by a specified percentage without recourse to the Department to enable them to deal with unanticipated surges in applications, particularly where places at alternative schools are not available. The maximum number

of pupils Towerview Primary School may admit if availing of this flexibility would be 51. However, this flexibility may only be utilised provided any additional pupils admitted do not result in the school exceeding its enrolment number.

Irish Language

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the advantages of the protocol between post-primary schools and Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta which aims to ensure that the interests of the Irish language are maintained in schools with Irish-medium streams or units; and (ii) whether his Department has considered the advantages of having a similar protocol in primary schools.

(AQW 10831/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The advantages of the protocols developed between Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta and school managing authorities have benefited both the host school and the Irish medium stream. Protocols have provided clarity around admissions policy; the range of subjects provided through the medium of Irish; governance arrangements; and introduced an agreement that the school managing authorities will assess the potential viability of the provision to be developed into a stand alone school.

The Report of Review of Irish medium education recommended that the development of new primary and post primary provision in a federation, unit or stream should be preceded by a protocol. In line with these recommendations protocols will be an integral part of the Development proposal process for both primary and post primary provision.

Integrated Education

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Education (i) what percentage of children are currently enrolled in integrated education; and (ii) what plans he has to increase this number.

(AQW 10839/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd:

- (i) 6.79 % of pupils are enrolled in integrated schools.
- (ii) The area planning process will consider the future need for a given area taking account of population projection. The level of demand for each sector will be determined and where there is clear evidence of a need to increase the provision in any sector then this will be built into the plan. As there is a finite number of pupils in an area, growth in any sector, including the integrated sector, will therefore have to be contained within the total planning figure for each Education and Library Board, so that the overall planning figure for all Boards is not exceeded. This means that growth in one sector may lead to a reduction in another sector.

Should proposals come forward within the area plans for increases in the number of places in integrated schools, I will consider these in the context of the area plan.

Proposed Cross-Border Survey

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education to detail the timescale for the proposed cross-border survey that he is undertaking jointly with the Dublin Government's Minister for Education and Skills.

(AQW 10849/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The cross border planning survey is currently being designed and undertaken jointly by the Department of Education in the north and the Department of Education and Science in the south. The survey will be conducted in September / October 2012, with the results from the survey and proposals on the way forward to be considered no later than the first North-South Ministerial Council Education meeting of 2013.

Cross-Sectoral Opportunities

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education how cross-sectoral opportunities will be explored through Area Based Planning.

(AQW 10852/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Area planning provides the opportunity to consider all potential solutions to maximise the accessibility of high quality education in local areas. It is a requirement of the process for the Boards to engage with, and seek input from, the other school sectors. Realistic, innovative and creative solutions may be considered and may include options that increase sharing of education provision and infrastructure. I cannot, nor would I wish to, be prescriptive about the nature, or type, of any emerging proposals.

Shared Education Advisory Forum

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education for an update on the establishment of the Shared Education Advisory Forum.

(AQW 10854/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I intend to establish a ministerial advisory group on advancing shared education in the coming weeks.

Vending Machines in Schools

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) how many schools have vending machines for fizzy/cafeinated drinks; and (ii) whether there has been a reduction in the number of the vending machines in schools in each of the last five years.

(AQW 10857/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education does not hold the details requested for individual schools.

The provision of vending machines in school dining areas is the responsibility of the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) in the controlled and maintained sectors and individual voluntary grammar and grantmaintained integrated schools. Vending machines in all schools, located outside the environs of the school canteen, are entirely a matter for the schools themselves.

I have been informed by the ELBs that only the BELB and SEELB Catering Services provide food or drink to pupils through vending machines. None of these machines contain fizzy/cafeinated drinks. They only stock items which are compliant with the Department's nutritional standards, for example still water, sparkling water and appletizer.

My Department recognises that a healthy, balanced diet is vital for children's growth and development, and for their long term health and well being. It has been working for some time to improve the quality of food in schools here and compulsory nutritional standards for school lunches are now in place in all our schools. Standards for other food and drinks provided in schools, including those through vending machines, breakfast clubs, tuck shops etc, have also been drawn up and schools are expected to adhere to them. They specify that items such as crisps, sweets and fizzy drinks should not be provided in school.

P1 Places at Moira Primary School

Mrs Hale asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the number of P1 places available at Moira Primary School; (ii) the number of children that applied; and (iii) how many children were unsuccessful in gaining entry for the 2012/13 academic year.

(AQW 10861/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The admissions number of Moira Primary School is 58, although the school can admit up to 60 pupils provided the overall enrolment capacity of the school is not exceeded. The school considered seventy-seven applications for admission in the 2012/13 academic year; 68 first-

preference, 6 second-preference and 3 third-preference. Sixty of these children have been offered places leaving 17 children who were unsuccessful in gaining entry to Moira Primary School.

Education and Skills Authority

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education to detail the dates, in the last two years, of all the meetings between the Chief Executive designate of the Education and Skills Authority (ESA) and the Chief Executives, Chairpersons, Members and Officers of Education and Library Boards to plan preparation work for the ESA.

(AQW 10868/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: A total of 97 meetings have been held between the ESA Chief Executive (Designate) and Chief Executives, Chairpersons, Members and Officers of the Education and Library Boards in the last two years in preparation for ESA. These are detailed in the table below.

GAVIN BOYD, CHIEF EXECUTIVE (DESIGNATE), ESA

MEETINGS WITH ELB STAFF, 1 APRIL 2010 –30 APRIL 2012

Date	Details
13 April 2010	BELB
22 April 2010	WELB/SELB/BELB/NEELB
26 April 2010	WELB/SELB/BELB/NEELB
27 April 2010	SELB
30 April 2010	BELB
4 May 2010	5 x ELBs
18 May 2010	WELB,
21 May 2010	SEELB
24 May 2010	WELB/SELB/BELB/NEELB
24 May 2010	5 x ELB
27 May 2010	NEELB
15 June 2010	WELB
18 June 2010	NEELB
29 June 2010	BELB
29 June 2010	BELB
1 July 2010	WELB
2 July 2010	5 x ELBs
2 July 2010	SELB
6 July 2010	BELB
21 July 2010	SELB/WELB
22 July 2010	WELB
27 July 2010	5 x ELBs
27 July 2010	NEELB

Date	Details
30 July 2010	BELB
4 August 2010	5 x ELBs
17 August 2010	WELB/SELB/BELB/NEELB
25 August 2010	WELB
3 September 2010	SELB/WELB
7 September 2010	BELB
8 September 2010	SELB
8 September 2010	BELB
9 September 2010	SEELB
10 September 2010	5 x ELBs
10 September 2010	NEELB
21 September 2010	WELB
27 September 2010	BELB
30 September 2010	SELB/WELB
1 October 2010	WELB
5 October 2010	5x ELBs
8 October 2010	BELB
8 October 2010	NEELB
19 October 2010	NEELB
26 October 2010	NEELB
28 October 2010	BELB
28 October 2010	SELB
29 October 2010	BELB
4 November 2010	5 x ELBs
5 November 2010	WELB/SELB/BELB/NEELB
11 November 2010	WELB
23 November 2010	NEELB
24 November 2010	5 x ELBs
3 December 2010	BELB
14 December 2010	ELB
14 December 2010	SELB/WELB
3 February 2011	WELB
1 March 2011	WELB
4 March 2011	SELB

Date	Details
11 March 2011	WELB
16 March 2011	SELB
21 March 2011	WELB
24 March 2011	SELB
24 March 2011	BELB
23 March 2011	WELB
28 March 2011	SEELB
4 April 2011	SEELB
4 April 2011	BELB
13 April 2011	WELB/SEELB
14 April 2011	WELB
14 April 2011	5 x ELBs
15 April 2011	SEELB
14 June 2011	WELB/SEELB
5 September 2011	NEWLB
9 September 2011	WELB/SEELB
15 September 2011	SEELB
16 September 2011	WELB
20 September 2011	NEELB
21 September 2011	BELB
30 September 2011	SEELB
5 October 2011	BELB
7 October 2011	BELB
17 October 2011	BELB
31 October 2011	BELB
1 November 2011	SELB
1 November 2011	SEELB
9 November 2011	WELB
22 November 2011	NEELB
2 December 2011	SELB/WELB
6 December 2011	WELB/SEELB
13 December 2011	BELB
14 December 2011	WELB
5 January 2012	WELB

Date	Details
5 January 2012	SELB/WELB
11 January 2012	5 x ELBs
13 January 2012	WELB
20 January 2012	SELB/WELB
24 February 2012	WELB/SEELB
27 February 2012	SELB

Education and Skills Authority

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Education to detail the dates, in the last two years, of all the meetings between members of the Education and Skills Authority (ESA) Implementation Team and the Chief Executives, Chairpersons, Members and Officers of Education and Library Boards to plan preparation work for the ESA.

(AQW 10869/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: A total of 309 meetings have been held between members of the ESAIT and Education and Library Board officers during the last two years. These are broken down by type and date in the table below.

2010

Date	Met with
April	
1st	All ELBs
10th	All ELBs
12th	All ELBs
12th	All ELBs
13th	All ELBs
14th	All ELBs
15th	All ELBs
16th	All ELBs
16th	All ELBs
21st	All ELBs
22nd	All ELBs
22nd	All ELBs
26th	All ELBs
27th	All ELBs
29th	All ELBs

Date	Met with
May	
4th	All ELBs
6th	All ELBs
7th	BELB
10th	All ELBs
12th	All ELBs
19th	All ELBs
20th	BELB
21st	BELB
24th	All ELBs
26th	All ELBs
27th	All ELBs
27th	SEELB
27th	All ELBs
28th	BELB
June	
1st	All ELBs
2nd	Antrim BC Ed Cttee
2nd	BELB
4th	BELB
10th	All ELBs
14th	All ELBs
16th	All ELBs
17th	All ELBs
17th	All ELBs
18th	BELB
21st	All ELBs
22nd	BELB
22nd	All ELBs
23rd	All ELBs
25th	BELB
30th	BELB
30th	NEELB
30th	All ELBs

Date	Met with
July	
1st	All ELBs
2nd	All ELBs
2nd	All ELBs
20th	All ELBs
22nd	WELB
26th	SELB
27th	All ELBs
August	
3rd	WELB
4th	All ELBs
6th	All ELBs
10th	WELB
10th	All ELBs
11th	All ELBs
16th	All ELBs
17th	All ELBs
September	
2nd	WELB
3rd	BELB
6th	All ELBs
7th	All ELBs
9th	SEELB
9th	WELB
10th	All ELBs
10th	All ELBs
13th	All ELBs
13th	All ELBs
14th	All ELBs
14th	All ELBs
15th	All ELBs
21st	All ELBs
23rd	BELB
23rd	All ELBs

Date	Met with
23rd	All ELBs
24th	WELB
24th	NEELB
28th	All ELBs
29th	All ELBs
30th	All ELBs
October	
1st	WELB
4th	All ELBs
5th	All ELBs
5th	All ELBs
11th	WELB
12th	All ELBs
13th	All ELBs
14th	All ELBs
14th	All ELBs
19th	SELB
19th	All ELBs
20th	All ELBs
21st	All ELBs
22nd	BELB
25th	All ELBs
26th	NEELB
28th	BELB
November	
3rd	All ELBs
4th	All ELBs
4th	All ELBs
4th	WELB
5th	All ELBs
8th	All ELBs
10th	All ELBs
17th	All ELBs
17th	All ELBs

Date	Met with
23rd	All ELBs
24th	All ELBs
26th	All ELBs
December	
1st	All ELBs
7th	All ELBs
7th	WELB
9th	All ELBs
14th	All ELBs
16th	BELB
16th	All ELBs
20th	All ELBs

2011	
Date	Met with
January	
5th	All ELBs
9th	BELB
10th	All ELBs
11th	WELB
11th	All ELBs
13th	BELB
13th	All ELBs
13th	All ELBs
14th	All ELBs
17th	All ELBs
17th	SELB
18th	All ELBs
21st	All ELBs
24th	SELB
25th	All ELBs
28th	All ELBs

2011	
Date	Met with
February	
2nd	All ELBs
3rd	All ELBs
7th	BELB
9th	All ELBs
16th	All ELBs
17th	SELB
21st	WELB
21st	SEELB
23rd	All ELBs
23rd	WELB
March	
1st	WELB
2nd	All ELBs
4th	SELB
8th	All ELBs
10th	All ELBs
10th	SEELB
11th	WELB
14th	SELB
15th	All ELBs
16th	All ELBs
16th	SELB & WELB
23rd	BELB
28th	NEELB
29th	All ELBs
29th	All ELBs
30th	All ELBs
April	
4th	BELB
7th	All ELBs
8th	All ELBs
11th	All ELBs

2011	
Date	Met with
13th	All ELBs
14th	All ELBs
14th	All ELBs
15th	All ELBs
19th	BELB
19th	All ELBs
20th	All ELBs
20th	All ELBs
May	
3rd	WELB
10th	BELB
11th	WELB
12th	All ELBs
17th	All ELBs
19th	NEELB
20th	SELB
24th	BELB
25th	SELB
26th	All ELBs
June	
1st	All ELBs
6th	All ELBs
8th	WELB
9th	All ELBs
10th	All ELBs
13th	SELB
14th	All ELBs
14th	SEELB
14th	All ELBs
15th	All ELBs
16th	All ELBs
21st	All ELBs
22nd	All ELBs

2011	
Date	Met with
27th	All ELBs
28th	All ELBs
July	
7th	All ELBs
21st	All ELBs
28th	All ELBs
28th	All ELBs
August	
4th	All ELBs
10th	All ELBs
16th	All ELBs
18th	All ELBs
26th	WELB
31st	All ELBs
September	
1st	All ELBs
2nd	SELB
5th	All ELBs
6th	All ELBs
7th	All ELBs
7th	All ELBs
8th	All ELBs
8th	BELB
9th	All ELBs
9th	All ELBs
12th	All ELBs
13th	All ELBs
13th	BELB
15th	All ELBs
16th	All ELBs
16th	All ELBs
21st	All ELBs
26th	All ELBs

2011	
Date	Met with
28th	All ELBs
29th	All ELBs
30th	All ELBs
October	
4th	All ELBs
4th	All ELBs
5th	All ELBs
5th	All ELBs
5th	WELB
6th	All ELBs
10th	All ELBs
13th	All ELBs
18th	All ELBs
19th	WELB
20th	All ELBs
26th	All ELBs
27h	WELB
28th	WELB
November	
2nd	SELB
3rd	All ELBs
4th	All ELBs
8th	All ELBs
8th	All ELBs
11th	All ELBs
15th	BELB
16th	SELB
16th	WELB
16th	All ELBs
17th	All ELBs
20th	SEELB
22nd	All ELBs
29th	All ELBs

2011	
Date	Met with
29TH	All ELBs
29th	BELB
December	
1st	All ELBs
1st	All ELBs
6th	All ELBs
7th	All ELBs
8th	All ELBs
13th	All ELBs
13th	All ELBs
14th	All ELBs
15th	BELB
15th	All ELBs

2012	
Date	Met with
January	
5th	All ELBs
9th	BELB
10th	All ELBs
17th	SELB
17th	All ELBs
18th	All ELBs
19th	All ELBs
19th	All ELBs
24th	All ELBs
27th	All ELBs
31st	BELB
February	
1st	All ELBs
2nd	All ELBs
8th	All ELBs
9th	All ELBs

2012	
Date	Met with
14th	All ELBs
21st	All ELBs
22nd	All ELBs
23rd	All ELBs
28th	All ELBs
March	
5th	All ELBs
12th	SELB / WELB
13th	All ELBs
16th	NEELB
16th	SELB
21st	SELB / WELB
22nd	All ELBs
26th	SELB / WELB
27th	All ELBs
28th	WELB
28th	All ELBs
29th	All ELBs
April	
2nd	NEELB
2nd	SELB
18th	All ELBs
19th	All ELBs
25th	All ELBs
26th	All ELBs

Proposals for Legislation

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) what legislation his Department has introduced since May 2011; (ii) what proposals for legislation, subject to Executive approval, he has introduced or intends to introduce between May 2011 and March 2015; (iii) the anticipated timescale for the introduction of each Bill; and (iv) the intention of each Bill.

(AQW 10905/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I refer the Member to my answer to AQW 10653/11-15, tabled by Conal McDevitt and published in the Official Report on 27 April 2012. The Department has not introduced any legislation since May 2011.

Schools: Vending Machines for Healthy Foods

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education how many schools have vending machines for healthy foods, such as fruit.

(AQW 10924/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education does not hold the details requested for individual schools.

The provision of vending machines in school dining areas is the responsibility of the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) in the controlled and maintained sectors and individual voluntary grammar and grantmaintained integrated schools. Vending machines in all schools, located outside the environs of the school canteen, are entirely a matter for the schools themselves.

I have been informed by the ELBs that only the BELB and SEELB Catering Services provide food or drink to pupils through vending machines.

The SEELB has six machines, none of which contain fruit.

The BELB has indicated that none of the companies who tendered, in 2009, were able to offer a range of healthy snacks in a vending machine. The Board therefore purchased a machine which it fills with sandwiches, salads, fruit salads, milk and other snack items which meet the Department's nutritional standards. The trial period of this machine has shown, however, that it is hard to maintain financially given the perishable nature of the foods and the cost of labour to fill the machine.

Correlation Between Fizzy/Caffeinated Drinks in Pupils' Diets and Negative Behaviour

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education what analysis his Department has carried out on the correlation between fizzy/caffeinated drinks in pupils' diets and negative behaviour.

(AQW 10926/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department has not carried out any analysis on the correlation between fizzy/caffeinated drinks in pupils' diets and negative behaviour.

However, the School Food Trust, which provides advice and support to schools in England, has produced a number of reports on school food and behaviour which are available on their website at:

<http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/research/research-projects>

The Trust's website also includes some case studies for interventions in local schools; a number of these highlight the role of fizzy/sugary drinks in relation to behaviour and two of these can be accessed at:

<http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/schools/case-studies/langford-primary-school>

<http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/school-cooks-caterers/case-studies/the-south-leeds-academy>

In addition, the Food Standards Agency published research, in 2007, which showed a modest association between children eating foods or consuming drinks containing certain artificial food additives and subsequent behavioural problems.

The Department has also provided guidance for schools on water provision as part of the School Food: the Essential Guide resource. This has the dual aims of reducing the consumption of sugary/soft drinks and promoting hydration.

Research shows that the amount of fluid consumed by most young people is below the recommended levels for good health and wellbeing. Where schools have improved water provision and have developed an effective policy for promoting water, pupils consume more water on a regular basis, which can have a range of health and other benefits, including the reduction of tiredness, irritability and distraction from thirst.

By incorporating water in the classroom, pupils are likely to be more attentive, and able to enjoy learning. In schools where water is encouraged throughout the day, there have been reported improvements in concentration levels, academic performance and pupil behaviour.

Choice of Food Available in School Canteens

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education what action his Department is taking, and intends to take, to improve the diets of school children through the choice of food available in school canteens.

(AQW 10928/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: My Department recognises that a healthy, balanced diet is vital for children's growth and development, and for their long term health and well being. It has been working for some time to improve the quality of food in schools here and compulsory nutritional standards for school lunches are now in place in all our schools. Standards for other food and drinks provided in schools (breakfast clubs, tuck shops, vending machines etc) have also been drawn up and schools are expected to adhere to them. They specify that items such as crisps, sweets and fizzy drinks should not be provided in school.

The revised curriculum also includes a Personal Development and Mutual Understanding strand for primary pupils and a Learning for Life and Work strand for postprimary pupils which allow pupils to explore issues such as the benefits of healthy eating and physical activity, the consequences of poor dietary choices, ways of achieving a healthy diet, the influences on their physical and emotional health and ways of developing their self-esteem.

In addition, it is a requirement of the revised curriculum for all children to undertake Home Economics at Key Stage 3. This provides opportunities for young people to develop their understanding of a healthy diet and the hygienic and healthy use of foods in the preparation of meals.

My Department is currently working with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) to finalise a joint Food in Schools policy which advocates a whole school approach to all food and drinks provided in schools and that all children should develop the knowledge and skills necessary to make healthy food choices now and in later life.

Enrolment Numbers

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 10586/11-15, how many post-primary schools in the North Eastern Education and Library Board area have exceeded their approved enrolment number in the last three years.

(AQW 10987/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The post-primary schools in the North Eastern Education and Library Board area which have exceeded their approved enrolment number in the last three years are listed in the table attached. These can be schools which have exceeded their numbers with or without the prior approval of the Department.

Schools must seek prior approval of the Department to exceed their approved numbers by way of a temporary variation. Each year the Department completes an exercise to identify schools that have exceeded their approved numbers without prior approval. This exercise requires verified data from the school census and as such has not yet been completed for the 2011/12 school year. This means that there may be other schools that have exceeded their approved enrolment number in the 2011/12 school year of which the Department is not yet aware. If any such schools are discovered, the Department will investigate and can sanction the schools in question in a number of ways including the zero-rating of pupil(s) for LMS purposes or by reducing the admissions number of school in a subsequent school year.

NEELB POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS - EXCEEDED ENROLMENT NUMBERS**2009/10 – 2011/12 SCHOOL YEARS**

2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Ballyclare High School	Ballyclare High School	Ballyclare High School
Ballyclare Secondary School	Ballyclare Secondary School	Ballyclare Secondary School
Ballymena Academy	Ballymena Academy	Ballymena Academy
Cross & Passion College	Cross & Passion College	Cross & Passion College
Dalriada	Dalriada	Dalriada
Dunclug College	Dunclug College	Dunclug College
Slemish College	Slemish College	Slemish College
St Pius X College	St Pius X College	St Pius X College
St Colm's High School, Draperstown	St Colm's High School, Draperstown	
Magherafelt High School	Magherafelt High School	
St Paul's College, Kilrea		St Paul's College, Kilrea
	Coleraine High School	Coleraine High School
	St Mary's Grammar School, Magherafelt	St Mary's Grammar School, Magherafelt
	Dominican College	Dominican College
Rainey Endowed	Cambridge House Grammar School	Carrickfergus Grammar School
		Ulidia Integrated College
		Larne Grammar School

Enrolment Numbers

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 10586/11-15, how many post-primary schools in the North Eastern Education and Library Board area exceeded their approved enrolment number without following the legally required steps in each of the last three years.

(AQW 10997/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department is aware that the following numbers of post primary schools in the North Eastern Education and Library Board area exceeded their approved enrolment number without following the legally required steps in each of the last three years.

2009/10	3
2010/11	1
2011/12	The exercise which is used to identify which schools in the current school year have exceeded their approved numbers without the prior approval of the Department is still ongoing. The Department, therefore, cannot confirm the final number of schools at which this may have happened for the 2011/12 school year.

School Attendance

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 705/11-15, to detail (i) the rate, per thousand, of primary school pupils who have less than 85 percent attendance, broken down by (a) council area; and (b) electoral ward; and (ii) what action is being taken to reduce the levels of absenteeism. [R]

(AQW 11004/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have arranged for the information requested to be placed in the Assembly Library.

School Attendance

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education pursuant to AQW 706/11-15, to detail (i) the rate, per thousand, of 15 to 17 year old pupils who have less than 85 percent attendance, broken down by (a) council area; and (b) electoral ward; and (ii) what action is being taken to reduce the levels of absenteeism. [R]

(AQW 11005/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have arranged for the information requested to be placed in the Assembly Library.

School Attendance

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 707/11-15, to detail (i) the rate, per thousand, of post-primary school pupils who have less than 85 percent attendance, broken down by (a) council area; and (b) electoral ward; and (ii) what action is being taken to reduce the levels of absenteeism. [R]

(AQW 11006/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have arranged for the information requested to be placed in the Assembly Library.

Preparing Pupils for Transfer Tests

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education what action his Department and the Education and Library Boards are taking in response to complaints that schools are concentrating on preparing pupils for transfer tests rather than on teaching the curriculum.

(AQW 11048/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Where the Department receives a complaint alleging that a primary school may be explicitly providing children with preparation for unregulated entrance tests to the detriment of other children not entered for these tests it will write to the school seeking reassurance that the school's Board of Governors (BoG) has had regard for the Department's post-primary transfer policy and that the school is fulfilling its statutory obligations to deliver the primary curriculum, and is not departing from these obligations.

Parental concerns may be raised through the established processes for handling curriculum complaints. If, following informal and formal approaches to a school, a complainant remains dissatisfied with the position adopted by a school's BoG a written complaint may be made to the relevant Education and Library Board (ELB). The ELB will then set up an independent Curriculum Complaints Tribunal to hear the complaint, and when the complaint has been fully investigated and considered the Tribunal will notify all parties of its determination. If it upholds the complaint, the Tribunal can give a notice for steps to be taken to remedy the matter.

Also, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) has advised that should a District Inspector, during the course of an incidental visit to a primary school, encounter a lesson where children are preparing for unregulated entrance tests, they will raise the matter with the teacher and the Principal, and advise the Department. A similar approach will also be taken in the case of formal inspections where these present evidence for it.

Preparing Pupils for Transfer Tests

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education whether the Education and Library Boards regularly confirm with primary schools that they are teaching the curriculum and not concentrating on preparing pupils for transfer tests.

(AQW 11049/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The statutory duty to deliver the revised curriculum rests with Boards of Governors of individual schools and does not ascribe a monitoring role to Education and Library Boards.

Monitoring that the curriculum is being delivered does however form part of the role of the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). Should a District Inspector, during the course of an incidental visit to a primary school, encounter a lesson where children are preparing for unregulated entrance tests, they will raise the matter with the teacher and the Principal, and advise the Department. A similar approach will also be taken in the case of formal inspections where these present evidence for it.

A primary school's function is to teach children the curriculum, it is not the function of any primary school to set aside the curriculum to teach to the individual entrance criteria of any post primary school.

Primary schools are responsible and will be held to account for the education of all pupils. All teaching and activities should be designed and delivered to and for the needs of all pupils.

Directors of the Education and Skills Authority

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Education how many senior officers in the Education and Library Boards who received redundancy or severance payments in the last five years were subsequently employed or appointed as directors of the Education and Skills Authority, broken down by (i) posts held; (ii) previous salaries; (iii) redundancy/severance payments; and (iv) annual salaries and allowances in each case.

(AQW 11057/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have been advised by the Education and Skills Authority Implementation Team that no senior officers in the Education & Library Boards who received redundancy or severance payments in the last five years were subsequently employed or appointed as Directors (Designate) of the Education and Skills Authority.

Proposals to Change GCSEs and A Levels in GB

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Education what discussions he has had with the UK Minister for Education, Michael Gove, regarding proposals to change GCSEs and A Levels in GB, particularly in relation to moving away from a modular system, and the impact that this may have on Northern Ireland students.

(AQW 11116/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I will always seek to ensure that qualifications offered here are portable, comparable and meet the needs of all our young people. It remains vital that all qualifications must be recognised and valued by employers and higher education institutions. Young people here must never be disadvantaged in relation to the qualifications they seek to acquire. I would also add that the standard of GCSEs remains the same, irrespective of whether the assessment route is linear or unitised.

I consulted widely on changes to GCSEs, proposed by Michael Gove in England, and decided that schools are best placed to make crucial decisions in the best interests of their pupils. That is why I decided to continue to support both a unitised and linear route.

In relation to GCE A Levels, the implications are potentially very significant and consequently, I will want to talk to a wide range of relevant stakeholders before deciding on any proposed changes, and their appropriateness here. I will also be meeting with Ministerial counterparts here and in England, Scotland and Wales to discuss all aspects of any proposed changes.

Education is a matter for the locally accountable governments, both here and in Wales, and I will continue to make evidence-based decisions on the nature and pace of change on critical areas of education such as GCSEs and A Levels.

Department for Employment and Learning

Cost of Producing Consultation Documents and Official Reports

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what was the cost to his Department of producing (i) consultation documents; and (ii) official reports in the 2010/11 financial year.

(AQW 10441/11-15)

Dr Farry (The Minister for Employment and Learning): The cost to the Department for Employment and Learning of producing consultation documents and official reports in the 2010/11 financial year is as follows:

Consultation documents	£17,600
Official reports	£24,816.31

Meeting with the Staff of Stranmillis University College, Belfast

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 9193/11-15, who initiated the cancellation of the meeting.

(AQW 10452/11-15)

Dr Farry: The meeting was cancelled by mutual consent.

Open University Courses: Lecturers

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, for each of the last three years, to detail (i) the number lecturers that have been brought to Northern Ireland to teach Open University courses, including the number of occasions; (ii) how many hours each lecturer was contracted to work; and (iii) to breakdown the cost in time and expenses in each incidence.

(AQW 10608/11-15)

Dr Farry: The Department for Employment and Learning does not have such information. Apart from 20 Initial Teacher Education (ITE) places, my Department does not provide any funding to the Open University. The Open University receives its funding from the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills. You may, therefore, wish to contact the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, or the Open University directly, for this information.

Proposals for Legislation

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) what proposals for legislation, subject to Executive approval, he has introduced or intends to introduce between April 2012 and March 2015; (ii) the anticipated timescale for the introduction of each Bill; and (iii) the intention of each Bill.

(AQW 10652/11-15)

Dr Farry: Currently, my Department has not provided formal notification of the introduction of any primary legislation between April 2012 and March 2015. However, work is ongoing in a number of areas which may occasion input to the legislative programme. I issued a discussion paper on 1 May that will inform a planned review of employment law. It is likely that policy proposals arising from that review will generate the need for primary legislation during the current mandate. In addition, future primary legislation may be required for policy proposals related to Further Education.

University of Ulster Staff

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what action he is taking to ensure the job security of University of Ulster staff whose employment contracts are due to be outsourced.

(AQW 10684/11-15)

Dr Farry: Any decision on this issue is a matter for the University as an autonomous organisation. However, I understand that the staff affected by the proposed outsourcing of services in the University of Ulster next year will transfer to the new service provider as provided for under the Transfer of Undertakings [Protection of Employment] Regulations 2006.

St Mary's University College, Belfast

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning if any guarantees or specific directions were made by his predecessor that secured the status of St Mary's University College, Belfast and ensured that it would not be subject to any merger.

(AQW 10704/11-15)

Dr Farry: I am not aware of any such guarantees or direction in relation to St. Mary's University College.

Bytes Project

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether his Department intends to continue funding the Bytes Project for the duration of 2012.

(AQW 10718/11-15)

Dr Farry: My Department, in conjunction with the Department of Education (DE), has been a contributory funder to the BYTES Project since April 2004. DE has transferred responsibility for organisations such as BYTES to the Youth Council for Northern Ireland (YCNi) in 2010. YCNi provided funding of £220,000 to the project in financial year 2011/2012, which was matched by DEL.

The YCNi has advised that it has provided interim funding for the period April to June 2012 with a decision on further funding for the remainder of the financial year 2012/2013 being made following a review by YCNi of the project's operations.

My Department is also providing interim funding for the period April 2012 to June 2012 of up to a maximum of £55,000. Decisions on funding for the remainder of the financial year will be made following the outcome of the review being undertaken by YCNi.

In addition, the Northern Ireland European Social Fund has committed to provide funding to the BYTES Project of £33,999 with match funding from my Department of £21,249 in the financial year 2012-13.

Agri-Food Sector

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, given that the Programme for Government contains a commitment to develop a strategic plan for the agri-food sector, how he plans to ensure that the necessary skills are in place to facilitate any growth of the Agri-food industry; and how his Department will ensure that it is fully involved in any such plan.

(AQW 10724/11-15)

Dr Farry: I have already designated the Agri-food industry as a priority sector due to its contribution to rebalancing the economy.

Last summer, officials from my Department alongside their counterparts in the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) and Invest NI established an employer-led group to identify skills gaps and shortages across the industry and develop action-focused interventions to address them.

The Group, chaired by Tony O'Neill of Moy Park, consists of employers, representatives from the education sector and officials from DEL, DARD and Invest NI. The Group has produced an Action Plan,

which will be published shortly, detailing the actions to be taken to address the skills issues and sector attractiveness and to improve communications in the sector over the next three years.

The Action Plan will contribute to the work of the new Agri-Food Strategy Board.

S.R. 2005 No 151 The Fair Employment Tribunal (Rules of Procedure) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister for Employment and Learning (i) to outline his Department's policy intention in relation to paragraph 19 of Schedule 1 to S.R. 2005 No 151 The Fair Employment Tribunal (Rules of Procedure) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005; (ii) whether he intends to review this Rule, as such rules in other tribunals are intended to deter vexatious litigants; and (iii) what mechanisms his Department has in place to mitigate a chairman of a Fair Employment Tribunal, sitting alone, applying the Rule in an injudicious manner.

(AQW 10843/11-15)

Dr Farry: Rule 19 of Schedule 1 of S.R. 2005 No. 151 provides a mechanism to deter parties, whether claimants or respondents, from pursuing before the Fair Employment Tribunal a claim which, in the opinion of a chairman, has little prospect of success. Parties wishing to pursue weak cases may be ordered to pay a deposit of up to £500 (incorporating an assessment of the party's ability to pay) as a precondition for the continuance of the tribunal proceedings. The intention is to discourage proceedings that have the potential to waste public money and to increase costs for parties.

My Department's recent comprehensive review of systems for resolving workplace disputes concluded that it was reasonable to consider the appropriateness of the current maximum level of the deposit, £500. I issued an Employment Law discussion paper to all key stakeholders on 1 May 2012 inviting views on this matter, as well as on a range of other proposals relating to the efficiency and effectiveness of the tribunal system.

If asked to do so, the Fair Employment Tribunal may review a decision of a chairman sitting alone, or a decision of a panel that includes a chairman and two lay panel members, on a variety of grounds, where the interests of justice require such a review. In addition, a party who is dissatisfied on a point of law with a decision of the Fair Employment Tribunal has the right to bring an appeal to the Court of Appeal.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Cost of Producing Consultation Documents and Official Reports

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what was the cost to her Department of producing (i) consultation documents; and (ii) official reports in the 2010/11 financial year.

(AQW 10442/11-15)

Mrs Foster (The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment): In the 2010/11 financial year my Department spent £47,694 producing consultation documents and £2,641 producing official reports.

Tourism Projects in North and East Antrim

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how much grant funding has been allocated to tourism projects in the (i) North Antrim; and (ii) East Antrim areas in each of the last three years.

(AQW 10444/11-15)

Mrs Foster: In October 2011, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) distributed a copy of the publication Financially Assisted Projects 2008 – 11 to all MLA's. This publication holds details on the allocation of grant funding within the Causeway Coast and Glens Signature Project area (under which both North Antrim and East Antrim fall) during this period.

The tables below provide a summary of all investment in tourism projects by NITB and Invest NI in the North Antrim and East Antrim areas on a constituency basis in each of the last 3 financial years.

NORTH ANTRIM CONSTITUENCY BREAKDOWN

Financial year	Number of Offers	Amount Offered
2009-10	7	£278,300.50
2010-11	16	£9,854,855.79
2011-12	4	£432,374.85
Total	27	£10,565,531.14

EAST ANTRIM CONSTITUENCY BREAKDOWN

Financial year	Number of offers	Amount Offered
2009-10	-	-
2010-11	3	£155,652.09
2011-12	2	£45,000.00
Total	5	£200,652.09

Information relating to grant funding available under the NITB Tourism Events Funding Programme for 2011/12 and 2012/13 is published on www.nitb.com/events. This information is not currently available by District Council Area; however plans are in circulation to develop this disaggregation.

Trade and Innovation Programmes

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 10187/11-15, how the annual comparisons are influenced by the schedules for evaluations and monitoring visits and the extent to which the figures quoted in the answer are reliable.

(AQW 10445/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The figures are a reliable indication of the total business value which companies in a particular year have attributed directly to an intervention of support from InterTradelreland.

The schedule of evaluations and monitoring visits can influence the figures because it is dependent on factors such as:

- different start times for programmes;
- different start dates for companies joining programmes;
- different time spans for the accrual of benefits; and
- scheduling visits to make best use of staff resources when visiting a particular location.

Thus not all the benefits of an intervention in a particular region may be collected in one year.

Job Losses at George Best Belfast City Airport

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the action being taken to help minimise job losses at George Best, Belfast City Airport and the assistance available to employees who are losing their jobs.

(AQW 10462/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The loss of British Midland International (BMI) jobs at George Best Belfast City Airport is very regrettable. However, this is a commercial matter for the International Airlines Group, the new owner of BMI, and is part of a UK wide cost cutting exercise.

I am aware that officials from the Department for Employment and Learning have already made contact with the Human Resources Department of BMI to offer support under the Redundancy Advice Service. This service offers a package of free support tailored to meet the needs of the employer and their employees facing redundancy.

InvestNI: Advertising

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 9786/11-15, to detail (i) the breakdown of the costs under International 2012 Promotion; and (ii) to whom payments were made under this category.

(AQW 10468/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The International Promotion campaign was strongly aligned with a range of regional strategies in the Programme for Government, in particular to attract and support high quality investment, and to increase employment prospects by attracting high quality inward investment.

Advertising was placed in a wide range of highly targeted and relevant publications and across a range of media formats including print, online, radio and television advertising. Amongst the publications were The Economist, The Financial Times, The Wall Street Journal and Bloomberg.com. In the United States there was an element of television advertising on BBC America, supported with advertising on National Public Radio (NPR).

The total spend for the campaign from January - March 2012 was £786,670, inclusive of VAT, media rebates and advertising levies where appropriate.

Below is a breakdown of all costs paid out under this promotional campaign for advertising.

JANUARY 2012

www.bbcamerica.com/executive news	£3,643.35
Crain's New York Business Daily News Alert	£4,736.25
Biz Journals Silicon Valley Daily Email Update	£1,947.87
Biz Journals Boston Daily Email Update Newsletter	£5,002.84
www.forbes.com - Business Channel	£10,019.23
www.businessinsider.com	£894.19
www.bloomberg.com	£9,677.42
Marketplace Radio	£193,006.45
Wall Street Journal Eastern Edition	£16,254.97
Wall Street Journal Western Edition	£8,725.94
New York Times	£25,788.39
Boston Business Journal	£6,466.84
Silicon Valley Business Journal	£7,560.00
Bloomberg Business Week - NY Metro Edition	£15,491.61
BBC America	£116,129.03
Google Management Fee	£223.55

MIT Review Daily Newsletter	£2,322.58
MIT Technology Review.Com	£3,096.77
MIT Technology Review	£17,032.26
Siteselection.Com	£2,709.68
Ad-serving Cost	£576.00
Recharge	£3,300.00
Wind Power Monthly	£2,301.46
Energy Digital	£1,200.00
Energy Digital	£1,709.00
Wind Energy Network	£1,080.00
Energy Global	£900.00
New Energy World	£720.00
World Wind Technology	£3,960.00
Ad-serving Cost	£306.00
World Wind Technology	£3,960.00
Total	£470,741.00

FEBRUARY 2012

www.crainsnewyork.com	£9,563.57
www.crainschicago.com	£9,563.57
www.bizjournals.com/sanjose	£9,099.27
Ad-serving Cost	£164.00
Total	£28,390.00

MARCH 2012

The Times	£17,400.00
The Guardian	£10,500.00
Daily Telegraph	£22,500.00
www.huffingtonpost.co.uk	£6,000.00
The Financial Times	£31,560.00
FDI Magazine	£7,062.60
The Economist UK	£17,228.40
New On The Economist (Wwide)	£3,600.00
Financial Times - In Today's FT	£2,625.34
Financial Times - UK Business	£1,860.00
www.fdimagazine.com	£7,560.00

www.economist.com	£50,400.00
www.ft.com	£21,120.00
Ad-serving Cost	£1,031.40
Outsource Express Newsletter	£2,400.00
www.outsourcemagazine.co.uk	£900.00
Chief Executive Officer	£6,000.00
www.the-chiefexecutive.com	£0.00
Hyperlinked Logo On Monthly CEO Enewsletters	£0.00
Ad-serving Cost	£324.00
www.silicon.com	£19,800.00
Ad-serving Cost	£108.00
Financial Times - Information Technology Enewsletter	£600.00
Financial Times - Financial Services Enewsletter	£600.00
Banking Technology	£1,800.00
www.thebanker.co.uk	£7,200.00
www.fstech.co.uk	£840.00
Ad-serving Cost	£50.40
www.wired.com	£9,108.39
www.wired.com	£9,108.39
www.technologyreview.com	£9,290.32
Fierce Cio Weekly Newsletter	£1,366.45
Fierce Wireless Weekly Newsletter	£3,643.35
Fierce Finance Weekly Newsletter	£1,366.45
www.gigaom.com	£2,322.58
www.cnnmoney.com	£10,262.00
Total	£287,538.00

All media was paid by Invest NI through its appointed advertising agency who were tasked with negotiating the best rates and liaising with the media outlets. Invest NI did not make any payments directly to any media outlets.

Titanic Building and Festival

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 9844/11-15, (i) to list the organisations that have received funding to date; (ii) how much each organisation received; and (iii) for what purpose the funding was used.

(AQW 10470/11-15)

Mrs Foster: DETI has provided funding to the following organisations for the Titanic Belfast Festival:

(i) Organisation	(ii) Funds Received	(iii) Purpose
Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB)	£402,508	The campaign supporting the ni2012 programme has been developed to create a platform which will reposition Northern Ireland as a positive place to live, work, invest, study and visit. All funding allocated by NITB was for the promotion of the Titanic Festival to both the Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland marketplaces to maximise investment efficiencies and impact effectiveness across a range of media channels.
Belfast City Council (via NITB)	£1.4 million	The ni2012 programme features eight international scale Tier 1 events to showcase Northern Ireland on a global platform. As a Tier 1 event Titanic Belfast Festival was allocated funds towards marketing and event costs.

Department of Energy and Climate Change report 'Shale Gas Fracturing: Review & Recommendations for Induced Seismic Mitigation'

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether her Department will adopt all of the recommendations in the Department of Energy and Climate Change report 'Shale Gas Fracturing: Review & Recommendations for Induced Seismic Mitigation'.

(AQW 10517/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Several of the report's recommendations for mitigating seismic risk relate solely to operations in the Bowland Basin. The geological characteristics of the Bowland Basin differ from those of Co Fermanagh, where hydraulic fracturing may in due course be proposed, but the experience drawn from the Bowland Basin operations will inform the process and specification of regulation of this activity in Northern Ireland.

The report also makes three recommendations for the assessment of potential seismic hazards associated with proposed hydraulic fracturing elsewhere in the UK. These concern baseline monitoring of seismic activity; assessment of faults; and modelling of possible ground motion. These recommendations will be followed and my officials, in conjunction with the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) and other regulators in Northern Ireland, are currently considering the technical details of these and other 'best practice' specifications.

Tourist Attractions in Co Fermanagh

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to list the ten tourist attractions in Co Fermanagh that received the most visitors in the last available year; and how many visitors each attraction received.

(AQW 10577/11-15)

Mrs Foster: This information is sourced from the Northern Ireland Visitor Attraction Survey conducted by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). It is important to note that the Visitor Attraction Survey is a voluntary survey and all data presented in the report is based solely on the visitor numbers provided by attractions choosing to take part in the survey.

Information is only available for four Visitor Attractions in Co Fermanagh in 2011 as listed below. Other Visitor Attractions in Co Fermanagh either did not respond or requested confidentiality.

VISITOR NUMBERS TO CO FERMANAGH VISITOR ATTRACTIONS, 2011

Rank	Attraction Name	Visitor Numbers
1	Belleek Pottery Visitor Centre, Belleek	165,297
2	Devenish Island Monastic Site	45,000
3	Florence Court House	40,314
4	The Higher Bridges Gallery	3,075

Source: Visitor Attraction Survey 2011 (as published http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-stats-index/tourism-statistics/visitor_attraction_survey-2.htm)

InvestNI: Assistance to Cúnamh ICT

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what assistance InvestNI has given to Cúnamh ICT, and for what purpose and when.

(AQW 10638/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Since August 2008 Invest NI has offered the company financial assistance of £43,040. This assistance was targeted at addressing a range of capability development and technical issues, including Management Structure, Software Development, Marketing, and Financial Consultancy, targeted at facilitating the growth of this bespoke software development business in external and export markets.

Fuel Shortage

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AWQ 7840/11-15, for her assessment of the impact that industrial action by fuel tanker drivers might have on fuel supplies in Northern Ireland; and given the proposal in Britain to train the Army to assist with the supply of fuel in the event of industrial action, what plans she has for a similar initiative.

(AQW 10674/11-15)

Mrs Foster: No strike action has been called by the Unite union and the operations of only one company based in NI, employing a few fuel tanker drivers, may be impacted should a strike occur. More than 15 other companies deliver fuel to NI forecourts.

Cabinet Office is coordinating the strategic UK response and the training and allocation of military drivers continues to be overseen in GB by DECC. They will be used only if requested by fuel distributors. Cabinet Office agrees there is likely to be very little impact locally should strike action proceed, therefore there are no plans to use military tanker drivers in Northern Ireland.

Tourists to Co Fermanagh

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the number of tourists in each of the last ten years; (ii) the total number of tourists to Co Fermanagh in each of the last ten years; and (iii) the percentage of the total number of tourists that visited Fermanagh in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 10676/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The number of visitors to Northern Ireland in each of the last ten years is presented in column (a) in the table below (Table 1). These figures relate to all out of state visitors (Great Britain, other overseas and Republic of Ireland) to Northern Ireland, visiting for any reason (holiday, business, visiting friends and relatives) and staying for at least one night. Added to this are Northern Ireland residents on holiday at home.

Figures are not available for the total number of visitors to County Fermanagh. The total number of visitors to the Fermanagh District Council area in each of the last ten years is presented in column (b)

of the table below (Table 1). These figures are based on the Northern Ireland Tourist Board's (NITB) Local Authority tourism estimates which are derived from a range of surveys relating to out of state visitors (for any purpose) and domestic holiday trip-takers staying at least one night in Northern Ireland.

The total number of visitors to the Fermanagh District Council area in each of the last ten years as a percentage of the total number of visitors to Northern Ireland is presented in column (c) of the table below (Table 1).

In 2010 the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) took over responsibility from NITB for the production of tourism performance statistics. NISRA is working on the production of regional tourism performance figures but 2010 and 2011 regional figures are not yet available.

TABLE 1: NI AND FERMANAGH DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA TOURISM PERFORMANCE FIGURES*

	(a)	(b)	(c)
Year:	All Out-of-State Visitors and Domestic Holiday Visitors to NI (000)	All Out-of-State Visitors and Domestic Holiday Visitors to the Fermanagh District Council Area (000)	All Out-of-State Visitors and Domestic Holiday Visitors to the Fermanagh District Council Area as a % of Visitors to NI
2009	3,129	177	6%
2008	3,024	174	6%
2007	3,142	185	6%
2006	3,147	201	6%
2005	3,325	194	6%
2004	2,889	154	5%
2003	2,924	147	5%
2002	2,657	180	7%
2001	2,226	173	8%
2000	2,212	210	9.5%

Source: NITB

*Figures relate to overnight visitors only

Hydro Scheme on the River Camowen, Omagh

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what funding her Department and its arm's-length bodies have provided to the hydro scheme on the River Camowen, Omagh.

(AQW 10680/11-15)

Mrs Foster: No funding has been provided by my Department or its arm's-length bodies to the Omagh District Council hydro scheme on the River Camowen. However, such a scheme would be eligible under the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation to receive Renewables Obligation Certificates for the electricity generated, subject to meeting the necessary accreditation requirements as set out in the Renewables Obligation Order (Northern Ireland) 2009, as amended.

Credit Unions

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, given the Financial Services Authority's decision not to extend the Modernisation Fund and the Growth Fund to include Credit Unions

in Northern Ireland, what financial support her Department is providing to Credit Unions to help meet the additional costs relating to both the new regulatory regime and the development of new services.
(AQW 10709/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Great Britain (GB) modernisation and expansion fund seeks to increase financial inclusion and reduce poverty through the promotion of mutual financial organisations in GB. It is funded and administered by the Department for Work and Pensions and is unrelated to the regulation of United Kingdom credit unions by the Financial Services Authority (FSA).

Northern Ireland credit unions' ongoing compliance costs associated with their regulation by the FSA relate for the most part, to the maintenance of satisfactory corporate governance and accounting standards. For the majority of credit unions, these costs and requirements will be no greater than they were when DETI was the regulatory authority. I am, however, aware that some credit unions may require some assistance to document their policies and procedures, and I am considering the ways as to how any such assistance can be best delivered.

The development of any new services will be a commercial decision for the board of each credit union.

Legislation to Allow Group Membership of Credit Unions

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether she has any plans to introduce legislation to allow group membership of Credit Unions, such as community and voluntary sector organisations and social enterprises; and to outline any other proposed legislative changes that will impact on Credit Unions.

(AQW 10710/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department is currently in the process of scoping out new legislative provisions in relation to Northern Ireland Credit Unions with the aim of aligning Northern Ireland Credit Union legislation with that of GB. It is intended that these proposed legislative provisions will provide new opportunities and greater clarity for the Northern Ireland Credit Union sector and group membership will be considered as part of this process.

The new Bill is scheduled for passage through the Assembly in the 2013/2014 legislative session. The draft policy proposals will be subject to the full statutory consultation process.

Investment for Ballyhornan, Co Down

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what investment has been earmarked for Ballyhornan, Co Down to unlock the tourist potential of the area.

(AQW 10719/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Ballyhornan is located within the recently designated Strangford and Lecale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) has been working with Down District Council (DDC) and the Councils of Newry & Mourne, Banbridge, Ards, North Down and Belfast, to progress the implementation of the Mourne Coastal Route (MCR). This will be a white on brown tourist driving trail with signs stretching from Newry to Belfast mainly along the A2 coastal road. Ballyhornan is located on the MCR and a Ballyhornan Scenic Loop has been identified for inclusion, signage for this is to be extended off the main MCR.

It is envisaged the MCR will complement the Causeway Coastal Route to provide a total driving trail around Northern Ireland, tying together several Signature Projects and stunning coastal scenery. A funding package for the MCR is currently being finalised and it is anticipated the signage will be in place by March 2013.

Down District Council has also been developing a series of walking routes around Lecale encompassing the rich Christian Heritage product and natural beauty of the area.

NITB Officials have also met with Ballyhornan Community representatives and DDC officers to discuss tourism opportunities within the area.

InvestNI: Business Start-up Programme

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the impact on the local business sector of InvestNI not providing a business start-up programme during the months it sought to defend the action taken by Enterprise Northern Ireland over the procurement process; and how InvestNI will seek to compensate the local business sector.

(AQW 10747/11-15)

Mrs Foster: It is important to note that, had it so chosen, ENI could have permitted Invest NI to continue to deliver a full business start programme, whilst still taking its legal challenge.

Due to the legal action instigated by ENI, Invest NI was prevented from providing a Business Start programme however Invest NI did provide an interim service and continued to advertise under the wider "Go For It" brand to stimulate public interest in enterprise, entrepreneurship and business start. During the period from 1 October 2011 to 31 March 2012 Invest NI, as part of its core activity, responded directly to 3,627 business start enquiries, held 135 business clinics attended by 940 individuals and met with another 499 individuals, which in turn resulted in 502 completed business plans.

In addition in the same period Invest NI, through the jobs fund, offered 94 business start grants of £1,000 to individuals in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas and 61 business start grants of £1,500 to individuals Not in Employment, Education or Training. To date these businesses have created 24 jobs and 15 jobs respectively.

Invest NI will continue to provide an interim service until there is a further tender process and award of a contract for business start provision.

Directors in the Voluntary and Non-Voluntary Sectors

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what criteria is used to assess the disqualification of directors in the (i) voluntary; and (ii) non-voluntary sectors.

(AQW 10809/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Department looks at the conduct of directors of insolvent companies. The same criteria are used in assessing the conduct of directors, regardless of the sector within which a director has operated.

The Directors Disqualification Unit within the Insolvency Service considers any unfit conduct reported to it by the Insolvency Practitioner or the Official Receiver and any other relevant information available.

Examples of unfit conduct are set out in Schedule 1 of The Company Directors Disqualification (N.I.) Order 2002.

If the unit considers that a director is unfit to be concerned in the management of a company, disqualification proceedings will be issued if it appears to be expedient in the public interest.

The concept of the public interest is incapable of precise formulation. It is a question of judgement in any given case and will involve consideration of a number of factors including the purpose of the legislation, (the main purpose being protection of the public), the nature of the allegations at issue, the directors responsibility in respect of such allegations together with any aggravating or mitigating factors and the prospects of success of proceedings should they issue. The Department reviews the position throughout the course of proceedings.

Investigation into the Northern Ireland Events Company

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the investigation into the Northern Ireland Events Company.

(AQW 10859/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The Department appointed inspectors to the Northern Ireland Events Company Limited on 17 November 2008 under Article 452(2) and Article 425(2)(a) of the Companies (NI) Order 1986. The target date for completion of the report is 30 April 2013.

Fracking

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what is the minimum depth at which fracking is proposed at any of the sites in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 10862/11-15)

Mrs Foster: There are currently no firm proposals to carry out high pressure hydraulic fracturing (fracking) at any sites in Northern Ireland.

Fracking

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what account she will take of the research which was published in the journal Marine and Petroleum Geology, when she is determining the award of licences for fracking, especially the findings that (i) contamination of water supplies could occur if they are less than 600 metres above shale gas fracking; and (ii) the fracking process causes fractures running upwards and downwards through the ground of up to 588 metres from their source.

(AQW 10864/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The paper by Davies et al. recently published in the journal Marine and Petroleum Geology is a valuable contribution to the current understanding of the vertical extent of fractures that can be produced during high pressure hydraulic fracturing operations. The value of 588 metres is the maximum documented from any of the shale gas basins in the USA and the vast majority of fracture heights are significantly lower in this and the other four basins studied. In Northern Ireland the risk of hydraulic fracturing operations causing contamination of water supplies by vertical propagation of fractures into underground aquifers, or by other means, would be assessed on a case-by-case basis taking into account factors such as the vertical separation between well perforation level and aquifer; distribution, thickness and permeability of rock layers; distribution and character of faulting; prevailing in-situ stress regime and natural seismicity. The results of such assessments would help determine whether permission for hydraulic fracturing was given, and under what conditions such operations could be carried out.

Visitors to Co Fermanagh

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the actual, or estimated, spend of visitors; (ii) the actual, or estimated, spend of visitors to Co Fermanagh; and (iii) the percentage of the actual, or estimated spend, of visitors that was spent in Co Fermanagh, in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 10885/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The estimated spend of visitors in Northern Ireland in each of the last ten years is presented in column (a) in the table below (Table 1). These figures relate to spend by all out of state visitors (Great Britain, other overseas and Republic of Ireland) to Northern Ireland, visiting for any reason (holiday, business, visiting friends and relatives) and staying for at least one night. Added to this is spend by Northern Ireland residents on holiday at home.

Figures are not available for the estimated spend of visitors in County Fermanagh. The estimated spend of visitors in the Fermanagh District Council area in each of the last ten years is presented in column (b) of the table below (Table 1). These figures are based on the Northern Ireland Tourist Board's

(NITB) Local Authority tourism estimates which are derived from a range of surveys relating to out of state visitors (for any purpose) and domestic holiday trip-takers staying at least one night in Northern Ireland.

The estimated spend of visitors in the Fermanagh District Council area in each of the last ten years as a percentage of the total spend in Northern Ireland is presented in column (c) of the table below (Table 1).

In 2010 the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) took over responsibility for the production of tourism performance statistics, including visitor spend, from NITB. NISRA is working on the production of regional tourism performance figures but 2010 and 2011 regional spend figures are not yet available.

TABLE 1:

NORTHERN IRELAND AND FERMANAGH DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA TOURISM PERFORMANCE FIGURES*

	(a)	(b)	(c)
Year:	Spend by all Out-of-State Visitors and Domestic Holiday Visitors in Northern Ireland (£m)	Spend by all Out-of-State Visitors and Domestic Holiday Visitors in the Fermanagh District Council Area (£m)	Spend by all Out-of-State Visitors and Domestic Holiday Visitors in the Fermanagh District Council Area as a % of Spend in Northern Ireland
2009	507	32	6%
2008	522	33	6%
2007	510	37	7%
2006	487	37	8%
2005	472	33	7%
2004	394	25	6%
2003	382	20	5%
2002	383	23	6%
2001	337	21	6%
2000	315	21	7%

Source: NITB

*Figures relate to spend by overnight visitors only

Tourism Sector in Co Fermanagh

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the estimated economic value of the tourism sector; (ii) the estimated economic value of the tourism sector in Co Fermanagh; and (iii) the percentage of the total economic value that is derived from the tourism sector in Co Fermanagh, in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 10887/11-15)

Mrs Foster: (i) The findings of the Tourism Economic Impact Studies conducted in relation to Northern Ireland are as follows:

Year	Tourism contribution to Northern Ireland economy (wider impacts)
2011	Figures not available
2010	Figures not available
2009*	4.9% of total Northern Ireland GDP
2008	Figures not available
2007	Figures not available
2006	Figures not available
2005**	3.7% of total Northern Ireland GVA
2004**	3.4% of total Northern Ireland GVA
2003**	3.6% of total Northern Ireland GVA
2002	Figures not available

Source:

* The Economic Contribution of the Visitor Economy: United Kingdom and the Nations, June 2010, Deloitte

** Tourism in the Northern Ireland Economy, June 2008, CogentSI.

(ii) Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) does not produce data relating to tourism contribution to Northern Ireland GDP at County or Local Authority level.

(iii) This information is not available.

GDP = Gross Domestic Product, GVA = Gross Value Added.

League Table for Visitor Numbers

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the position of Fermanagh District Council in the league table for visitor numbers to each local council area in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 10891/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) does not keep or circulate a league table of council areas in relation to visitor numbers.

The position of Fermanagh District Council in relation to visitor numbers to each local council area is presented for each of the last ten years in the table below (Table 1).

The position is based on all out of state visitors (Great Britain, other overseas and Republic of Ireland) to Northern Ireland, visiting for any reason (holiday, business, visiting friends and relatives) as well as Northern Ireland residents on holiday at home. These visitor figures relate to overnight visitors only, i.e. exclude day visitors.

NITB's Local Authority Tourism Estimates 2007-2009, which include the number of trips to each local authority area, are available on www.nitb.com

TABLE 1: POSITION OF FERMANAGH DISTRICT COUNCIL'S VISITOR NUMBERS COMPARED WITH VISITORS TO NORTHERN IRELAND'S OTHER LOCAL COUNCIL AREAS

Year	Position of Fermanagh District Council area
2009	4
2008	4
2007	4
2006	4
2005	4
2004	4
2003	5
2002	3
2001	3
2000	2

In 2010 the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) took over responsibility for the production of tourism performance statistics from NITB. NISRA is working on the production of regional tourism performance figures but 2010 and 2011 regional figures are not yet available.

InvestNI Offices

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 9552/11-15, to detail the geographical location that is covered by each employee or office.

(AQW 10892/11-15)

Mrs Foster: Invest NI's overseas operation is divided into four territories: (i) Europe and Russia (including Great Britain and Republic of Ireland); (ii) North and South America; (iii) India, Middle East and Africa; and (iv) Asia Pacific. All territories are responsible for both the promotion of foreign direct investment (FDI) and the development of export opportunities for Northern Ireland companies. Other objectives include the development of university linkages and the diaspora community.

In addition, the Northern Ireland-based Trade team is responsible for building capability and presenting opportunities for companies that wish to export goods and services outside Northern Ireland.

In some areas the geographical focus of each location is discrete and easily defined. For example, the Dublin office covers the Republic of Ireland market. In other areas, the geographical focus of each location is less defined. For example, the North American offices will proactively research FDI opportunities across the US and Canada. The decision about which office follows up each possible lead is based partly on proximity to the prospect company and partly on the sectoral focus of staff in the respective offices.

The following table summarises the geographical reach of each location where Invest NI has an ongoing overseas presence:

Territory	Location	Geographical Reach
Europe & Russia	London Dublin Brussels Dusseldorf	FDI and export opportunities in GB, Republic of Ireland, Continental Europe and Russia. In addition, in-market advisors are available, in conjunction with the Northern Ireland based Trade team, to provide advice to companies wishing to investigate export opportunities to the Nordics, Russia, Holland ¹ , Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania and Poland.
North & South America	Boston New York San Jose Chicago Toronto	FDI and export opportunities in the US and Canada. In-market advisor, based in Sao Paulo, provides export-related advice on opportunities in South America in conjunction with the Northern Ireland based Trade team.
India, Middle East and Africa	Mumbai Bangalore Jeddah Dubai Erbil (Kurdistan) ¹	FDI and export opportunities in India, Sri Lanka, the Gulf States and Kurdistan. In-market advisor, based in Johannesburg, supporting companies looking to export to South Africa.
Asia Pacific	Tokyo Shanghai Taipei	FDI and export opportunities in China, Japan and Taiwan.

Note:

- 1 Representation in Erbil and the in-market advisor in Holland have been established since the previous response (AQW 9552/11-15) was provided.

Northern Ireland Air Access Initiative

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment why the Port of Larne is not included in the Northern Ireland Air Access Initiative.

(AQW 10918/11-15)

Mrs Foster: My Department recently invested £1 million to boost Tourism Ireland's co-operative marketing activity with air and sea carriers to drive demand from Great Britain, North America and Mainland Europe in the early part of 2012. This was matched by a further £1 million investment from participating sea and air carriers.

As part of this initiative, Tourism Ireland invested in co-operative marketing activity with P&O Irish Sea to promote routes to the Port of Larne from Troon and Cairnryan. Activity included a ni2012 TV advertising campaign in Scotland, radiotorials on radio stations in Scotland and Northern England, in addition to online advertising and social media activity.

Video Games that have 18 Certificates

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action her Department intends to take on the issue of under-age children being able to pre-order video games that have 18 certificates.

(AQW 10975/11-15)

Mrs Foster: DETI'S Trading Standards Service (TSS) will continue to monitor age-related sales of dvds and video games and will take swift and robust enforcement action where non-compliance with the criminal provisions of the Video Recordings Act 2012 has been detected and there is sufficient admissible evidence to support such action.

'Our Time, Our Place' Programme

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 10472/11-15, to provide the figures that indicate £359,793 worth of media value for Co Fermanagh as part of the NI2012 campaign.

(AQW 11012/11-15)

Mrs Foster: The value of the media campaign to promote Co Fermanagh within the ni2012 campaign is broken down in the table below:

Spring 2012	Rate card cost £
Northern Ireland Press	7,584.52
Republic of Ireland Press	4,180.61
Northern Ireland TV	82,812.50
Republic of Ireland TV	181,514.25
Northern Ireland Outdoor	18,555.50
Republic of Ireland Outdoor	65,145.94
Spring 2012 Total	359,793.32

Projects to Tackle Fuel Poverty

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how much has been invested by wind farm developers on projects to tackle fuel poverty in each of the last three years, broken down by project.

(AQW 11172/11-15)

Mrs Foster: I am aware that a range of community benefits have been agreed between wind farm developers and communities, and also bi-laterally with individuals, throughout Northern Ireland. These arrangements have been developed and agreed on a voluntary basis and the information you request is not held by DETI.

Department of the Environment

Edge-of-Town Shopping Complexes

Ms Lo asked the Minister of the Environment whether he intends to (i) review the situation under which the gradual growth of edge-of-town shopping complexes, through numerous planning applications, damages town centres over time with retailers drawn away from the towns and towards the new developments; and (ii) implement a more stringent and balanced approach which involves on-going monitoring of the current net retail floor space for edge and out-of-town retail developments.

(AQW 10436/11-15)

Mr Attwood (The Minister of the Environment): I believe there is a strong need to review retail and town centre policy. To inform this I intend to commence a wider debate on the future of city and town centres in the North and all matters relating to their vitality and viability. It is my ambition to bring about a new PPS to cover these issues.

I recognise that we must have up to date robust evidence to inform this process. I can advise that officials are currently considering how this can be best facilitated, including identification of information needs and the role of monitoring.

In addition, ongoing monitoring will be handled through the new 'plan-led' local development plan system. This will require councils to prepare a monitoring report annually as to the extent to which objectives, including town centre and retailing objectives, set out in their local development plans are being achieved. Regular reviews of plans will take account of this monitoring to allow plan policies to be more responsive to ever changing retail needs and demands.

However, retail decisions will still need to be made. I plan to be decisive in this regard.

Prosecutions for Dog Attacks on Livestock

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to the number of dog owners that have been prosecuted for dog attacks on livestock in the last five years, and the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development's comment that this a matter for local councils to enforce (i) what procedures are in place to address this issue; and (ii) what action is being taken to increase the number of prosecutions. **(AQW 10530/11-15)**

Mr Attwood: As dog owners are prosecuted under Department of Agriculture and Rural Development legislation, it a matter for the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to monitor and report on the effectiveness of this legislation.

Common Agriculture Policy Proposals

Mr McMullan asked the Minister of the Environment whether he will instruct the Planning Service to consider how changes in farming practices as a result of the Common Agriculture Policy proposals might affect current planning laws and conditions. **(AQW 10542/11-15)**

Mr Attwood: The Common Agricultural Policy reform proposals, which were published on 12 October 2011, are at an early stage in the EU process and are not expected to be finalised until January 2014. Whilst, it is too soon to consider the impact of the proposals at this point, I have instructed Officials to monitor developments as the formal negotiations proceed and as the shape of the reform proposals evolve over the course of the next 12 months. It is important that we stay close to the decision making process and are alert to the potential impact of the CAP reform proposals on rural planning policy in N. Ireland.

Pension Deficit

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what action is being taken by local councils to reduce the levels of pension deficit. **(AQW 10560/11-15)**

Mr Attwood: Councils participate in the Local Government Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland). There are currently a total of 202 local employers participating in the Scheme. Contributions from all active members and employers are paid into the common pension fund maintained by the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee. The Local Government Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) currently has a recovery plan in place to grow the pension fund.

A review of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) is underway and it is anticipated that revised pension arrangements may be introduced by April 2014. This review captures the relevant issues around the reform and costs of pensions. The 44,000 members of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) did not pay the pension increases required of other public sector pension members as of April 2012, as the arguments that the ongoing review would address all pension issues and that the Local Government Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) is different from other schemes as it is a fully funded scheme prevailed.

Pension Deficit in Local Council

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the levels of pension deficit in each local council. (AQW 10561/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Councils participate in the Local Government Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) (LGPS (NI)). A total of 202 employers participate in the LGPS (NI). Contributions from all active members and employers are paid into the common pension fund maintained by the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC). The total assets and liabilities of this fund are valued every three years. The valuation is conducted by an actuary appointed by NILGOSC (the scheme actuary). It is a snapshot in time of the future liabilities of the LGPS (NI). At the last valuation at 31 March 2010, the fund had assets totalling £3.4bn and liabilities totalling £4.3bn, giving a funding level of 82%. NILGOSC is operating a 20 year plan to return to full funding.

Employers who are members of the Scheme may request the scheme actuary to provide them with the information about pension liabilities required for their individual annual accounts.

The valuations for the purposes of annual accounts and the triennial valuation of the pension fund are carried out using different assumptions. The main difference between the two is that, for the purposes of annual accounts, it is assumed that all assets are invested in bonds. Bonds currently have very low returns. In contrast, the fund valuation reflects the fact that the majority of the investments are in equities.

A table showing the deficits attributed to each council for their annual accounts purposes is given below. However the total liabilities of all 202 employers participating in the Scheme are pooled on a common basis. It is the total pooled liability of the fund that will determine the nature and scale of action taken to address that liability at the next triennial valuation in 2013.

Council	Pension deficit
Antrim	£5.100m
Ards	£5.932m
Armagh	£6.898m
Ballymena	£6.408m
Ballymoney	£2.423m
Banbridge	£4.125m
Belfast	£71.939m
Carrickfergus	£4.155m
Castlereagh	£5.383m
Coleraine	£8.544m
Cookstown	£3.428m
Craigavon	£8.225m
Derry City	£14.981m
Down	£5.953m
Dungannon & South Tyrone	£4.435m
Fermanagh	£5.293m
Larne	£3.576m
Limavady	£3.419m

Council	Pension deficit
Lisburn	£9.400m
Magherafelt	£2.229m
Moyle	£2.213m
Newry & Mourne	£8.453m
Newtownabbey	£8.284m
North Down	£7.568m
Omagh	£4.862m
Strabane	£3.106m

The deficit arises from the downturn in the markets, follows a period when the fund had a positive balance and noting that while the deficit needs to be fully addressed, it is not as serious as other schemes.

Environment Agency as a Statutory Consultee on Planning Applications

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment what action his Department is taking to speed up the response time of the Environment Agency as a statutory consultee on planning applications, given that the average response time has increased over recent years.

(AQW 10576/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) is an expert advisor to DOE Planning and attaches a high priority to providing timely and authoritative advice and comment on planning applications and other consultations from the Planning Divisions within the Department.

NIEA agreed to revised and challenging targets for response times to individual consultations in 2010/11. Overall 78% of the routine consultations received in that year were responded to within the deadline which exceeded the target of 75%. Significant difficulties were encountered within both the Built and Natural Heritage Directorates during 2011/12 and the overall response rate is expected to be in the region of 65%.

Response times to planning consultations are monitored monthly by the NIEA Board. Its aim is to deliver the highest possible standard of service in terms of both quality and response time. Recent actions taken by NIEA to improve this service include:

- The re appointment of a NIEA/Planning Liaison Officer for pre- application discussions and other strategic projects.
- The issue of standing advice to Planning NI to allow planners to assess certain issues and make decisions without reference to NIEA (for example in relation to single wind turbines).
- A new contract went 'live' in November 2011 to provide professional archaeological support in respect of planning consultations for the Built Heritage Directorate.
- The recruitment of hydrogeologists who will be based in the Land and Resource Management Unit to support the development of responses to applications involving contaminated land.
- Temporary workers have also been deployed to assist in clearing a backlog.

The Agency is confident these actions will allow it to achieve the target for routine responses in the future. Some inadequate Environmental Impact Assessments and Environmental Statements have led to considerable delays to the planning process. NIEA has been working with developers and agents to attempt to improve the quality of these, in particular through increased pre-application discussions.

I have made it clear to the NIEA that in its responses it should provide all information necessary and offer full advice when consulted. It should not be the case - for any consultee - that it fails to provide all advice and information needed as fully as possible as soon as possible.

Moreover, I shall be introducing a 'statutory' timeframe for consultation as part of the Planning Bill which I hope to table in the autumn.

Extension of Bridgewater Park, Banbridge

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the contact between (i) Banbridge District Council; and (ii) individual Banbridge councillors and his Department regarding proposals for the extension of Bridgewater Park, Banbridge, including the erection of the proposed Tesco Extra Superstore.

(AQW 10585/11-15)

Mr Attwood: During the processing of this planning application there was contact between the Department and Banbridge District Council on 7 occasions:

- The Department wrote to the Council on 22 April 2010 to confirm that Article 31 of the Planning (NI) Order 1991 had been applied to the planning application;
- On 11 June 2010, the Council wrote to the Department stating inter alia that the development would bring 'much needed investment ...into the area' and that a decision on the application should be reached as soon as possible;
- On 5 April 2011, the Department consulted the Council - in accordance with legislative requirements - on the details of the draft Article 40 legal agreement associated with the application;
- The Council, on 19 April 2011, replied to the Department on the matter of the draft Article 40 agreement, stating inter alia that the agreement should include an enhanced level of financial contribution towards environmental improvement works in Banbridge;
- The Department, on 26 October 2011, wrote to the Council asking them to substantiate the level of financial contribution they requested;
- The Council responded on this matter on 17 November 2011 and again on 7 December 2011;
- The Department wrote to the Council on 12 March 2012 to confirm that planning permission had been granted.

During the processing of the application, three Banbridge councillors – Dessie Ward, Seamus Doyle and Jim McElroy – wrote to the Department to express their support for the proposed development.

Councillor Doyle was part of a delegation that attended a meeting in my office on 29 November 2011 regarding the application.

Hydro Scheme on the River Camowen, Omagh

Mr Allister asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) when planning permission was issued for the hydro scheme on the River Camowen, Omagh; (ii) whether a licence is in place governing the extraction of water and what restrictions apply; and (iii) whether there have been any incidents of an unacceptable drop in the level of the river and, if so, the outcome of any investigations carried out by the Environment Agency.

(AQW 10642/11-15)

Mr Attwood:

- (i) Planning permission for construction of a hydroelectric generation station to provide power for Omagh College and Leisure Complex at Land adjacent to the Camowen River in Stranamullagh recreation area, Omagh was issued on the 14 November 2007. A further application for construction of hydroelectric power generation station, comprising of a screw turbine, pumphouse,

intake and outfall together with trenching and cabling from the site to the existing Omagh Leisure Centre at Land adjacent to and including the Camowen River to rear of Omagh Leisure Centre, that replaced the first application was issued on the 11 January 2011.

- (ii) The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) issued Omagh District Council with an Abstraction and Impoundment Licence, under the Water Abstraction and Impoundment (Licensing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006, for a hydropower scheme on the Camowen River, on 23 June 2011. The licence specifies the maximum amount of water the scheme can divert, also the amount of water that must remain in the river when the scheme is operating, and the abstraction licence also defines flow periods when the scheme must not operate.
- (iii) NIEA was made aware of a potential breach of the licence conditions on the 16 March 2012. In response to this incident, the Council were told to stop their testing of the hydroelectric scheme, which was immediately acted upon by the Council. A formal written Stop Notice was then issued to Omagh District Council by NIEA on the 21 March 2012 which means that they are not permitted to abstract from the Camowen River until a full investigation has been concluded by NIEA. Omagh District Council have 28 days to formally respond. The Council requested an extension of 14 days to the initial time period for their considered response, and a response is now due by 2 May 2012. As the investigation is still ongoing it would not be appropriate to comment further at this time.

This is the first incident which NIEA have investigated where river flow has been diverted via another man made channel that resulted in a stretch of river being dewatered. NIEA as such have no other case histories for reference.

Metropole Hotel in Portrush

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of the Environment, following the demolition of the Metropole Hotel in Portrush, to detail (i) how the bricks and other building materials were disposed of; and (ii) who benefited from the disposal.

(AQW 10666/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The demolition of the former Metropole Hotel in Portrush is one element of the £405,000 package which I announced on 12 March 2012 to tackle dereliction in Portrush and Portstewart. I am sure you will agree that the building had become an unsightly eyesore in Portrush.

The contractor McCormack Demolition started demolishing the building at the beginning of April 2012. This company has a valid waste carrier's licence and transported the demolition waste to McKinstry Skip Hire, 81-83 Belfast Road, Crumlin, County Antrim. McKinstry Skip Hire has a waste management licence to operate a materials recovery facility (MRF) and is permitted to accept demolition waste.

Between 2 April and 16 April 2012, 446.32 tonnes of mixed demolition waste was transported to the McKinstry site at Crumlin and waste transfer notes were generated and completed for all movements.

The demolition waste from the former Metropole site has been separated into rubble, timber etc and added to processed waste material already on site. The rubble is still on the site and will be recycled. The timber has been included in a batch which has left the site for reuse.

The removal of the old hotel will benefit tourism, local residents in the area and the natural and built environment. In addition, the demolition waste is being recycled and will help increase recycling levels which is good news for everyone in Northern Ireland.

Bridgewater Park, Banbridge

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the proposed development at Bridgewater Park, Banbridge, including when a decision will be made.

(AQW 10671/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Planning permission for this development was granted by the Department on 12 March 2012.

A legal challenge to the Department's decision has been mounted by Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association (NIIRTA). The matter is due to be heard by the High Court on 24 September 2012.

Endorsing a Driving Licence with Penalty Points

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the average length of time it has taken the Driver and Vehicle Agency to endorse a driving licence with penalty points in each of the last eight years. (AQW 10691/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The Driver & Vehicle Agency currently has a target of 100% of licences to be endorsed within 20 working days of the receipt of court notifications. In the last financial year 2,141 licences were endorsed within an average of eight working days, surpassing the target.

The information for periods before 2011-12 is not held in a format which would allow average processing times to be calculated accurately.

It should be noted that DVA is responsible only for the endorsement of licences upon notification from a court. Where an endorsement is required as a consequence of a fixed penalty, the licence is endorsed by the Fixed Penalty Office at Laganside Courts, Belfast.

Buildings at the Hydebank Wood Site

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) what protection exists for the buildings at the Hydebank Wood site; and (ii) whether there are any barriers to restoring the walled garden and the water feature on the site. (AQW 10693/11-15)

Mr Attwood: None of the buildings at the Hydebank Wood site are currently protected through listing. However a tower within the walled garden has been surveyed as part of the systematic Second Survey of the historic buildings of Castlereagh Council area, but not yet evaluated.

In addition, none of the buildings or features at Hydebank are specifically protected under the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. However Hydebank does lie within the designed landscape associated with (the now demolished) Purdysburn House. This is one of the gardens within the Heritage Gardens Inventory. It is also a Supplementary Site within the Register of Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes. It is therefore protected under Policy BH 6 of Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS 6).

In relation to your question about restoring the walled garden and water feature on the site, NIEA:Historic Monuments Unit staff would seek to work with those proposing any such scheme to retain and re-use any original features, rather than providing a barrier to the proposal. They would also be happy to meet on site to provide advice and input at an early stage.

Planning Permission

Mr Lynch asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 9631/11-15, to detail the (i) number; and (ii) planning application numbers of planning permissions that were granted under special circumstances by the Omagh Planning Office for the Fermanagh area. (AQW 10824/11-15)

Mr Attwood: No applications have been granted under special circumstances in Fermanagh District Council area in the last three years.

Littering Offences

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) how many people were convicted of littering offences last year; (ii) how much revenue was raised from the resulting fines; and (iii) what further measures he is taking to combat this problem. (AQW 10838/11-15)

Mr Attwood: District Councils are much more likely to issue on-the-spot fines to litter offenders instead of seeking convictions through the courts. Therefore, figures for convictions are quite low compared to those for on-the-spot fines.

The latest information held by the Department shows that 133 people were convicted by the courts for littering offences in the period 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011 and a total of £7,707 in fines and £5,935 in court costs were imposed. By contrast, in the same period, district councils issued 3,930 £50 fines for littering offences resulting in a total of £150,268 received. Information for the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012 will not be compiled and verified until August 2012.

Litter is still a major problem costing Councils and therefore ratepayers a lot of money to clean up. Despite the ongoing good work to tackle the problem by District Councils and, for example, Tidy Northern Ireland. Voluntary groups and many concerned residents in local communities also seek to tackle the problems through the current series of Big Spring Clean events.

Since becoming Minister of the Environment I have taken part, along with many other concerned and dedicated volunteers, in a number of Big Spring Clean events and in doing so I have become much more aware of the extent of the environmental impact caused by litter and how it can spoil the visible appearance of local beauty spots. I am determined to do all that I can to help to deal with this pernicious problem. Litter in all of its forms e.g. bottles, cans, cigarette butts, chewing gum, if left unchecked, is an eyesore which leads to dirty and unhealthy local environments. Also local beauty spots, including our beaches and countryside, can also be spoiled by litter which can be detrimental to our tourist industry.

There are a number of measures which I am bringing forward to help to deal with the litter problem. These include the development of a Marine Litter Strategy, the introduction of a carrier bag levy and the bringing into operation on 1 April 2012 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2011. Also Departmental funding to Tidy Northern Ireland has been increased to help with the organisation's work to make Northern Ireland a cleaner and more pleasant place in which to live. Tidy Northern Ireland's work, for example, in relation to the Big Spring Clean, the Eco-schools Programme, the Clean Coast Programme and its ongoing monitoring of local environmental cleanliness makes an important contribution to raising awareness and helping to reduce the overall litter problem.

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 contains significant measures specifically designed to strengthen the law to help district councils to deal more effectively with the scourge of litter. I was pleased to bring the Act into operation on 1 April 2012 and I look forward to positive results in the future in terms of better local environmental cleanliness once the Act begins to have an impact.

This Act introduced bigger on-the-spot fines for litter offenders and a range of other measures. For example, it gives district councils new powers to issue litter clearing notices to require businesses and individuals to clear litter from their land. By utilising the new powers introduced by the Act, district councils will be able to deal more effectively with litter on land in private ownership and will also be able to enter the land, clear it of litter and impose a reasonable charge on the person who failed to comply with the notice.

Bigger on-the-spot fines for litter offenders together with the stronger anti-litter laws generally should send out a strong message to people who litter to think about the quality of their environments. Bigger fines should act as an effective deterrent against littering in the future. From 1st April 2012 Councils will be able to impose fines of up to £80 on people who litter – this is a significant increase on the previous £50.

There is now a real determination to tackle the litter problem more effectively than before so that we can all look forward to a cleaner Northern Ireland in the future.

Reintroduction of Animal Species

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department has considered the reintroduction of animal species that are no longer found in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 10842/11-15)

Mr Attwood: The reintroduction of animal species is resource intensive as it requires the establishment of sustainable habitat and conditions for the reintroduced species and an analysis of the impact on existing biodiversity.

NIEA has given some informal consideration to the reintroduction of some species but these have not been progressed due to resource constraints and the impact this would have on higher priority work. The Agency has however undertaken a number of translocation projects for pearl mussels and pollen.

The Department undertakes a range of activities to conserve biodiversity which can include the reintroduction of animal species that are no longer found in Northern Ireland. A recent example is the reintroduction of the red kite which was undertaken by the RSPB and approved and grant-aided by the NIEA. The Department is not aware of any further proposals for reintroducing animal species but would give any such proposals serious consideration. In all cases the Department requires that any reintroductions are in accordance with International Union of the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) guidelines.

Buffer Zone Distance Between Residents and the Industrial Estate at Carnbane, Newry

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of the Environment what is the development buffer zone distance between residents and the industrial estate at Carnbane, Newry.

(AQW 10927/11-15)

Mr Attwood: Outline planning permission was granted for industrial development on land at Shepherds Way, Carnbane Industrial Estate between Newry River and Cloghanramer Road, Newry on 23 April 2010. Full permission for associated infrastructural works was granted on 26 April 2010.

The permissions include conditions requiring the implementation of the agreed landscape proposals which include a landscaped belt of approximately 40 metres along the eastern site boundary with the Cloghanramer Road.

Department of Finance and Personnel

PEACE III Funding Allocated to Ex-Prisoners Groups

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the total level of PEACE III funding allocated to ex-prisoners groups.

(AQW 10359/11-15)

Mr Wilson (The Minister of Finance and Personnel): To date, £10,319,882 in PEACE III funding has been allocated to projects that include ex-prisoner groups as partners.

Review of Arrangements for the Appointment of Ministers Special Advisers

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether the Model Contract for Employment for Special Advisers referred to in paragraph 20 of the Review of Arrangements for the Appointment of Ministers Special Advisers exists, and whether he will place a copy in the Assembly Library.

(AQW 10368/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I have arranged for the Model Contract of Employment for Special Advisers, as amended to take account of increased employee contributions for the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) with effect from 1 April 2012, to be placed in the Assembly library.

Small Business Rates Relief Scheme

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the businesses that have benefited from the Small Business Rates Relief Scheme to date, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 10390/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Information on the number of businesses in each constituency that have benefited from the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme is not available as data is collated at District Council and Ward level only. The latest figures available, as at 15th April 2012, indicate that a total of 23,728 non-domestic premises have benefited (received a Small Business Rate Relief after other awards have been taken into account) from the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme. The attached table indicates the number of properties in each District Council Area that have benefited. A list of individual businesses cannot be provided as it may breach the confidentiality of individual ratepayers.

District Council Area	Number of Properties at 15th April 2012 that have Benefited from SBRR
Antrim	623
Ards	1,003
Armagh	835
Ballymena	924
Ballymoney	426
Banbridge	627
Belfast	3,726
Carrickfergus	401
Castlereagh	497
Coleraine	910
Cookstown	564
Craigavon	1,139
Derry	1,242
Down	1,047
Dungannon & South Tyrone	972
Fermanagh	1,162
Larne	441
Limavady	415
Lisburn	1,271
Magherafelt	722
Moyle	355
Newry & Mourne	1,421
Newtownabbey	867
North Down	832
Omagh	781
Strabane	525
NI Total	23,728

Small Business Rates Relief Scheme

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to list the small businesses that have benefited from the Small Business Rates Relief Scheme to date.

(AQW 10393/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Information on the number of businesses in each constituency that have benefited from the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme is not available as data is collated at District Council and Ward level only. The latest figures available, as at 15th April 2012, indicate that a total of 23,728 non-domestic premises have benefited (received a Small Business Rate Relief after other awards have been taken into account) from the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme. The attached table indicates the number of properties in each District Council Area that have benefited. A list of individual businesses cannot be provided as it may breach the confidentiality of individual ratepayers.

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Castlereagh	497
Coleraine	910
Cookstown	564
Craigavon	1,139
Derry	1,242
Down	1,047
Dungannon & South Tyrone	972
Fermanagh	1,162
Larne	441
Limavady	415
Lisburn	1,271
Magherafelt	722
Moyle	355
Newry & Mourne	1,421
Newtownabbey	867
North Down	832
Omagh	781
Strabane	525
NI Total	23,728

Special EU Programmes Body for Peace III Funding

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the organisations based in the East Derry area which applied to the Special EU Programmes Body for PEACE III funding in each of the last five years; (ii) the organisations that were successful and the level of funding awarded in each case. **(AQW 10417/11-15)**

Mr Wilson: Table 1 details those organisations based in the East Londonderry area that have applied directly to the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) for PEACE III funding in the last five years, and the outcome of the applications.

TABLE 1 – PEACE III APPLICATIONS TO SEUPB FROM ORGANISATIONS BASED IN THE EAST LONDONDERRY AREA IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS

Year	Lead Partner	Project Title	Outcome	Amount £
008/09	Coleraine Borough Council	North East Peace and Reconciliation Action Plan	Successful	3,608,589 ¹
2009/10	Training for Women Network (TWN)	Roe Valley Community Association	Successful	62,162 ²
	Coleraine Borough Council	Shared and Safe Space, Town Hall Square / Kerr Street, Portrush	Unsuccessful	
	Coleraine Borough Council	Market Yard Reconnections	Unsuccessful	
2010/11	Coleraine Borough Council	Market Yard Peace and Reconciliation Centre (MYPARC)	Approved - Letter of Offer not yet in place	4,210,910
	Coleraine Borough Council	North East PEACE III Partnership	Successful	4,176,818 ¹
	Coleraine Rural & Urban Network	Community Hub for Coleraine	Unsuccessful	
	P&M Contracts Ltd	Ard Cluain - Re-Generation & Cross Community Living Project	Unsuccessful	
2011/12	Roe Valley	Extending Positive Relations	Successful	82,047 ²

Notes:

- 1 These projects are Phase I and Phase II of the North East PEACE III Partnership Local Peace and Reconciliation Action Plans. The Action Plans were developed at local authority level and approved by SEUPB. While the North East Partnership is led by Coleraine Borough Council, it also comprises Limavady Borough Council, Ballymena Borough Council, Ballymoney Borough Council, Larne Borough Council and Moyle District Council, and the Action Plans benefit all named council areas.
- 2 These projects are sub-projects of wider projects led by Training for Women Network (TWN).

There are fourteen local authority led Peace and Reconciliation Action Plans developed at local authority level and delivered over two phases. These include the North East Action Plans detailed in Table 1. Project applicants can seek funding from within the Action Plan allocations.

Table 2 details those organisations based in the East Londonderry area that have applied for funding under the local Peace and Reconciliation Action Plans in the last five years, and the outcome of those applications.

TABLE 2 - PEACE III APPLICATIONS TO LOCAL PEACE AND RECONCILIATION ACTION PLANS FROM ORGANISATIONS BASED IN THE EAST LONDONDERRY AREA IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS

	Lead Partner	Project Title	Outcome	Amount £
2009/10	Coleraine Borough Council	Management Costs/ Technical Assistance	Successful	469,117 ¹
	Coleraine Borough Council	Programme 3b2 - Developing Young Peer Leaders	Successful	53,520 ¹
	Coleraine Borough Council	Programme 3b3 - Schools Based Programme	Successful	93,795 ¹
	Coleraine Borough Council	Programme 4b1 - Community Integration Programme (Coleraine, Limavady, Ballymoney & Moyle)	Successful	368,125 ¹
	Coleraine Borough Council	Programme 4b2 - Community Integration Programme (Ballymena & Larne)	Successful	184,310 ¹
	Coleraine Borough Council	Programme 4b Interactive Learning Tool	Successful	49,400 ¹
	Lestas Consulting	Area Development Programme	Unsuccessful	
	Lestas Consulting	Capacity Building Programme	Unsuccessful	
	Lestas Consulting	Design & Delivery of a Cross Border Capacity Building Programme for SW Cluster	Successful	71,596 ³
	Macaulay Associates Network Ltd	Faith Communities Programme	Successful	42,500 ⁴
	Magherafelt District Council - Lestas Consulting	Cross Border Survey & Organisation of Cross Border Networking Events for the SW Cluster Peace III Programme	Successful	7,800 ³
	Magherafelt District Council - Lestas Consulting	Design & delivery of a Leadership in a Shared Society Development Programme across the SW Cluster	Successful	50,740 ³

	Lead Partner	Project Title	Outcome	Amount £
	PADIVA (Pomeroy and District Innocent Victims Association)	Caravan/ Mobile Home Holiday Facility	Unsuccessful	
	Coleraine Borough Council	Indigenous & Ethnic Minority Sport & Leisure for Peace Building Programme	Successful	130,876 ¹
2010/11	Coleraine Borough Council	Programme 1c Leadership in a shared society (Elected & Community Representatives)	Successful	58,700 ¹
	Coleraine Borough Council	Building Brighter Futures	Approved – Letter of Offer not yet in place	334,550 ²
2011/12	Coleraine Borough Council	Faith Works	Successful	199,682 ²
	Limavady Borough Council	Limavady Area Project	Successful	123,000 ²
	Coleraine Borough Council	Coleraine Area Project	Successful	123,000 ²
	Coleraine Borough Council	Cultural Fusions	Successful	205,000 ²
	Coleraine Borough Council	Phase 2 Management Costs	Successful	500,318 ²
	Coleraine Borough Council	Sport for Peace Building Programme	Successful	175,893 ²
	Coleraine Borough Council	Partnership Development Project	Successful	30,000 ²
	Coleraine Borough Council	Detached Youth Project	Successful	178,980 ²
	Coleraine Borough Council	Peer Leadership Project	Successful	118,150 ²
	Coleraine Borough Council	Schools Based Project	Successful	198,250 ²
	Coleraine Borough Council	Community Integration Project	Successful	266,835 ²
	Coleraine Borough Council	Community Cohesion & Transformation Project	Successful	260,000 ²
	Coleraine Borough Council	Leadership in a Shared Society	Approved – Letter of Offer not yet in place	391,900 ²
	Coleraine Borough Council	Communications Project	Under appraisal	

	Lead Partner	Project Title	Outcome	Amount £
	Coleraine Borough Council	Phase 2 Evaluation Costs	Under appraisal	
	Lestas Consulting	Leadership and Learning Programme	Unsuccessful	

Notes:

- 1 These are sub-projects of the overall North East Phase I Action Plan.
- 2 These are sub-projects of the overall North East Phase II Action Plan.
- 3 These are sub-projects of the South West Cluster Action Plan.
- 4 These are sub-projects of the CAN (Carrickfergus, Antrim and Newtownabbey) Action Plan.

It is important to note that applications to the North East PEACE III Partnership's Action Plans seek funding from within the overall Action Plan allocations presented in Table 1. Therefore, the funding awarded to sub-projects of the North East Phase I and Phase II Action Plans presented in Table 2 is not additional to the Action Plan awards shown in Table 1, but has instead been awarded from within those allocations.

Finally, Table 3 details one organisation based in the East Londonderry area which applied for PEACE III funding under the Programme Theme Acknowledging and Dealing with the Past. This Theme is delivered on behalf of SEUPB by a Consortium comprising the Community Relations Council (CRC) and Pobal.

TABLE 3 - PEACE III APPLICATIONS TO THE CONSORTIUM FROM ORGANISATIONS BASED IN THE EAST LONDONDERRY AREA IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS

Year	Lead Partner	Project Title	Outcome
2010/11	University of Ulster	Prisons Memory Archive	Unsuccessful

Capital Values on Rateable Properties

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail any plans his Department has to review capital values on rateable properties.

(AQW 10432/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The Executive has currently no plans to carry out a domestic revaluation during the spending review period and lifetime of this Assembly.

Furthermore, carrying one out would be difficult at the moment, as the evidence required to establish the values is not sufficiently reliable, given the low volume of sales and the continued volatility in the housing market.

Research by LPS and other bodies indicate that broadly speaking residential values have now returned to values that existed in January 2005 – the base date for the existing domestic Valuation List.

The Executive and Councils still need the same amount of money out of the system to pay for public services. If a general revaluation of all domestic properties were to take place soon and we found that all values had decreased below the 2005 levels, the tax rate or rate in the pound would simply have to go up.

The important issue in deciding whether to undertake a revaluation, however, is the extent to which some areas of the market have declined over this period relative to others. Revaluation always creates winners and losers; houses that have reduced in value by more than the average since 1 January 2005 would end up paying less rates, those that have reduced by less than the average, or indeed increased, would have an increased rates liability.

LPS will continue to monitor changes and shifts in value and when these relativities get significantly out of line and the housing market is sufficiently stable and active to provide the underlying evidence, the matter can be reconsidered. At present the only calls for a general revaluation are from those who are under the mistaken impression that lower house prices across the board should result in lower rates for all households.

Departmental Guidance: (FD DFP 01/09)

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether the guidance issued by his Department on 24 February 2009 (FD DFP 01/09) is still operative; and, if so, how the approval of the A5/A8 roads expenditure complies with paragraphs 13 - 17.

(AQW 10464/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I can confirm that the guidance issued by my Department on 24th February 2009 (FD DFP 01/09) is still operative.

In my statement to the Assembly on 14th February 2012, I announced the outcome of the Executive's deliberations on how to address the financial consequences of the Irish Government's decision to materially revise its funding commitment to the A5 and A8 road schemes, and I gave details of the consequent funding allocations within the next four years as agreed by the Executive.

This announcement was about funding allocations and it did not imply approval for the Departments concerned to enter into contracts ahead of the appropriate business case approval as set out in the FD (DFP) 01/09.

As FD (DFP) 01/09 and other DFP guidance makes clear, all expenditure decisions require a proportionate economic appraisal, and where expenditure will exceed a Department's delegated limit this economic appraisal requires DFP approval prior to entering into a commitment or contract. This is equally true for each of the projects covered in my announcement on 14th February 2012, and my officials have been working closely with the Departments concerned to that end.

Businesses in Derry City Unable to pay their Rates Bill

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many businesses in Derry City have been unable to pay their rates bill in the 2011/12 financial year.

(AQW 10488/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Information on the number of businesses in Londonderry that have been unable to pay their rates bill in the 2011/12 financial year is not available as data is collated at district council and ward level only. Information is available on the number of non-domestic properties in the Derry City Council area for which a rates assessment raised in April 2011 has not been fully paid. From a total of 3,047 rates assessments raised in April 2011 in respect to the non-domestic properties in the Derry City Council area, as at 15th April 2012 some or all of the debt is still outstanding for 469 properties. No payments have been received in respect of 210 of these 469 properties.

Prompt Payment of Domestic Rates Discount

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel why the 4 percent discount for the prompt payment of domestic rates does not apply to vacant properties.

(AQW 10499/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The continued necessity for the long established early payment discount was considered back in 2007 as part of the Executive's Review of the domestic rating system and a decision was taken to make no change. The analysis my Department undertook at that time showed that a higher proportion of ordinary pensioners paid their rates bills early compared to the general population. I wish to maintain this position, notwithstanding that from a public finances point of view it makes less difference than it used to, because we have moved away from a cash basis of accounting.

The application of an early payment discount for empty homes was considered prior to the introduction of the measure in October 2011. As empty properties will, in the main, not be a person's main home but a second home or investment property it was not felt appropriate to extend the discount to empty homes, particularly as the pensioner issue is not a significant factor when it comes to considering policy on empty homes.

Fuel Prices and Fuel Duty

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the impact that the current fuel prices and fuel duty are having on the local economy.

(AQW 10501/11-15)

Mr Wilson: DFP has not carried out any formal assessment of the impact of the current high fuel prices we are experiencing, but clearly these are unwelcome and are impacting negatively on both households and businesses in Northern Ireland.

Fuel prices are determined by a number of factors, and while the rate of duty applied is obviously a key component, it is only one of these. Fuel duty is also a reserved matter for HM Treasury to determine and one over which the Executive has no control.

Civil Servants who Work in Belfast

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of civil servants who work in Belfast, broken down by the constituency in which they live.

(AQW 10502/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The information requested is set out in the table overleaf.

HOME PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY LOCATIONS OF NICS STAFF WHO WORK IN BELFAST* AT 1 APRIL 2011

	Number of Permanent NICS Staff
Belfast East	1,207
Belfast North	829
Belfast South	1,119
Belfast West	982
East Antrim	782
East Londonderry	172
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	104
Foyle	98
Lagan Valley	933
Mid Ulster	356
Newry & Armagh	226
North Antrim	435
North Down	1,213
South Antrim	1,054
South Down	776

	Number of Permanent NICS Staff
Strangford	1,698
Upper Bann	707
West Tyrone	94
Staff who have a work location in Belfast but have missing or incomplete postcode details, from which Parliamentary constituency details are derived.	2,195
Total	14,980

Notes:

Data sourced from HRConnect and additional DOJ data sources at 1st Apr 2011

Figures are for Permanent staff

Staff on Career Break and Uniformed staff in the NI Prison Service are excluded

Figures are staff Headcount

*Belfast has been defined as Belfast City Council area.

Civil Service Pay

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether any staff employed by the Civil Service, or its arm's-length bodies, were paid without tax being deducted over the last five years.

(AQW 10514/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I refer the member to my response to questions AQW 8394/11-15 and AQW 9668/11-15 answered on the 12th April 2012. I can confirm that the position remains, as set out in those answers.

Claims for Compensation by People with Pleural Plaques

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the number of claims for compensation made by people with pleural plaques since 2011.

(AQW 10526/11-15)

Mr Wilson: It is not possible to provide information on the overall number of claims for compensation for pleural plaques since 2011. This is partly because the system for monitoring the volume of court business does not provide for the recording of the precise nature of the claim. It is also partly because some cases may be settled in advance of legal proceedings being issued and there is no way of tracking those cases. I understand, however, that the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment is currently dealing with 221 claims relating to pleural plaques.

Cost of Producing Consultation Documents and Official Reports

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what was the cost to his Department of producing (i) consultation documents; and (ii) official reports in the 2010/11 financial year.

(AQW 10536/11-15)

Mr Wilson: There was no cost to my Department to produce consultation documents and my Department spent £31,662.47 on producing official reports in the 2010-11 financial year.

Economically Active and Unemployed

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many people aged between 16-74 years old in North Down are (i) economically active and unemployed; and (ii) economically active and long-term unemployed, broken down by electoral ward.

(AQW 10551/11-15)

Mr Wilson: This information will be available from the Northern Ireland Census of Population in winter 2012.

However, the Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey (LFS) can be used to provide sample based estimates of the economically active population. Due to the LFS sample size, estimates are only available for economic activity at the District Council Area (DCA) level.

For information, the latest economic activity estimates for North Down DCA are included in Table 1 overleaf.

TABLE 1 – ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN NORTH DOWN (2010)

Age group	Number	Rate
16+	38,000	59.1%
16-641	37,000	70.0%

Source: LFS, LADB 2010

- 1 The LADB does not allow analysis by individual year of age and it is therefore not possible to select those aged 65-74.

Information on the number of persons unemployed at a ward level is available from the claimant count measure of unemployment. Table 2 shows the number of people claiming unemployment related benefits and those claiming such benefits over a year (long-term unemployed) in North Down DCA, and this information for the wards within North Down DCA at March 2012.

Table 2– Claimants of unemployment related benefits in North Down

Area	Total Claimants	Rate	Long-term*
North Down DCA	1,877	3.7	420
Wards within North Down			
Ballycrochan	83	2.2	10
Ballyholme	36	2.4	5
Ballymacconnell	33	1.7	5
Ballymagee	56	2.1	10
Bangor Castle	79	5.1	20
Bloomfield	112	4.8	25
Broadway	42	2.5	10
Bryansburn	41	2.7	5
Churchill	54	3.5	10
Clandeboyne	160	5.0	40
Conlig	177	4.6	55
Craigavad	35	2.1	5
Crawfordsburn	31	1.9	5

Area	Total Claimants	Rate	Long-term*
Cultra	11	0.7	0
Dufferin	134	8.5	40
Groomsport	43	2.5	10
Harbour (Northdown)	200	9.4	45
Hollywood Demesne	64	3.4	20
Hollywood Priory	33	2.1	5
Loughview	79	2.6	20
Princetown	36	2.4	10
Rathgael	79	4.8	15
Silverstream	116	5.7	25
Spring Hill	40	2.3	5
Whitehill	103	6.7	20

* Long-term data is round to 5 and does not include clerical claimants that make up less than 1% of total

Small Business Rate Relief Scheme

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 9478/11-15, how many small business entities, as opposed to business properties will be excluded from the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme because they occupy four or more properties, broken down by council area.

(AQW 10574/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The estimated number of business entities excluded from the Small Business Rate Relief scheme because they occupy four or more properties is 332.

It is not possible to give a breakdown by council area because an estimated 164 of the 332 businesses occupy properties in several council areas.

Proposals for Legislation

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) what proposals for legislation, subject to Executive approval, he has introduced or intends to introduce between April 2012 and March 2015; (ii) the anticipated timescale for the introduction of each Bill; and (iii) the intention of each Bill.

(AQW 10634/11-15)

Mr Wilson: From 1 April 2012 I have not introduced any legislative proposals. However, I intend to bring forward the following proposals during the period up to March 2015:

- Air Passenger Duty Bill – to set the rate of APD of direct long haul flights to zero;
- Rate Collection and Recovery Bill – to enable more effective collection of rates;
- Legal Complaints and Regulation Bill – to provide powers for a new legal services Oversight Commissioner and create new complaints handling committees for barristers and solicitors;
- Financial Provisions Bill – to adjust specific statutory limits and handle other routine financial matters;
- Land Law Reform Bill – to give effect to the recommendations of the Northern Ireland Law Commission for the reform of the general land law; and
- Land Registration Bill – to replace the Land Registration Act (NI) 1970.

As the above proposals are subject to Executive agreement I am unable to give any timescales for introduction. Moreover, additional proposals may emerge on foot of ongoing work.

In addition, I intend to introduce the following Budget Bills:

- to give effect to the 2012/13 Main Estimates and annually thereafter; and
- to give effect to 2012/13 Spring Supplementary Estimates and 2013/14 Vote on Account and annually thereafter.

These Bills are normally introduced in June and February each year.

Peace III Funding

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail what assistance Cúnamh ICT, and any of its satellite groups, have received under PEACE III, and in respect of what projects.

(AQW 10641/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Cúnamh ICT has received no assistance under the PEACE III Programme. However, its parent organisation, Cúnamh, was awarded £278,132.60 under PEACE III Theme 1.2, Acknowledging and Dealing with the Past, to deliver a project titled Peace in Mind / Suaimhneas Intinne.

Review of Family Law

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in relation to the review of family law, to detail (i) when public consultation will commence; and (ii) the premise of the public consultation.

(AQW 10657/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The target date for the consultation, which will invite views on the substantive law on child contact and parental responsibility, is June 2012. However, that date is subject to departmental priorities and may fall to be revised.

Alternative Dispute Resolution in Family Law Cases

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution in family law cases.

(AQW 10658/11-15)

Mr Wilson: In the family law context there are different mechanisms for alternative dispute resolution (“ADR”) and, as each of those mechanisms is difficult to track, it is impossible to fully assess the prevalence of ADR. For example, a couple may voluntarily avail of the collaborative law process, but that will necessarily be a private arrangement between the parties and their solicitors. Alternatively, the parties may turn to a family mediation service provider, but that will be a private arrangement between the parties and the service provider and, whilst a court may invite parties to avail of mediation, we do not know how often that invitation is made. Although there is no way of providing comprehensive figures, I understand that, in 2011, Family Mediation NI and Barnardo’s undertook 676 sessions of ADR as part of the early intervention process under the Families Matter Strategy. The number of sessions required for each case will necessarily depend on the complexity of the issues.

Pensions Across the Public Sector

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether all pensions across the public sector are now consumer price index linked, including the Health Service, Education sector, north/south bodies and those affecting the holders of judicial office.

(AQW 10695/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I can confirm that pensions across the public sector in Northern Ireland are now consumer price index linked.

Civil and Public Servants in Each Council Area

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of civil and public servants in each council area, broken down by grade.

(AQW 10712/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The numbers of civil servants, broken down by council area and grade

is set out in the attached table. In view of the large number of grades within the Northern Ireland Civil Service the tables show general service and analogous grades.

It is not possible to provide information on the number of public servants in each council area broken down by grade. However, estimates for the number of employee jobs in the public sector in each district council area are available from the following link to the Business Register and Employment Survey 2010. http://www.detini.gov.uk/bres_2010_dca_by_public_private_split.xls

These estimates are based on the location of the job and do not distinguish between employees of working age and non-working age. Percentages have been calculated using these figures.

TABLE 1: NORTHERN IRELAND CIVIL SERVICE PERMANENT STAFF IN POST AT 1ST APR 2011 BY ANALOGOUS GRADE AND DISTRICT COUNCIL

	Antrim	Ards	Armagh	Ballymena	Ballymoney	Banbridge	Belfast	Carrikerergus	Castlereagh	Coleraine	Cookstown	Craigavon	Derry
G5+	1	0	1	0	0	0	199	1	2	1	0	0	1
SP/PO	12	11	17	31	0	3	958	14	24	32	3	16	29
DP	27	2	6	48	2	2	1665	47	48	30	7	32	48
SO	88	13	25	91	7	19	2126	33	70	66	18	77	91
EOI/EOII	98	80	106	204	31	34	4497	83	150	214	45	198	536
AO	73	93	109	184	21	30	4506	89	77	351	48	197	733
AA	30	19	36	63	8	10	964	10	39	128	10	48	141
Industrial	43	6	29	21	26	18	65	4	0	105	4	107	27
Total	372	224	329	642	95	116	14980	281	410	927	135	675	1606

	Down	Dungannon	Fermanagh	Larne	Limavady	Lisburn	Magherafelt	Moyle	Newry & Mourne	Newtownabbey	North Down	Omagh	Strabane
G5+	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	27	0	0
SP/PO	8	9	12	8	0	15	2	0	27	0	124	28	0
DP	24	2	12	0	0	60	15	0	12	1	137	61	1
SO	52	22	51	4	8	98	41	1	30	6	136	105	3
EOI/EOII	156	114	131	41	35	194	79	4	147	48	262	245	41
AO	125	78	118	54	28	155	64	2	124	69	249	229	29
AA	47	22	40	15	7	51	18	0	44	13	60	69	12
Industrial	62	28	152	11	14	113	31	4	22	61	3	72	26
Total	474	275	516	133	92	687	250	11	407	198	998	809	112

Notes:

Data sourced from HR Connect & Additional DOJ databases 1st Apr 2011.

Figures are Staff Headcount.

Figures comprise Staff Headcount for staff working in the 13 Northern Ireland Departments and in the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland, the Office of the Attorney General for Northern Ireland, and staff of The Assembly Ombudsman for Northern Ireland/The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Complaints

Includes all Permanent NICS staff for whom Work Location information is available

Staff on career break and Uniformed staff in the NI Prison Service are excluded

Processing Payments for Domestic Rates by Credit or Debit Card

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to AQW 10413/11-15, to where the revenue generated from the two percent transaction fee on the payment of rates bills goes, given that the processing costs to the Land and Property Services (LPS) is only £1.30 and he has stated that the LPS does not make a profit.

(AQW 10754/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The 2% transaction fee is paid directly to the LPS payment service provider at the point of payment. The 2% fee is not paid to LPS.

Account NI: Department Bills and Invoice Payments

Mr McClarty asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of bills and invoice payments processed on behalf of Departments and their agencies by Account NI between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012, within (i) 30 calendar days; and (ii) 10 working days.

(AQW 10785/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012, the number of bills/invoice payments processed by Account NI on behalf of Departments and their agencies against prompt payment targets was (i) 180,291 within 30 calendar days; and (ii) 166,251 within 10 working days.

Civil Service: Fair Participation

Mr McLaughlin asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, with reference to the 2010 Review of Fair Participation in the Civil Service, to outline the rationale for using economically active population figures, from census information, as a comparator for assessing fair participation in the Civil Service workforce.

(AQO 1831/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The use of the economically active population (ie those in work, unemployed or actively seeking employment) to compile comparators for assessing fair participation is considered to be the most appropriate method and is consistent with advice from the Equality Commission for NI.

DFP: Cost of Division

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline what work he will ask his Department to undertake to reduce the cost of division.

(AQO 1832/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The nature of the work progressed by my Department is largely in support of the other government departments and as such does not have direct exposure to the policies that cut across the cost of division.

I expect officials in my Department to explore all opportunities to reduce costs to ensure that we continue to deliver quality, cost effective and efficient public services.

DFP: North/South Shared Services

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the work being undertaken by his Department on the development of North-South Shared Services.

(AQO 1833/11-15)

Mr Wilson: At the end of last year, the North South Ministerial Council recommended that the two Finance departments should take forward a feasibility study into the potential for shared services to provide efficiency savings within the North South Implementation Bodies.

This recommendation is currently being considered by both Departments and I understand that an update will be provided for the NSMC Plenary in June 2012.

Derry-Londonderry UK City of Culture 2013: Additional Funding

Mr McCallister asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to explain the rationale behind the allocation of an additional £12.6 million to the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure to assist with the Derry-Londonderry UK City of Culture 2013.

(AQO 1834/11-15)

Mr Wilson: Under the Executive's Programme for Government 2011-15, there is a commitment to provide financial and other support across government to ensure the success of the Derry~Londonderry UK City of Culture 2013.

Derry City Council, through the medium of its Culture Company, will shortly have to enter into contractual commitments with event organisers to secure their events and commissions for the Cultural Programme. The Council therefore requires early confirmation of programme funding from Government. It is important that both business case approvals and funding are in place to ensure we can deliver on the PfG commitment.

This programme funding was considered and approved by the Executive at its meeting on 5th April 2012.

Budget: 2013-14 and 2014-15 Allocations

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what is the purpose of the review of the 2013-14 and 2014-15 budget allocations.

(AQO 1835/11-15)

Mr Wilson: The key driver behind commissioning this review was the level of reduced requirements surrendered by departments through the 2011-12 in-year monitoring process. When the Budget 2011-15 was agreed in March 2011 the indications were that it was a very tight settlement and, as such, there was little expectation of material reduced requirements being surrendered. However, the evidence of the 2011-12 monitoring process suggests otherwise. While this may be due to the robust action taken by departments to contain expenditure it also raises the possibility that the original Budget allocations to some departments either over-estimated need or under-estimated the capacity for savings. In light of this, I have asked my officials to undertake an analysis of the current financial position in departments against the original Budget allocations.

I am not proposing that this should be a fundamental review of the Budget 2011-15 but rather a reassessment of original allocations based on departmental performance in 2011-12.

My officials will assess the scale of reduced requirements surrendered by each department and, more importantly, the reasons for these surrenders. This will be followed by an assessment of year-end underspends when this information is available from departments in May. The outcome of this work will determine the overall scope of the review.

Regional Pay

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the Chancellor's proposal to introduce local pay variations for public sector workers.

(AQO 1836/11-15)

Mr Wilson: I am very concerned that the potential introduction of local pay variations for public sector workers and any associated block adjustment made would harm Northern Ireland's economic recovery. Local pay variations would likely lead to reduced public spending and a protracted pay freeze for public sector workers which would reduce economic activity and damage business and consumer confidence in the region.

I also don't accept the argument that national pay agreements make it difficult for the private sector to recruit and retain employees.

I can assure you that I will oppose any proposals that I believe would adversely affect our local economic recovery.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Delayed Discharges from the Antrim Area Hospital

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 10151/11-15, why (i) delayed discharges due to patients awaiting tertiary care beds increased from 2.5 percent in 2010/11 to 26.4 percent in 2011/12; and (ii) delayed discharges due to no step-down beds being available increased from 1.3 percent in 2010/11 to 11.9 percent in 2011/12.

(AQW 10372/11-15)

Mr Poots (The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): The rise in delayed discharges due to patients awaiting tertiary care beds reflects high demand for some regional services

The rise in delayed discharges due to no step-down beds being available is predominantly explained in terms of a change in statistical collection criteria which took effect in November 2010. Prior to this date, patients who were moving to another Trust statutory facility (such as Whiteabbey or Mid Ulster hospitals) were recorded as transfers and not discharges. From that date inter-Trust transfers have been included.

Breaches of Good Practice and Cases of Neglect in each Health and Social Care Trust Area

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail all investigations into breaches of good practice and cases of neglect in each Health and Social Care Trust area in the last year; and when each case is due for completion.

(AQW 10552/11-15)

Mr Poots: Information on the past year has not been compiled, as yet, and is not therefore available. The table below however details the number of clinical / social care negligence cases open at any stage during 2010/11, including the outcome (open, settled or closed) of these cases at 31 March 2011, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust.

Table 1: Number of Clinical/Social Care Negligence Cases which were Open, Settled or Closed at 31 March 2011

HSC Trust/Legacy HSS Board	Outcome of Cases at 31 March 2011						All Cases Open During 2010/11
	Open		Settled		Closed		
Belfast HSC Trust	887	80.6%	20	1.8%	193	17.5%	1,100
Northern HSC Trust	393	81.0%	30	6.2%	62	12.8%	485
South Eastern HSC Trust	379	75.5%	14	2.8%	109	21.7%	502
Southern HSC Trust	282	81.7%	16	4.6%	47	13.6%	345
Western HSC Trust	414	82.8%	*	-	*	-	500
NIAS	8	72.7%	*	-	*	-	11
Legacy Eastern HSS Board	68	49.3%	8	5.8%	62	44.9%	138

HSC Trust/Legacy HSS Board	Outcome of Cases at 31 March 2011						All Cases Open During 2010/11
	Open		Settled		Closed		
Legacy Northern HSS Board	25	80.6%	*	-	*	-	31
Legacy Southern HSS Board	57	80.3%	4	5.6%	10	14.1%	71
Legacy Western HSS Board	32	61.5%	0	0.0%	20	38.5%	52
Northern Ireland Total	2,545	78.7%	96	3.0%	594	18.4%	3,235

- 1 In order to prevent personal disclosure, cells with a value of less than 4 have been anonymised with an astrix. In addition, where the anonymised cell can be deduced from the totals, the next smallest cells have also been anonymised.

There were 3,235 clinical / social care negligence cases open at any stage during 2010/11.

Over three quarters (2,545, 78.7%) of these 3,235 clinical/social care negligence cases remained open at the 31 March 2011, 594 (18.4%) were closed and 96 (3.0%) were settled.

It is not possible to determine the length of the time which a clinical / social negligence case will remain open. However, almost half (1,543) of those cases open in 2010/11 had been open for 3 years or more. Table 2 below details the length of time cases had been open at 31 March 2011, by the outcome of the case.

TABLE 2: LENGTH OF TIME CASES WERE OPEN BY THE OUTCOME (31 MARCH 2011) 1

Length of time open	Outcome of Cases at 31 March 2011			All Cases Open During 2010/11
	Open	Settled	Closed	
Less than 1 year	598	4	28	630
1 year to < 3 years	915	21	126	1,062
3 years to < 5 years	449	17	93	559
5 years to < 10 years	412	40	197	649
10 years to < 15 years	101	10	91	202
15 years to < 20 years	58	4	58	120
20 years or more	*	*	*	*
Unknown	*	*	*	*
Total	2,545	96	594	3,235

- 1 In order to prevent personal disclosure, cells with a value of less than 4 have been anonymised with an astrix. In addition, where the anonymised cell can be deduced from the totals, the next smallest cells have also been anonymised.

Fines for People who Fail to Attend Medical Appointments

Mr Dickson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has plans to introduce fines for people who fail to attend medical appointments at a hospital or with a GP.

(AQW 10617/11-15)

Mr Poots: There are on average 170,000 missed appointments every year in health and social care trusts alone. This represents a substantial cost to the health service and is an unacceptable waste of scarce public resources. I want to ensure that all options that can help to reduce the numbers of missed appointments and ensure better use of taxpayers money are explored. The HSCB is responsible for performance monitoring of Trusts and I will be looking to the HSCB working with the Trusts to address this.

Policy for Dental Screening of Primary School Children

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is his Department's policy for dental screening of primary school children, and whether it has changed from the policy of March 2008.

(AQW 10629/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Chief Dental Officer issued a statement on the future policy on dental screening (inspection) in schools to the service on 4 March 2008. In summary, the policy advises that school screening should cease.

This followed on from advice from the National Screening Committee (NSC) which recommended to the UK Chief Dental Officers that there is no evidence to support the continued population screening for dental disease among children aged 6-9 years.

This policy change does not relate to children in special schools who are considered to be a separate group.

The DHSSPS policy on school screening has not changed.

Oasis Dental Care

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether Oasis Dental Care has been awarded a contract, which was not part of a tendering competition, to screen primary school children.

(AQW 10630/11-15)

Mr Poots: Oasis Dental Care has not been awarded a contract to screen Primary School Children. Rather there has been a formal contract variation of the existing Oasis contract.

Oasis Dental Care

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether children who have been screened by Oasis Dental Care and who require dental treatment will be advised to attend their regular dentist, if registered, or be given a list of dentists currently accepting patients.

(AQW 10631/11-15)

Mr Poots: Oasis dental care will not be involved in screening children for dental disease. They will however be involved in the collection of oral health data. The two elements to the Oral Health Data Collection Pilot involve either Oasis's own registered patients (therefore any necessary treatment care will be provided by Oasis dentists themselves) or will use the standard British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry methodology for dental surveys. When the latter approach is used children found to have dental disease are not issued with a letter advising them to attend a dentist.

Omagh Area Intensive Care Vehicles and Patient Care Service Vehicles

Mr McElduff asked Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of journeys, excluding local journeys, carried out by the Omagh area Intensive Care vehicles or Patient Care Service vehicles in the last year which were outside the Omagh catchment area.

(AQW 10725/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is assumed that this question refers to the number of intermediate care vehicles deployed outside Omagh Local Government District (LGD) area.

With this in mind, the number of completed journeys whereby Omagh Patient Care Service Vehicles were deployed outside of the Omagh LGD area during 2011/12 is detailed below for each vehicle type:

Vehicle Type	Total
Sitting Case Vehicle	2
Dual Purpose Vehicle	2,383
Intermediate Care Vehicle	409
Total	2,794

Source: NIAS

GP Calls, AS1 Calls and Hospital Transfers

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, excluding all Omagh Accident and Emergency Department and GP calls, to detail the number of (i) GP calls; (ii) AS1 calls; and (iii) hospital transfers in each the last six months which were outside the Omagh catchment area.
(AQW 10727/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is assumed that this question refers to the number of calls that required a response outside Omagh Local Government District (LGD) area.

With this in mind, the number of (i) GP calls, (ii) AS1 calls; and (iii) hospital transfers in each of the last six months which were outside the Omagh LGD is detailed below¹:

Month	(i) GP calls	(ii) AS1 calls	(iii) Hospital transfers
March 2012	29	63	5
February 2012	24	88	11
January 2012	30	49	8
December 2011	45	70	2
November 2011	27	53	7
October 2011	33	44	3

Source: NIAS

1. Excludes Omagh GP calls and Tyrone County emergency care department.

Northern Ireland Ambulance Service

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why the England and Wales Ambulance Services have an Assistant Medical Director while the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service has two full-time Medical Directors.

(AQW 10730/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) does not employ two full time Medical Directors. NIAS employs a Medical Director and an Assistant Medical Director. The Wales Ambulance Service employs a Medical Director and Unscheduled Care and Clinical Director. The England Ambulance Service relates to 12 individual organisations which have mixtures of Medical Directors, Assistant Medical Directors and other clinical roles at Director and/or Assistant Director levels within each organisation however these may be named differently. Each organisation differs significantly in organisational structure and it is therefore inappropriate to make comparisons.

People in Full-Time Residential Social Care

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people in full-time residential social care in 2010/11 funded their placement entirely using their own means.

(AQW 10732/11-15)

Mr Poots: This information is not collected centrally and is not available in the format requested.

999 Calls that Required Station Officers to Attend Emergency Situations

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of 999 calls that required station officers to attend emergency situations in each of the last three years.

(AQW 10752/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of 999 incidents which required Fire Station Commander attendance in each of the last 3 financial years is shown in the table.

Year	Number of 999 Incidents Requiring Fire Station Commander Attendance
2009/10	3,528
2010/11	3,438
2011/12	3,406
Total	10,372

Pandemrix Swine Flu Vaccine

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of people (a) under the age of 20; and (b) over the age of 20 who have been treated for swine flu with the pandemrix swine flu vaccine; and (ii) the number of suspected or actual cases of narcolepsy which his Department has investigated or treated in each of the last three years.

(AQW 10771/11-15)

Mr Poots: Pandemrix vaccine was one of two vaccines used in the UK to vaccinate 'at risk' groups against the A/H1N1 2009 (swine flu) pandemic. Vaccination offers protection against infection. It is not used to treat those with swine flu. A small amount of Pandemrix was also used during the seasonal flu vaccination programme in 2010/2011.

The number of people who received Pandemrix vaccine is of the order of:

2009/10

6 months to 19 years inclusive	75,000
20 years and over	222,000

In 2009/10 a further 33,000 Health and Social Care staff, including health and social care students, were also vaccinated. It is not possible to provide a breakdown by age of this figure however it is likely that the majority would be aged 20 years and over.

2010/11

6 months to 19 years inclusive	3200
20 years and over	4550

No Pandemrix vaccine was administered during the seasonal flu vaccination programme for 2011/2012.

As narcolepsy is not a notifiable disease the department does not hold information on the number of suspected or actual cases of the condition. Narcolepsy is a rare, naturally occurring illness, with around 10 new cases per million people every year.

Pandemrix Swine Flu Vaccine

Mrs Dobson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) how many people have been diagnosed with narcolepsy as a result being treated for swine flu with the pandemrix vaccine in each of the last three years; and (ii) any on-going treatments they will need to receive.

(AQW 10775/11-15)

Mr Poots: Narcolepsy is a rare, naturally occurring illness, with around 10 new cases per million people every year. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has advised that they have received two yellow card reports of suspected narcolepsy following vaccination with Pandemrix (swine flu vaccine) from Northern Ireland.

It is important to note that the inclusion of a particular reported reaction in the MHRA database does not necessarily mean it has been caused by the vaccine, only that the reporter had a suspicion that it may have been, or that it had a close temporal relationship to the administration of the vaccine. The fact that symptoms occur after a vaccination is given does not mean that they have been caused by the vaccine itself, as underlying illnesses and other conditions may be responsible.

Although no cure yet exists for narcolepsy, a combination of treatments can help to control narcolepsy symptoms and enable an individual to enjoy many normal activities. The treatment that works best for an individual will vary according to their specific narcolepsy symptoms and they should discuss this with their own GP, but it may include a combination of counselling, medication, and lifestyle changes.

Funding for Areas of High Social Deprivation

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how funding is targeted at areas of high social deprivation.

(AQW 10777/11-15)

Mr Poots: My department uses a number of weighted capitation formulae to determine the target shares of health and social care services. The underlying principle of these capitation formulae is one of equal resource for equal need; the distribution of resources is thus based on the relative need for health and social care services of each area. These formula skew resources in response to need; these needs are seen to arise due the age / gender profile of each area and also to the deprivation and socioeconomic circumstances in each area.

Each weighted capitation formula is based upon statistical research, which use proxies for health needs to determine whether each area should receive more or less funding relative to the others. To be clear as there is a finite pot for each service this is a relative distribution of the available resources.

When each of the formulae are being developed they are subjected to many reality checks, these checks include an investigation of the correlation of the calculated needs index with the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure produced by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). This check for the main capitation formula suite, (which is currently used to allocate £3,121 million of the total health and social care spend, covering hospital and community spend and personal social services) can be seen in the table below.

TABLE 1 AVERAGE COMBINED NEEDS INDEX (INCLUDES AGE & DEPRIVATION RELATED NEEDS) FOR THE SOAS IN EACH DEPRIVATION DECILE

Deprivation Decile (1 least deprived, 10 most deprived)	Total Combined Needs Index
1	0.74
2	0.83
3	0.85
4	0.93
5	0.94
6	0.97
7	1.05
8	1.08
9	1.16
10	1.34

This average total needs index per person in each area shows the relative need after accounting for the age/gender profile and the relative socioeconomic conditions in each area. This index is used to target shares of the available resources; from the table it can be seen that the formula targets over 80% more resources per head towards the most deprived (index of 1.34) areas compared to the least (index of 0.74), as measured by the Multiple Deprivation Measure.

Areas of High Social Deprivation

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the total level of spend in areas of high social deprivation in each Health and Social Care Trust area, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 10778/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is not possible to answer this question, as the HSC Trusts do not capture expenditure by areas of high social deprivation.

Life Expectancy of People Living in Areas of High Social Deprivation

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he is taking to improve the life expectancy of people living in areas of high social deprivation.

(AQW 10779/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department, through the Public Health Agency, is taking action across the province to improve health and wellbeing, and to reduce inequalities in life expectancy. The PHA is working with the statutory, community and other sectors to take action in the areas of greatest need to address a range of lifestyle issues such as smoking, obesity, home accidents, alcohol and drug misuse, and mental health and suicide.

In addition partnership working is seeking to address the factors that affect life expectancy which go beyond the HSC, such as living conditions - for example fuel poverty, working environment, education, community cohesion, and environmental factors.

Plain Packaging for Cigarettes

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department would support the introduction of plain packaging for cigarettes.

(AQW 10836/11-15)

Mr Poots: I support the concept of plain packaging, which is why I recently agreed that Northern Ireland should be included in a UK-wide consultation on this issue. The consultation exercise, led by the Department of Health (London) will close on 10 July 2012 and I look forward to receiving a breakdown of the responses from Northern Ireland, in addition to a UK-wide analysis.

Following full consideration of the consultation responses, I will determine whether plain packaging for tobacco products should be introduced in Northern Ireland.

Inter-Ministerial Group on Sexual and Domestic Violence

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 10377/11-15, how many issues relating to the Inter-Ministerial Group on Domestic and Sexual Violence that required Ministerial input have been dealt with by written correspondence since the last meeting of the group on 29 June 2010.

(AQW 10845/11-15)

Mr Poots: There have been two issues relating to the Inter-Ministerial Group on Domestic and Sexual Violence that have required ministerial input and which have been dealt with by written correspondence since the last meeting on the 29 June 2010. The issues relate to the endorsement of the "Tackling Sexual Violence and Abuse" Action Plan and the "Tackling Violence at Home" Action Plan for the period 2010 to 2012.

Support for Children with Autism in Schools

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what discussions he has had with the Minister of Education in the last 12 months in relation to developing support for children with autism in schools.

(AQW 10847/11-15)

Mr Poots: I have met with the Minister for Education on two occasions in the past 12 months to discuss a number of areas where there is potential to improve services and outcomes for vulnerable children including those with Autism.

In addition, officials from all Departments are working closely together to develop a whole life strategy for the provision of services to those with autism. That strategy will include actions to improve services across the education sector.

Reducing the Problem of Dental Decay

Mr Dunne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans his Department is putting in place to reduce the problem of dental decay, particularly among young people.

(AQW 10898/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department has been very proactive in introducing evidence-based programmes to improve the oral health of children in Northern Ireland.

Since 2004, we have introduced the following measures:

- Fluoride toothpaste schemes for young children in the most deprived areas
- Preventive fissure sealant scheme delivered through the general dental services for young people
- Enhanced capitation payments for dentists providing care to children from deprived areas

- Focussing the work of the Community Dental Service on high priority areas such as providing care for children from socially disadvantaged area and delivering evidence-based oral health improvement programmes.

Since the implementation of these schemes, we have noticed a significant improvement in the oral health of our child population.

We have noted a reduction in extractions under general anaesthetic from 40,000 in 2004 to 26,500 last year. We have also recorded a large reduction in the number of fillings carried out in children under 18 over this period.

In addition, my Department is supporting a large research trial to investigate the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of using fluoride varnish and fluoride toothpaste to prevent decay in young children.

The 2007 Oral Health Strategy stated that the greatest oral health gain is likely to be achieved through community water fluoridation. I am actively considering fluoridation of the water supplies. I intend to will consult with my executive colleagues to seek their views on water fluoridation.

We will continue to use these evidence-based programmes to further improve the oral health of our child population.

Drug Gilenya for People with Multiple Sclerosis

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the drug Gilenya will be available for people with multiple sclerosis.

(AQW 10900/11-15)

Mr Poots: NICE published Technology Appraisal TA254 - Fingolimod (Gilenya) for the treatment of relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis on Wednesday 25 April 2012. As set out in circular HSC (SQSD) NICE 04/11, my Department is expected to locally review and endorse NICE Technology Appraisals within 4 weeks of the NICE publication date, after which the HSC Board are asked to submit a commissioning plan within 15 weeks of the confirmed receipt of endorsement. Once a commissioning plan is agreed, it will represent the formal Departmental policy position on implementation.

Prior to the guidance being endorsed with an agreed commissioning plan, individual applications for funding can be made to the HSC Board for their consideration.

Closure of the Bangor Diabetes Clinic

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the impact of the closure of the Bangor Diabetes Clinic on the local community.

(AQW 10910/11-15)

Mr Poots: The temporary discontinuation of the Bangor Hospital diabetes clinic is a matter for the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust. As the change is not permanent, the Trust has not carried out a formal impact assessment.

The Trust has advised that it will be reinstating a diabetic service in Bangor but an exact date for recommencement has not yet been established. In the interim, patients from the Bangor area continue to attend the Ulster and Ards Hospitals for their new and review appointments.

Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the buildings of the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children were constructed.

(AQW 10945/11-15)

Mr Poots: The original Children's Hospital building was constructed in 1929 with a variety of extensions having been added since. The most recent extension, known as the 'White Building', was added in 1999.

Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to provide an estimate of the cost of a replacement building for the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children; and when he expects the investment for the replacement building to be confirmed.

(AQW 10946/11-15)

Mr Poots: Early indicative cost estimates for this project are £180m, including £30m for essential energy infrastructure required for the project. These costs will, however, be subject to review when the business case is scrutinised.

Investment for a replacement facility cannot be confirmed until all procurement options have been considered and the business case has been approved. The current capital budget does not permit the completion of a Regional Children's Hospital within the current budget period ending in March 2015. However, I have set aside £3m and £9m in 2013/14 and 2014/15 respectively to allow this project to commence and will be pressing the Trust to progress the project as quickly as possible.

Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children

Mr McGimpsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety where the replacement building for the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children is in terms of his Department's priorities for capital investment.

(AQW 10949/11-15)

Mr Poots: As I have stated previously, I consider this project to be of the utmost priority. However the current capital budget does not permit the completion of a Regional Children's Hospital within the current budget period ending in March 2015. I have been able to set aside £3m and £9m in 2013/14 and 2014/15 respectively to allow this project to commence and will be pressing the Trust to progress the project as quickly as possible.

Fluoridation of the Public Water Supply

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in light of the promotion of better oral health, particularly among younger people, what consideration he has given to the matter of freedom of choice in deciding if fluoridation of the public water supply is an option.

(AQW 10954/11-15)

Mr Poots: My Department can only enter any fluoridation arrangements after it has consulted and ascertained public opinion, and secured approval by resolution of the Assembly.

Child Protection Register

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether Social Services, as a matter of course, advise schools if they are working with one of their pupils or if a pupil is being placed on the Child Protection Register.

(AQW 11016/11-15)

Mr Poots: In accordance with existing guidance, Social Services staff will, as a matter of course, advise schools if they are working with a pupil who is a Looked After Child or whose name is on the child protection register as part of their investigative and supportive interventions.

Schools have a designated teacher who has responsibility for sharing information with social services when child protection enquiries are being undertaken. Guidance requires that teaching staff and educational welfare staff, where appropriate, are invited to contribute to and attend Child Protection Case Conferences. In such instances the relevant designated teacher is advised of the inclusion of a pupil's name on the Child Protection Register.

The minutes of Child Protection Case Conferences and contents of Child Protection Plans and Care Plans are also shared with teaching and Educational Welfare staff. Such staff are also consulted in relation to the progress and welfare of pupils whose names are included on the Child Protection Register.

When Social Services are working with a child who is designated to be a 'Child in Need' but not Looked After or on the Child Protection Register, they will ordinarily seek parental consent to share information about their involvement with schools.

Inter-Ministerial Group on Sexual and Domestic Violence

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 10377/11-15, how many issues have been dealt with by correspondence since the group last met.
(AQW 11018/11-15)

Mr Poots: There have been two issues which have been dealt with by correspondence since the group last met. The issues relate to the endorsement of the "Tackling Sexual Violence and Abuse" Action Plan and the "Tackling Violence at Home" Action Plan for the period 2010 to 2012.

Inter-Ministerial Group on Sexual and Domestic Violence

Mr Swann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 10377/11-15, how many pieces of written correspondence have been circulated to the whole group since it last met.
(AQW 11019/11-15)

Mr Poots: There has been one piece of written correspondence circulated to the whole group since it last met. This issue related to the endorsement of the "Tackling Violence at Home" Action Plan for the period 2010 to 2012.

MRI Scanner in the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast

Ms Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 8481/11-15, to detail (i) the number of (a) adults; and (b) children waiting for an MRI scan; and (ii) the average waiting time for each group, in each Health and Social Care Trust area.
(AQW 11036/11-15)

Mr Poots: MRI waiting time data are collected in aggregate time bands; therefore it is not possible to calculate an average waiting time. It is, however, possible to calculate the median time band, a similar statistical measure.

The number of adults currently waiting for an MRI scan at each HSC Trust, and the median waiting time band, is outlined in the table below:

HSC Trust	No. adults currently waiting for MRI scan¹	Median waiting time band (weeks)
Belfast	1,117	0-6 weeks
Northern	278	0-6 weeks
South Eastern	438	6-9 weeks
Southern	765	0-6 weeks
Western	660	0-6 weeks
Northern Ireland	3,258	0-6 weeks

Source: HSC Trusts

The number of children currently waiting for an MRI scan at each HSC Trust, and the median waiting time band, is outlined in the table below:

HSC Trust	No. children currently waiting for MRI scan¹	Median waiting time band (weeks)
Belfast	265	6-9 weeks
Northern	9	0-6 weeks
South Eastern	9	0-6 weeks
Southern	8	0-6 weeks
Western	65	0-6 weeks
Northern Ireland	356	0-6 weeks

Source: HSC Trusts

- 1 Children are categorised as patients aged between 0 and 16 years of age, with adults categorised as patients over 16 years of age.

Social Workers

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what his Department is doing to increase the numbers and skills of social workers to ensure that clients get the best possible care.

(AQO 1842/11-15)

Mr Poots: The number of social workers trained in Northern Ireland (NI) each year is closely aligned to DHSSPS Workforce planning and anticipated projected workforce needs. There is currently an annual intake of 260 social work students to meet workforce needs. There are robust arrangements in place for training social workers in NI at qualifying and post-qualifying levels. Indeed QUB has one of the highest rankings in the UK in respect of the Degree in Social Work. All qualified social workers are required to be registered with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) and, to ensure their skills and knowledge remain current and up-to-date, must complete ongoing professional training as a condition of their registration.

Diabetes

Mr Douglas asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans he has to improve diabetes services.

(AQO 1843/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Clinical Resource Efficiency Support Team (CREST)/Diabetes UK Joint Taskforce Report 2003 set out a framework for diabetes care in Northern Ireland. Since then significant progress has been made in improving services for people with diabetes, with more than £10m invested recurrently. I have asked officials in my Department to instigate a review of the 2003 Report. This review will consider the provision of existing services and emerging priorities in order to inform the development of a strategic and co-ordinated approach to improving services for people with diabetes.

The Review will need to take account of the principles of the new model of care set out in “Transforming Your Care” to ensure that services are commissioned and delivered that will secure optimum health outcomes and well-being for people with diabetes.

The Review will also need to consider my Department’s Policy Framework, “Living with Long Term Conditions” which I launched on 26 April. The Framework will help drive the modernisation of health and social care services for adults living with long term conditions and their carers including diabetes.

Health and Social Care Centre, Ballymena

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the provision of a new Health and Social Care Centre in Ballymena.

(AQO 1844/11-15)

Mr Poots: The development of a new health and care centre in Ballymena is going ahead and I recently visited Ballymena to view Trust plans for the new facility. Enabling works are underway at the site and I have set aside almost £25m from my Department's capital budget for this scheme.

Construction works on the main scheme are expected to commence on site by January 2013 and the project should be completed by mid 2014.

Chronic Conditions

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he is taking to improve outcomes for people with chronic conditions.

(AQO 1845/11-15)

Mr Poots: On 26 April I launched my Department's Policy Framework, "Living with Long Term Conditions". The Framework will help drive the modernisation of health and social care services for adults living with long term conditions and their carers.

The Framework sets out clear principles and good practice for commissioners and providers in the statutory, independent, voluntary and community sectors who are responsible for planning and delivering treatment and care to support people living with long term conditions.

The Policy Framework is relevant across a wide range of conditions and all care settings. It was developed in conjunction with the Long Term Conditions Alliance Northern Ireland, which is an umbrella body for voluntary and not for profit organisations working with and for people with long term conditions in Northern Ireland.

The Framework reflects the new model of care recommended in "Transforming your Care", which includes long term conditions as one of its key areas.

A Regional Implementation Steering Group will be established to take forward the implementation of the Long Term Conditions Policy Framework.

The Policy Framework will support my vision of driving up the quality of care, improving outcomes and enhancing the patient experience.

Counselling and Addiction Services: East Belfast

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there are adequate resources for counselling and addiction services in East Belfast.

(AQO 1846/11-15)

Mr Poots: As I said during the adjournment debate on this issue on 17th April, people living in East Belfast have access to a range of local counselling and addiction services. They also have access to regional counselling services for specific issues. It is for the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust to ensure that the range and volume of these services are adequate to address the needs of the population in East Belfast.

DHSSPS: External Consultants

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much his Department spent on external consultants in the last twelve months.

(AQO 1847/11-15)

Mr Poots: It is estimated that my Department will spend £130,000 on external consultants for the financial year 2011/12.

Whilst the final figure will not be available until the annual accounts have been prepared, this represents a reduction of some 76% compared to the previous financial year and continues the downward trend noted in such expenditure over recent years.

Dementia Care

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he has taken to acknowledge excellence in dementia care.

(AQO 1848/11-15)

Mr Poots: I recently presented the Northern Ireland Dementia Excellence Awards at the 'Dementia 2012' event held at the end of March, which was hosted by the Dementia Services Development Centre.

The awards provided an excellent opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the hard work and dedication shown by both individuals and organisations, across all sectors, who work diligently and selflessly to help those people living with dementia who need their care and support.

Stillbirths

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given that the stillbirth rate has not decreased over the past decade, what action his Department intends to take to reduce the number of stillborn babies.

(AQO 1849/11-15)

Mr Poots: The death of a baby is devastating. We owe it to families to do everything we can to prevent such tragedies. Statistics released on 25th April 2012 by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency confirm that 2011 saw the lowest rate ever recorded for stillbirths at 3.6 per 1,000 live and still births. In 2001 the rate was 4.6 per 1,000. Despite this improvement we must not be complacent.

A new UK-wide Maternal and Newborn Clinical Outcome Review Programme has been established to examine maternity outcomes, identify risk factors for maternal and perinatal deaths, including stillbirths and improve how lessons are learnt quickly. My Department contributes to the work of this group and we will be able to benefit from any advice and guidance offered.

In addition my Department has consulted on a draft Maternity Strategy for Northern Ireland. The Strategy considers maternity services at each stage of pregnancy and makes recommendations for improving all clinical outcomes.

Listeria: Causeway Hospital and Antrim Area Hospital

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps have been taken to prevent any recurrence of listeria at the Causeway and Antrim Hospitals.

(AQO 1850/11-15)

Mr Poots: Following the outbreak of listeria in the Northern Trust in April, the Trust carried out a review of food supply and distribution chains with the Food Standards Agency and Environmental Health to ensure that food safety arrangements were being adhered to.

Preliminary results of tests on sandwiches provided to in-patients indicated low levels of listeria present, although these were within the legal limits. As a precautionary measure the Northern Trust decided not to serve sandwiches from a particular supplier until investigations have been completed.

Following discussions with the Northern Trust, the Public Health Agency wrote to the other Trusts recommending a number of precautionary actions, specifically:

- not serving sandwiches from a particular supplier to in-patients;

- assurance of robust implementation of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points and cold chain requirements;
- ensuring that clinical staff are aware of the possibility of listeria infection and diagnosis; and
- promptly reporting new cases of listeria to the PHA Duty Room

The PHA has provided a food safety leaflet and listeria factsheet to all Trusts

In addition, the Public Health Agency has established an Outbreak Control Team which has been meeting regularly and liaising with colleagues in the rest of the UK and in the Republic.

Osteoporosis: Fracture Liaison Services

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the effectiveness of fracture liaison services in assisting patients with osteoporosis.

(AQO 1851/11-15)

Mr Poots: Fracture liaison services provide invaluable help to prevent patients who have already suffered a fracture due to disease such as osteoporosis, coming to further harm.

In total, over the past six months, fracture liaison services have seen or are monitoring 1,216 patients. This includes providing reviews and referrals for bone density scans, bone protection treatment, counselling, or a falls clinic. I am confident the number of patients who will benefit from this excellent preventative work will increase as services become further established.

Department of Justice

Discovery of Semtex in HMP Maghaberry Roe House

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the circumstances around the recent discovery of Semtex in HMP Maghaberry Roe House and sections of the visitor areas; and for his assessment of the discovery in relation to plans to reduce the necessity for body searches.

(AQW 10339/11-15)

Mr Ford (The Minister of Justice): There has been no recent discovery of Semtex in any part of Maghaberry Prison. Recent newspaper reports suggesting that there has been are false.

Case of Kevin Kennedy Versus the Chief Constable of the PSNI

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister of Justice to detail the costs incurred by each of his Department's arm's-length bodies in relation to the case of Kevin Kennedy versus the Chief Constable of the PSNI.

(AQW 10376/11-15)

Mr Ford: The details of the costs incurred by the Department of Justice's arm's length bodies, including Agencies, in relation to the case of Kevin Kennedy versus the Chief Constable of the PSNI are as follows:

Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service - £1,450

Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) - Costs incurred by the PSNI are an operational matter for the Chief Constable, who is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I am committed to respecting the operational independence of the Chief Constable and the role of the Policing Board.

Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) - In addition to the case against the Chief Constable, Mr Kennedy lodged a Fair Employment Tribunal case against the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB). Costs incurred by the NIPB in respect of legal advice amounted to £2,433 but the tribunal case was subsequently withdrawn following the settlement reached in respect of the case against the Chief Constable.

Training Prison Staff in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

Mr Frew asked the Minister of Justice what strategy is in place to train staff in prisons in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation.

(AQW 10408/11-15)

Mr Ford: Since 2004 all uniform staff have received First Aid training as part of their induction into the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS). Cardiopulmonary resuscitation is covered within this training.

In September 2011 NIPS also introduced a one day Emergency First Aid Course. On average three of these initial courses and four refresher courses are delivered each year by approved trainers. This ensures that NIPS exceeds the legislative requirements for numbers of first aid accredited staff.

Primary Healthcare Units within each establishment also provide 24 hour emergency first aid cover.

RUC/PSNI Museum

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice whether the RUC/PSNI museum will move to the new Police College at Cookstown; and if not, where the museum will be located.

(AQW 10447/11-15)

Mr Ford: No decision has yet been taken on where the new Police Museum will be located. An Outline Business Case is currently being prepared by the RUC George Cross Foundation which, once finalised, will need to be approved by my Department and by the Department of Finance and Personnel. As with all business cases, a number of options will be appraised and a preferred option identified for the location of the new museum.

Sexual Offences Prevention Orders

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many Sexual Offences Prevention Orders were in place in each court division in 2011; and how many of these were breached.

(AQW 10454/11-15)

Mr Ford: Information is not readily available to answer the question in the format sought. However, the table below shows the number of Sexual Offences Prevention Orders made by calendar year which were in place during 2011.

SEXUAL OFFENCES PREVENTION ORDERS IN PLACE IN 2011

	Crown Court	Magistrates' Court	Total
2005	1	4	5
2006	12	13	25
2007	43	17	60
2008	71	28	99
2009	65	23	88
2010	75	16	91
2011	64	15	79
Total	331	116	447

Notes:

Figures include orders made on appeal if no order was made on the original case.

Figures for 2011 are provisional.

Information on order breaches is available from 2007 when the NI Courts and Tribunals Service IT system became fully operational. Information on breaches prior to this would require an extensive trawl of manual records. During the period 2007 to 2011 there were 160 convictions for order breaches involving 118 defendants.

Magistrates' Court Cases: Forensic Evidence Delays

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 9854/11-15, whether these figures include case number 11/150443 at Dungannon Magistrates' Court and case number 11/128987 at Magherafelt Magistrates' Court.

(AQW 10534/11-15)

Mr Ford: The figures contained in my answer to AQW9854/11-15 did not include case number 11/150443 at Dungannon Magistrates' Court and case number 11/128987 at Magherafelt Magistrates' Court as they are not included in the adjournment monitoring exercise which is currently only operating at Londonderry Magistrates' Court.

Cost of Producing Consultation Documents and Official Reports

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Justice what was the cost to his Department of producing (i) consultation documents; and (ii) official reports in the 2010/11 financial year.

(AQW 10539/11-15)

Mr Ford: External print and design costs incurred by the Department of Justice, excluding Agencies and arms length bodies, to produce (i) consultation documents and (ii) official reports in the 2010/11 financial year are shown in the table below.

Consultation Documents	£4,200
Official Reports	£5,449

This does not include any internal expenditure that may have been incurred. Internal expenditure is not recorded on the Department of Justice finance system in a way that makes this possible.

Legislation Relevant to the Theft of Lead from Buildings

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice what legislation is relevant to the theft of lead from buildings.

(AQW 10564/11-15)

Mr Ford: I understand that the relevant legislation is the Theft Act (Northern Ireland) 1969. Depending on circumstances, the Theft (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 may apply.

Legislation on the Regulation of the Sale of Lead

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Justice what legislation exists on the regulation of the sale of lead.

(AQW 10565/11-15)

Mr Ford: I am not aware of any specific regulations governing the sale of lead. I understand, however, that if lead was bound for a waste management facility it would be controlled waste and subject to the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997.

Contraband Items Brought into Prisoners

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Justice what measures he has taken to address the issue of contraband items being brought in to prisoners; and what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of those measures.

(AQW 10592/11-15)

Mr Ford: The main measures in place to address the issue of contraband items being brought in to prisoners can be broadly categorised as prevention, education and punishment.

Preventive measures include the searching of all visitors, staff and goods entering the prison. There are also arrangements in place to search prisoners on committal and discharge, and before and following visits. In addition, passive drugs dogs are deployed to screen visitors prior to visits, and Governors ensure that prison cells, residential areas and other areas of the prison are regularly searched.

Visits are supervised and monitored by CCTV. Visitors may be banned if there is evidence that they have passed contraband items during a visit, and Governors may recommend to Prison Service Headquarters that prisoners who have received contraband items on a visit are restricted to 'closed visits' for an appropriate period of time.

Programmes are in place to educate prisoners about the dangers of using illicit substances, both from the point of view of a prisoner's health and in relation to addressing issues relevant to a prisoner's risk of reoffending.

Punitive measures include charging prisoners under Prison Rules and referring more serious cases to PSNI for investigation. Prisoners may also be removed from normal association with other prisoners if their behaviour gives cause for concern that they pose a threat to the good order and discipline of the establishment.

My assessment is that the measures outlined above are appropriate to the aim of taking reasonable steps to address concerns about contraband items entering prisons whilst at the same time not unduly limiting opportunities for prisoners to maintain regular links with family members and friends. Policies are kept under review in light of the information regularly provided to senior managers about, for example, the number and type of drugs finds.

Cases of Dishonestly Using Electricity

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many cases of dishonestly using electricity or diverting an electricity supply are presently in the court system.

(AQW 10609/11-15)

Mr Ford: As of 20 April 2012, there were 63 cases before the Magistrates' and Crown Courts, with one County Court Appeal in relation to charges of dishonestly using electricity or diverting an electricity supply.

Pearson Review Team Report

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 9151/11-15, to detail the occupations of the current pool of investigators, and of these, how many are independent of the Prison Service.

(AQW 10610/11-15)

Mr Ford: The current pool of investigators comprises Prison Governors and civil servants from the Northern Ireland Prison Service. On occasion, the Prison Service also utilises the services of the Department of Agriculture Central Investigation Unit which is independent of the Prison Service.

Cases Involving Alleged Sexual Assault

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many cases involving alleged sexual assault are currently with the (i) Magistrates Court; and (ii) Crown Court, broken down by court division.

(AQW 10611/11-15)

Mr Ford: Table 1 below details the number of active cases involving sexual offences in the Magistrates' Court and Crown Court broken down by County Court Division.

TABLE 1

Division	Magistrates' Court	Crown Court	Total
Antrim	29	31	60
Ards	22	17	39
Armagh and South Down	13	13	26
Belfast	92	77	169
Craigavon	23	21	44
Fermanagh and Tyrone	21	17	38
Londonderry	36	16	52
Total	236	192	428

Table 2 details the number of active cases involving sexual offences that are currently being appealed before the Court of Appeal and County Court.

TABLE 2

Court of Appeal	18
County Court Division of:	
Armagh & South Down	1
Belfast	3
Fermanagh & Tyrone	1
Total	23

All cases relate to sexual offences which trigger the notification requirements under Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (as amended).

Development of the Titanic Quarter

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice, in light of the development of the Titanic Quarter, what plans there are to extend the PSNI's jurisdiction to cover the Harbour area of Belfast.

(AQW 10620/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Police Service of Northern Ireland already has full constabulary powers throughout Northern Ireland and the adjacent United Kingdom waters. Whilst the day-to-day policing of the Harbour Estate is carried out by Belfast Harbour Police (BHP), this can be enhanced by officers from the PSNI depending on the nature or scale of the problem or incident. A joint PSNI/BHP Neighbourhood Policing Team has been established within the Titanic Quarter area to deal with the particular demands of policing that part of the Harbour Estate.

Small Claims Court

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice to detail the main differences between the Small Claims Court in Northern Ireland and England.

(AQW 10623/11-15)

Mr Ford: In May 2011, following a review of the jurisdictional limits of the County Courts, I increased the financial limit of the Small Claims Court from £2,000 to £3,000. This increase has allowed more users to avail of this efficient and informal arbitration system. There are certain types of cases which

the Small Claims Court does not hear in this jurisdiction. These exclusions are provided in the County Court Rules and include personal injury claims and those arising from road traffic accidents.

In England and Wales the Small Claims track processes cases with a value of £5,000 or less, however if it is a personal injury claim or a housing dispute, the value of the claim can be no more than £1,000.

In England and Wales the courts provide a Small Claims Mediation Scheme which offers an alternative method for resolving disputes if both parties agree. Whilst there is no court based mediation scheme in Northern Ireland at this time, it is always open to parties in small claims proceedings to have recourse to third-party mediation where they wish to do so.

Small Claims Court

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice whether any problematic aspects of the Small Claims Court would be diminished if it was brought into line with the Small Claims Court system in England.

(AQW 10625/11-15)

Mr Ford: I am satisfied that the Small Claims Court in Northern Ireland provides an informal, effective and affordable system of arbitration for the resolution of low value disputes in Northern Ireland. Its procedure remains simple and straightforward and gives rise to few difficulties for individual applicants. It has undergone a number of important reforms over recent years which have enhanced the system.

In May 2011, following a review of the jurisdictional limits of the County Courts, the financial limit of the Small Claims Court was increased from £2,000 to £3,000. This increase has allowed more users to avail of this efficient and informal arbitration system.

Small Claims Online allows claimants to make a small claims application using the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service website. This service allows members of the public and businesses to make a small claims application outside normal working hours and to track the progress of the application online.

Some respondents to the earlier consultation paper on the jurisdictional limits of the County Courts commented that consideration should be given to allowing the Small Claims Court to deal with personal injury claims and those arising from road traffic accidents. The County Court Rules presently excludes these types of cases from the Small Claims Court. The County Court Rules Committee was made aware of these comments and I understand intends to consider the matter in the near future.

Small Claims Guide: A Guide to the Small Claims Process

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice whether his Department intends to amend the 'Small Claims Guide: A Guide to the Small Claims Process', to explain clearly how to initiate and conduct an appeal without using a solicitor.

(AQW 10627/11-15)

Mr Ford: I am satisfied that the current Small Claims Guide provides comprehensive and clear instructions on the small claims process including the relevant grounds for appeal, service requirements, time limits and appropriate appeal form. It also advises customers that court staff will assist with the procedure to be followed but notes they cannot provide legal advice and recommends the services of a solicitor or the Citizens Advice Bureau if required.

Given that the most recent version of the Guide was published in July 2011 and included revisions to the appeals section, I have no plans to commission a further review at this time.

Case 11/039234 at Dungannon Magistrates Court

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to case 11/039234 at Dungannon Magistrates Court, to detail what led to the outcome of this case being wrongly recorded as to be dealt with by

caution and it was then reinstated when the caution was not taken up; and (ii) whether the incorrect recording was done by the Public Prosecution Service or the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service.
(AQW 10656/11-15)

Mr Ford: The issues associated with case number 11/039234 are a matter for the Public Prosecution Service (PPS). I have therefore forwarded your question to the PPS who will respond to your question directly.

However, I can confirm that the court records show that the outcome of the original proceedings is correctly recorded as 'Dismissed – On Merits'.

Director General of the Northern Ireland Prison Service

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Justice how many meetings have been held between the out-going Director General of the Northern Ireland Prison Service and the Chairman of the Prison Officer's Association.

(AQW 10659/11-15)

Mr Ford: There have been no formal meetings between the Director General and the Chairman of the Prison Officers' Association. In line with normal practice industrial relations matters are handled by the Director of Human Resources.

The Chairman of the Prison Officers' Association has not requested a meeting with the Director General.

Prison Service: Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme

Mr Allister asked the Minister of Justice when the 73 Prison Service staff who were approved for the Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme, but who were not permitted leave on 31 March 2012 for operational reasons, will receive their redundancy package; and for his assessment of the situation where a further 320 applicants do not know when they will be included in the Scheme.

(AQW 10681/11-15)

Mr Ford: 544 members of the Northern Ireland Prison Service applied for the Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme. 151 staff left on 31 March 2012, and a further 9 will leave on 30 April. The departure of 139 individuals has been delayed for operational reasons. The remaining 245 of the applications received remain under consideration.

I remain committed to allowing as many as possible of those who wish to leave the opportunity of doing so. It will however take time to work through the operational and financial issues and it will be necessary to balance carefully those wishing to leave with the arrival of the new recruits to the Custody Officer grade.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

Mr Copeland asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the current Alternative Dispute Resolution.

(AQW 10688/11-15)

Mr Ford: It is my view that Alternative Dispute Resolution should be seen as one of the first avenues to be considered by parties seeking to resolve their differences. In keeping with this view, in September 2011 my Department supported the publication of a booklet called Alternatives to Court. The initiative, led by the Northern Ireland Ombudsman and Law Centre (NI), was designed to demonstrate the options for dealing with many types of disputes and explains how alternatives to court work in practice and how they can be used. In particular the booklet deals with Alternative Dispute Resolution which includes mediation.

The Access to Justice Review published in September 2011 contains recommendations for a greater use of mediation and other options under Alternative Dispute Resolution. The consultation period to

the report ended in January 2012 with 47 responses being received. These responses have been considered and I intend to publish my response to the recommendations in June 2012.

Prison Service Professional Standards Unit

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice (i) what was the cost of setting up the Prison Service Professional Standards Unit; (ii) how many dedicated staff are assigned to this unit; (iii) where it will be based; and (iv) for an estimate of its annual running costs.

(AQW 10702/11-15)

Mr Ford: As the setting up of the Professional Standards Unit is still at the development stage, the information sought is not yet available.

Case 11/039234 at Dungannon Magistrates' Court

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice for a breakdown of all the costs associated with case 11/039234 at Dungannon Magistrates' Court.

(AQW 10705/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below sets out the estimated costs associated with case number 11/039234.

Cost Type	Estimated Cost
PSNI	Not Available ¹
PPS Prosecution	£500
Defence (Legal Aid Costs) ²	£736
Court (Judiciary and Staff Costs)	£467
Facilities (e.g. Courtroom Accommodation)	£85
Total	£1,788

- 1 The Investigating Officer conducted his enquires consistent with his normal duties and would therefore not incur any additional costs over those associated with normal duty time.
- 2 The defence costs relate solely to the fees submitted by Junior Counsel; the solicitor in the case has not yet submitted their claim.

Prison Service Code of Conduct and Discipline

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, in relation to Rule 6 of S.R. 1995/08 The Prison and Young Offenders Centre Rules (Northern Ireland) 1995, when the Secretary of State approved the Prison Service Code of Conduct and Discipline.

(AQW 10706/11-15)

Mr Ford: The current Code of Conduct and Discipline came into effect in 1996, replacing the previous Code of Discipline. NIPS is unable to provide the exact date that the Secretary of State approved the current Code.

Legal Aid for Appealing Convictions and Sentences

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how much has been paid in legal aid for appealing convictions and sentences, which were handed down in Magistrates' Court, at a higher court in each of the last three years, broken down by court division.

(AQW 10757/11-15)

Mr Ford: The table below details the legal aid payments made in respect of County Court appeals over the last three years broken down by County Court Division.

County Court Division	Assessed Gross Total 09/10	Assessed Gross Total 10/11	Assessed Gross Total 11/12
Antrim	58,496	81,734	83,597
Ards	47,059	37,027	54,584
Armagh and South Down	56,662	80,951	69,603
Belfast	147,315	224,621	219,944
Craigavon	57,327	96,841	106,232
Fermanagh and Tyrone	89,067	149,650	170,561
Londonderry	30,730	47,144	52,088
Total	486,656	717,968	756,609

Victims of Human Trafficking

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether he intends to amend legislation in relation to victims of human trafficking, who have been coerced into committing a crime, to ensure that they are either not charged with the crime or that their situation can be used as a defence, particularly in relation to cannabis factories and people caught living in the dwellings which have been converted for cultivation purposes.

(AQW 10761/11-15)

Mr Ford: I have no plans to amend legislation to provide blanket immunity from prosecution for trafficked victims. The Public Prosecution Service will consider each case on its merits having regard to the seriousness of the possible offence committed. Evidence or information to support the fact that the suspect has been trafficked and has committed the alleged offence whilst in a coerced situation will be considered as a strong public interest factor mitigating against prosecution.

Funding Received by the Northern Police Fund

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Justice to detail the funding received by the Northern Police Fund in each of the last five years.

(AQW 10791/11-15)

Mr Ford: I have provided information for the last two years from when the Department of Justice was created.

	2010/11 £	2011/12 £
Police Fund	1,850,000	1,822,000

Funding from the Northern Ireland Police Fund

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Justice to list (i) the bodies which have received funding from the Northern Ireland Police Fund in each of the last three years; and (ii) the amount of funding received by each body.

(AQW 10793/11-15)

Mr Ford: The information requested can be found in the table below:

Organisation	2009/10	2010/11 £	2011/12 £
RUC GC Parents' Association	45,000.00	45,800.00	45,000.00
Disabled Police Officers' Association	39,438.00	55,500.00	43,000.00
Retired Police Officers' Association	20,625.00	7,500.00	0
Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust	65,213.90	0	0
RUC Benevolent Fund (including local voluntary welfare groups)	85,001.58	77,004.37	75,000.00
RUC GC Widows' Association	6,450.00	5,000.00	0
Forgotten Families	113.90	0	250.00
Carers' Association	18,000.00	18,000.00	0
Total	279,842.38	208,804.37	163,250.00

Disabled Police Officers Association

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Justice what funding his Department has allocated to the Disabled Police Officers Association in each year since April 2009; and whether future funding for the Association is ring-fenced.

(AQW 10796/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department of Justice does not provide any direct funding to the Disabled Police Officers' Association; funding is provided by the Northern Ireland Police Fund, which is itself funded by the Department.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences

Ms Brown asked the Minister of Justice how victims are protected prior to, and during, the referral of their cases to Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences.

(AQW 10805/11-15)

Mr Ford: Prior to referral to a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) the referring agency would put some basic protective measures in place that are within their remit and advise the victim of other agencies who could offer immediate assistance.

The MARAC will result in an agreed safety plan which will set out actions to be delivered by all relevant agencies to protect the victim.

Victims of Human Trafficking

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice if he will liaise with the UK Border Agency to ensure that victims of human trafficking are not (i) automatically treated as illegal immigrants and are not deported without access to justice, appropriate medical treatment or assistance under human rights legislation; and (ii) subject to unnecessary removal and placement in detention centres.

(AQW 10810/11-15)

Mr Ford: I have regular contact with United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA) representatives who are integral members of the Organised Crime Task Force. The Agency is represented on the OCTF Stakeholder Group, the Strategy Group and the Immigration and Human Trafficking sub group.

Suspected victims of human trafficking are managed through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), a multi-agency framework, which operates across the United Kingdom and seeks to identify victims of trafficking and ensure they receive appropriate advice, accommodation and support. If "victim status"

is confirmed by the NRM then a recovery and reflection period is granted during which time victims may access a range of support services including legal advice and access to health care.

Where a possible victim is identified as part of the immigration process the UKBA will deal with the referral, for example where trafficking may arise as part of an asylum claim. Trained UKBA staff will assess the case and make a decision on whether an individual is a victim of trafficking. No immigration decision will be served during the recovery and reflection period. When a person has no right to remain in the United Kingdom, voluntary repatriation is the preferred option. Enforced removal by the UKBA is always a last resort.

I have received no specific representations or information to suggest that the UKBA is operating outside the established framework, but would raise any issues with them, and other relevant bodies, if they are drawn to my attention.

I am also open to suggestions for change. In that connection I would note that the UK Government's Strategy on Human Trafficking which was published in July 2011 sets out, in chapter 3, a number of steps to be taken to assist in the improved identification and care of victims.

Barristers: Legal Aid Payments List

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, given that the barrister who is listed as Number 19 on the legal aid payments list for 2010/11, is in receipt of £225,428 of public money and is therefore subject to the same accountability as other recipients of public money, why this barrister is permitted to refrain from identifying himself/herself.

(AQW 10811/11-15)

Mr Ford: When considering the publication of personal information, the Legal Services Commission is bound by the statutory requirements of the Data Protection Act. The Commission is required to notify anyone about whom it is proposing to release personal data and that individual has a right to object to the publication of such data. The Commission is required to consider any objection raised, in every instance, in advance of the publication of personal data. In the case of the individual referred to, this process has not yet been completed.

Benefit Appeal Tribunals

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether he has made a decision on permitting legal aid to be granted to people involved in benefit appeal tribunals.

(AQW 10814/11-15)

Mr Ford: Legal aid is currently not available for hearings before the Appeal Tribunal. The Access to Justice Review report, published for public consultation in September 2011, made a number of recommendations concerning the availability of legal aid for Tribunals. This consultation period ended in January 2012 with 47 responses being received. These responses are being considered and I intend to publish my response to the recommendations in June 2012.

Intended Court Action Against Peter Hain and his Publisher

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Justice for an estimate of the costs of the Attorney General's intended court action against Peter Hain and his publisher.

(AQW 10818/11-15)

Mr Ford: The court costs associated with the case of the Attorney General v The Right Honourable Peter Hain MP and Biteback Publishing Limited are estimated at £1,525 for the preliminary hearings and an additional £16,780 for four hearing days.

These estimated costs exclude legal fees which are not within my responsibilities.

Outstanding Fines

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister of Justice to detail, for each of the last five years, the (i) average value; (ii) maximum value; and (iii) minimum value of outstanding fines for which fine defaulters have been subject to a custodial sentence.

(AQW 10873/11-15)

Mr Ford: The average, maximum and minimum values of unpaid fines which have resulted in a period of imprisonment solely for non-payment are provided in the table below.

Fine Amount (£s)	Year				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Min fine	£5.00	£14.00	£30.00	£10.00	£8.50
Max fine	£3,550.00	£90,607.00	£26,025.00	£10,897	£15,106.00
Ave fine	£287.38	£382.07	£306.49	£281.72	£294.42

Government's Request to Subpoena Recordings from the Boston College Oral History Project

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Justice to detail any discussions, in the last 18 months, his Department has had with (i) the US Secretary of State; (ii) the Home Office; (iii) the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland; (iv) the PSNI; and (v) the Minister for Justice and Equality in the Republic of Ireland, regarding the Government's request to subpoena recordings from the Boston College Oral History Project (a) prior to; and (b) subsequent to the request being made.

(AQW 10915/11-15)

Mr Ford: This is not a matter for the Minister of Justice or the Department of Justice. I have had no substantive discussions on this issue but the matter was referred to in passing by the Chief Constable in a meeting on other matters on 27 February 2012.

Category 3 Sex Offenders

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) how Category 3 sex offenders are monitored in the community after release; (ii) what agencies are involved; and (iii) who takes the lead in risk management.

(AQW 10932/11-15)

Mr Ford: General information on the risk management procedures adopted under the public protection arrangements (PPANI) is available on the PPANI website. The agencies involved are listed in Article 49 of the Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008. The agency with the primary statutory role in dealing with the offender provides a designated risk manager in every case. All agencies are responsible for discharging their own statutory functions in relation to every case.

Granting of Legal Aid

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice whether he intends to review the granting of Legal Aid for the automatic appeal of convictions and sentences at Magistrates Courts, particularly as this requires counsel to be to be instructed as well as solicitors.

(AQW 10936/11-15)

Mr Ford: A person convicted by a Magistrates' Court is entitled to appeal, to a County Court, against his sentence regardless of whether or not he pleaded guilty and, if he did not plead guilty, against the conviction as well. In such circumstances a person would be entitled to legal aid to fund the appeal subject to the means and merits tests. This does not mean that there would be an automatic entitlement to counsel.

I have no plans to review the grant of legal aid in County Court appeals.

Rape Convictions

Mr Spratt asked the Minister of Justice how many rape convictions have been secured in each of the last three years.

(AQW 11038/11-15)

Mr Ford: I refer the Member to my response to AQW/5852/11-15 which details the number convicted for the calendar years 2004 to 2008 (the latest year for which figures are currently available).

Prison Service: Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme

Mr Girvan asked the Minister of Justice for an update on the Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme for the Prison Service.

(AQO 1859/11-15)

Mr Ford: 544 members of the Northern Ireland Prison Service applied for the Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme. 151 staff left on 31 March 2012, and a further 9 left on 30 April 2012. The departure of 139 individuals has been delayed for operational reasons. The remaining 245 of the applications received remain under consideration.

Prison Service management remains committed to allowing as many of those who wish to leave the opportunity of doing so. It will however take time to work through the operational and financial issues and will need to balance carefully those wishing to leave with the arrival of the new recruits to the Custody Officer grade.

Maghaberry Prison: Management

Mr Hamilton asked Minister of Justice, in light of the appointment of the Governor of HMP Maghaberry as the temporary Director of Operations for the Prison Service, what assurances can be given that HMP Maghaberry will have the appropriate management for Northern Ireland's Category A prison.

(AQO 1860/11-15)

Mr Ford: In light of the imminent departure of the current Director General, a decision was made to appoint a temporary Director of Operations so that adequate support measures are in place for Governors in Charge as well as continuing to ensure robust performance management of each establishment.

Governor Pat Maguire, the current Governor in Charge of Maghaberry Prison has a wealth of experience in this area and has recently been leading Maghaberry through a period of substantial and significant change. He has also previously held the position of Deputy Director of Operations. I am confident that his appointment to this new role will help to underpin improving performance across the three prison establishments.

Governor Austen Treacy, currently Deputy Governor at Maghaberry since June 2010, will take up the post of Acting Governor in Charge. Both his current role and his previous experience as Governor in Charge of Hydebank Wood make him a good choice to provide consistency in leadership and management through this transitional phase, to drive forward reform and to continue the process of performance improvement at Maghaberry.

Maghaberry Prison: Staff Duties

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Justice to outline the differences in the way that prison staff carry out their duties in relation to separated republican prisoners on protest in Roe House compared to prisoners in Bush House.

(AQO 1861/11-15)

Mr Ford: The prison staff working with separated prisoners in Bush and Roe Houses operate the same standard operating procedures in terms of controlled movement arrangements, visits, searching, catering and association and recreation periods.

However the application of these standard operating procedures may differ according to the level of compliance of the prisoner groups. The 11 loyalist prisoners in Bush House comply with all aspects of the separated compact. Within the republican prisoners in Roe House, 29 of the current 37 prisoners are on protest and do not comply with the separated compact or the 12 August Agreement.

Marian Price McGlinchey: Medical Report

Ms Gildernew asked the Minister of Justice whether a recent medical report on Marian Price McGlinchey recommended that she be moved from Hydebank Women's Prison to an outside facility to receive medical treatment.

(AQO 1862/11-15)

Mr Ford: It is not appropriate for me to discuss in detail a private medical report on any prisoner in a public forum such as this.

Mrs McGlinchey's health will be kept under review by the South Eastern HSC Trust as is the case for all other prisoners. If I receive medical advice relating to my responsibilities with regard to Mrs McGlinchey's individual healthcare needs, I will act upon it immediately.

Prisoners: Illiteracy and Innumeracy

Mr Rogers asked the Minister of Justice what plans he has to tackle the high levels of illiteracy and innumeracy among prisoners.

(AQO 1864/11-15)

Mr Ford: During 2011, 48% of prisoners in Northern Ireland were assessed as having literacy skills of Entry Level 3 (9 year old equivalent) or below, with 62% assessed at the same level for numeracy.

That deficits exist should not come as a surprise, indeed they have long been a concern to custodial authorities here and in other jurisdictions.

I am committed to putting in place measures that will provide quality education, skills training and work experience that are relevant both to the needs of prisoners and of the employment market.

In doing so, I plan to build on the examples of excellent and innovative practice mentioned in the report, which have delivered successes within the area of learning and skills provision for example the partnership with the North West Regional College and the high levels of commitment and enthusiasm of learning and skills staff. Work is already in hand which will identify and implement further improvements but I readily accept that more needs to be done both within and beyond the prison environment, including better coordinating initiatives and efforts across and between departments and therefore in collaboration with Ministerial colleagues.

I am pleased that we are already seeing positive results emerging from this approach, with strong links already established between NIPS and DEL, for example:

- prisoner access to DEL's providers of LEMIS – the Local Employment Intermediary Service, which is designed to help unemployed people in the community overcome issues - including low levels of literacy - that may be preventing them from finding and keeping a job; and
- DEL's participation in NIPS' review of its learning and skills service, both the range available and its delivery.

A number of other measures are also already in place within NIPS including:

- the development of a draft Employability Strategy to ensure that NIPS services provide prisoners with a better opportunity to gain employment post-release;

- revised policies which enable prisoners to gain more but better controlled access to education-related IT; and
- enhanced arrangements to fill a number of existing teacher and vocational training instructor vacancies.

Prison Service: Recruitment

Mr Murphy asked the Minister of Justice why he will not disclose the legal advice that he was given in relation to the new recruitment procedures for the Prison Service.

(AQO 1865/11-15)

Mr Ford: The Department's legal advice is confidential and attracts legal professional privilege. I wish to maintain privilege in the advice and in the circumstances it would not be appropriate for me to disclose it.

Judicial Appointments

Mr Kinahan asked the Minister of Justice to outline any discussions he has had with the Lord Chief Justice and the Attorney General regarding their views on the judicial appointments process.

(AQO 1866/11-15)

Mr Ford: I have not discussed the judicial appointments process with either the Lord Chief Justice or the Attorney General.

The Northern Ireland Act 1998 provided a mechanism for review of the operation of appointments and removals arrangements. The Justice Committee led review was the proper opportunity to express views on the system and both the Lord Chief Justice and the Attorney General recently took the opportunity to submit oral and written evidence to the Justice Committee's Inquiry on this matter. My Department also made a written submission. That evidence is a matter for consideration by the Justice Committee. I look forward to considering the Committee's report and to the debate on the issue.

Department for Regional Development

Ministerial Cars and Drivers

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the number of departmental staff who have availed of ministerial cars and drivers in each of the last three years; (ii) the cost of providing the service; and (iii) whether the benefit derived is subject to income tax.

(AQW 10336/11-15)

Mr Kennedy (The Minister for Regional Development):

- (i) The number of Departmental staff who have availed of the ministerial car and driver in each of the last 3 financial years is as follows:

2009-2010	0
2010-2011	0
2011-2012	4

- (ii) Most journeys were within normal working hours and so there is only marginal additional cost. In any event, as officials' use of ministerial cars is solely for official purposes, any cost would be offset by the saving in travel expenses claims which might otherwise have been incurred.
- (iii) As officials' use of ministerial cars is solely for official purposes, there is no taxable benefit.

NI Water Tender C071

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 8814/11-15, (i) whether NI Water produced a monthly excel spreadsheet detailing the average jobs per man per day for each individual ICA embedded contractor engaged under the C071 tender; (ii) whether the ICA embedded contractors were informed that this was a league table of performance; (iii) what was the purpose of the monthly report; (iv) who requested that this report be produced; and (v) whether the directors of Williams Steel Industries were made aware of these league tables and if not, to give the reasons for the position on this issue.

(AQW 10358/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that it does not recognise the term embedded contractor and that (i) monthly spreadsheets detailing jobs/man/day were produced for relevant NIW staff and ICA contracted technicians engaged under the C071 contract; (ii) it is not possible to ascertain if ICA contracted technicians were advised if this was to be viewed as a league table; (iii) the monthly spreadsheet was used for internal management information purposes; (iv) production of the spreadsheet was requested by NIW's Head of M&E Services; (v) it is believed that Williams Industrial Services were aware of the production of the spreadsheet information, but made no request to NIW for the information relating to its employees.

NI Water Tender C398

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) why NI Water tender C398 has not been awarded; (ii) to detail where this tender was advertised and at what cost; and (iii) for a breakdown of the cost to the public purse of not awarding this tender.

(AQW 10366/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that (i) tender C398 was not awarded owing to a legal challenge to the process; (ii) tender C398 was advertised via NIW's website, eSourcingNI and the Official Journal of the European Union (Tenders Electronic Daily) at no cost to NIW; and (iii) a breakdown of the cost of not awarding tender C398 is not readily available and could only be compiled at disproportionate cost.

NI Water Tender C527

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Regional Development whether NI Water tender C527 is a revised version of tender C398; and whether the tender contracts are comparable.

(AQW 10367/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that C527 is a revised version of C398 and the two tenders are comparable.

NI Water Tender C527

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the NI Water tender C527 process and the awarding of the tender in respect of UK, Northern Ireland or European statutory employment laws.

(AQW 10373/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the tender process for C527 was conducted in compliance with the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2006 (as amended); and the contract award decision complies with all applicable employment laws.

Cost of Car Parking at Belfast International Airport and the George Best Belfast City Airport

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development what steps he has taken to monitor and control the cost of car parking at Belfast International Airport and the George Best Belfast City Airport.
(AQW 10375/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Airport parking charges are a commercial matter for each airport operator or the companies which provide the parking facilities and my Department has no statutory role in the regulation of such charges.

Non-Domestic Water Supplies

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development how many non-domestic water supplies are assessed for payment by (i) meter; and (ii) property value.
(AQW 10386/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that in relation to non-domestic water supplies (i) 68,860 are charged on the basis of metered consumption; and (ii) 11,267 are charged on an unmeasured basis using the Net Annual Value (NAV) of the property. The NAV of a property is determined by Land and Property Services.

Non-Domestic Properties that have had a Water Meter Installed

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development how many non-domestic properties have had a water meter installed in the last three years; and what assessment has been carried out on how this has affected water bills.
(AQW 10389/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that water meters have been installed at 3,046 non-domestic properties during the past three years. The table below shows the number of meters installed in each of the three years.

	2009 / 10	2010 / 11	2011 / 12
Number of meters installed at non-domestic properties	933	1,111	1,002

No assessment has been undertaken of how bills may have been affected by changing from unmeasured billing to measured billing because the number of variables involved would make any comparison unduly complex and would require a case by case scrutiny.

Translink Monopoly

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development when the issue of the Translink monopoly was last reviewed.
(AQW 10411/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Transport Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 provides that most public transport services will continue to be provided by the subsidiaries of the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company. During public consultation and the development of the Bill the issue of Translink's role was considered and there was strong support for retaining a regulated public transport system and for Translink to remain the lead supplier of public passenger transport services in Northern Ireland.

Funding for Translink

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development how much funding Translink receives on an annual basis from (i) his Department; (ii) the Department of Education; and (iii) any other Department or non-government agencies.

(AQW 10414/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink funding varies on an annual basis. However to give you an indication Table (i) below sets out what the Group received in terms of annual funding of both a capital and revenue nature from my Department as taken from the Translink Annual Report and Accounts for the 2 years from 2009/10 to 2010/11. The 2011/12 Accounts are not yet available but estimates are provided.

The Education and Library Boards reimburse Translink for operating the Home to School bus services for school children. This is a contract arrangement. However, it is included as the size of the contract is deemed relevant to your question. The Department of Education also contributes a subvention due to the abolition of '3 for 2' and standing passengers on school services. Table (ii) below sets out the relevant information and includes 2011/12 figures as reported by Translink to me. Translink have also advised me that there is no other material annual funding from other Departments or non-government agencies.

TABLE (I)

TRANSLINK PUBLIC TRANSPORT FUNDING FROM 2008-2009 TO 2010/11

	2009/10 £m	2010/11 £m	2011/12 £m
Public Service Obligation (Rail)	23	21.7	23.3
Concessionary Fares	31.6	33.1	35.4
Other (Including Fuel Duty Rebate & Pensions)	15.5	14.1	17.7
Total Revenue	70.1	68.9	76.4
Bus Capital	14.2	8.1	16.6
Rail Capital	36.4	53.4	92.1
Total Capital	50.6	61.5	108.7
Total Funding DRD	120.7	130.4	185.1

Source:

Translink Annual Report and Accounts and Departmental records for 2011/12 – Note: Figures do not include some contractual elements of funding and need to be adjusted for accounting period differences)

TABLE (II)**EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARDS/ DEPT OF EDUCATION CONTRACT PAYMENTS 2009/10 TO 2011/12**

	2009/10 £m	2010/11 £m	2011/12 £m
ELBs Bus	36.3	36.6	35.6
ELBs Rail	0.7	0.7	0.8
Dept Education	2.1	2.2	2.3
Total Funding DRD	39.0	39.5	38.6

Thirteen Replacement Road Gritters

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Regional Development where the thirteen replacement road gritters that were recently announced will be located; and how these allocations will be determined.
(AQW 10443/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the locations of the thirteen replacement road gritters, that were recently announced, are detailed in the table below:

LOCATIONS OF THE REPLACEMENT GRITTERS

Number	Location	Council Area
2	Armagh Depot	Armagh City and District Council
1	Arvalee Depot	Omagh District Council
2	Balloo Depot	North Down Borough Council
2	Ballykeel Depot	Ballymena Borough Council
1	Carn Depot	Craigavon Borough Council
1	Moygashel Depot	Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council
1	Northbrook Depot	Coleraine Borough Council
1	Rathmore Depot	Antrim Borough Council
1	Strabane Depot	Strabane District Council
1	Woodburn Depot	Derry City Council

These allocations are based on a combination of vehicle age and condition as assessed by Roads Service fleet engineers.

I am also advised that during the planning of next season's winter service, some additional vehicle movements may be required to ensure the most efficient use of available resources.

Ballymena Railway Station

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development what has been the impact on the Saturday revenue take at Ballymena Railway Station this year since the reduction in staffing levels introduced by Translink.

(AQW 10446/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised that staff duties at Ballymena station were changed to exclude Saturday opening of the Ticket Office from early March 2012. In the subsequent 5-week period, revenue collected for all Saturday journeys to and from Ballymena Station was broadly similar to that lifted during the same period in 2011.

All passengers continue to be sold tickets and have tickets checked by Ballymena Station platform staff on Saturdays.

Ballysallagh Upper and Lower Reservoirs, Craigantlet

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Regional Development whether NI Water plans to carry out any inspections or maintenance work in the current financial year at the Ballysallagh Upper and Lower Reservoirs, Craigantlet; and to outline the nature of this work.

(AQW 10448/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that in order to maintain the safety and structural integrity of all of its reservoirs, it carries out regular routine inspections and undertakes any necessary remedial work identified. An inspection of the Ballysallagh reservoirs is planned for the current financial year.

Ballysallagh Upper and Lower Reservoirs, Craigantlet

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Regional Development whether NI Water plans to temporarily, or permanently, lower water levels at Ballysallagh Upper and Lower Reservoirs, Craigantlet.

(AQW 10449/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that it plans to carry out maintenance work at Ballysallagh Upper and Lower Reservoirs which will require the water levels to be lowered temporarily. It is not envisaged that the work will be undertaken within this financial year.

The levels in the reservoirs will, of course, rise and fall as a result of seasonal variations in rainfall within the catchment areas.

Ballysallagh Upper and Lower Reservoirs, Craigantlet

Mrs Cochrane asked the Minister for Regional Development whether NI Water plans to dispose of Ballysallagh Upper and Lower Reservoirs, Craigantlet; and if so, to outline the method to be used and the envisaged timeframe for disposal.

(AQW 10450/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the Ballysallagh Reservoirs have been declared surplus to requirements and are being considered for disposal.

Disposal of the reservoirs will be carried out in accordance with NIW's disposal strategy which requires properties to be placed on the open market in order to obtain the best price and achieve value for money. However, it is unlikely that NIW will dispose of the reservoirs prior to the 2013/14 financial year.

Banks that Hold Bonds from Developers

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Regional Development whether banks that hold bonds from developers can be made to complete works in the relevant developments.

(AQW 10480/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that bond providers, including banks which have guaranteed the completion of a street by providing a bond for a developer, can be required to pay for the completion of such streets, if the developer does not complete the necessary works.

Value of Cash Bonds

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Regional Development what is the value of the cash bonds currently held by his Department.

(AQW 10481/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it currently holds cash bonds to the value of £1,691,089.

Inspector's Report on the A8 Road Project

Mr Allister asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to the Inspector's Report on the A8 road project, (i) when was the report received; (ii) to whom it has been circulated; (iii) whether and when ARUP received a copy and the reasons why this was the case; and (iv) when the affected residents and landowners will learn of the report's full contents.

(AQW 10549/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the Inspector's Report on the A8 road project was received on 12 September 2011. The report has since been circulated to me, my Department's officials, and my Department's Engineering and Environmental consultants, ARUP.

ARUP received a copy of the Inspector's Report in September 2011 to enable them to advise Roads Service on the possible implications of incorporating the recommendations contained within the report.

As the Member will be aware, I announced my decision to proceed with this scheme on 1 May 2012. In the current economic climate, the commencement of this dual carriageway should be welcome news for the construction industry and when completed, will contribute to the overall economic development of Northern Ireland. In addition, the provision of a new all-purpose dual carriageway will benefit road users by helping to reduce journey times, improve road safety along the A8, and help the development of the Port of Larne, the second largest Port in Northern Ireland.

The Inspector's Report, and my Department's Statement on the way forward, was made available to view on 1 May 2012 at the following locations:

- Roads Service - Headquarters, Room 2-01, Clarence Court, 10-18 Adelaide Street, Belfast BT2 8GB;
- Roads Service - Northern Division, County Hall, Castlerock Road, Coleraine BT52 3HS;
- Roads Service - Eastern Division, Hydebank, 4 Hospital Road, BT8 8JL;
- Newtownabbey Borough Council, Mossley Mill, Newtownabbey, BT36 5QA;
- Larne Borough Council, Smiley Buildings, Victoria Road, Larne, BT40 1RU.

Alternatively, the reports can be downloaded from the A8 Belfast to Larne Dualling website at http://www.drndni.gov.uk/index/roadimprovements/schemes/a8_belfast_to_larne_dualling.htm.

Lurgan Railway Station

Mr Moutray asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans Translink has to provide a pedestrian footbridge or walkway at Lurgan Railway Station.

(AQW 10566/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised that it has recently undertaken some refurbishment of the footbridge that already exists at the station. There are no plans at present to provide a new pedestrian footbridge or walkway at Lurgan Railway Station.

Quay Lane South Car Park, Enniskillen

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the income generated in parking charges; and (ii) the number of tickets purchased from the Quay Lane South car park, Enniskillen from (a) September 2010 to March 2011; and (b) September 2011 to March 2012.

(AQW 10568/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that details of the income generated and ticket sales for the Quay Lane South car-park in Enniskillen, for the periods September 2010 to March 2011 and September 2011 and March 2012 respectively, are set out in the table below:

	Sept 2010 – Mar 2011	Sept 2011- Mar 2012
Pay & Display Tickets Purchased	27,167	18,618
Income	£18,400	£15,400

NI Water: Planning Applications

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development what action his Department is taking to speed up the response time of NI Water as a statutory consultee on planning applications, given that the average response time has increased over recent years.

(AQW 10569/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Northern Ireland Water (NIW) is consulted by Planning Service on planning applications and provides advisory responses. It is committed to meeting response times agreed with Planning Service on planning consultations.

I have been advised by NIW that its response time has been affected by the introduction of a new ePIC system by Planning Service during 2010. The new system has proven to be substantially more time consuming for NIW than the previous system.

NIW has taken steps to allocate additional staff resources to this area and has significantly reduced the number of outstanding planning consultations during the past month. NIW continues to work towards meeting the agreed response times and I will seek updates on progress through current monitoring arrangements to ensure that previous performance is restored.

Roads Service as a Statutory Consultee on Planning Applications

Mr Flanagan asked the Minister for Regional Development what action his Department is taking to speed up the response time of Roads Service as a statutory consultee on planning applications, given that the average response time has increased over recent years.

(AQW 10570/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I should firstly point out that while my Department's Roads Service is a key consultee on planning applications where roads matters are involved, it is not a statutory consultee under current planning legislation.

However, Roads Service and the Department of the Environment's Planning Division have a Service Level Agreement which includes a requirement for Roads Service to respond to 70% of planning application consultations within 15 working days of receipt. Officials have advised that, in each of the last 3 years, Roads Service has exceeded this target, and specific details are provided in the table below:

Year	Responses within 15 Working Days (%)
April 2009 – March 2010	77%
April 2010 – March 2011	81%
April 2011 – March 2012	80%

In order to further speed up response times, Roads Service has been working closely with DOE Planning Division on a range of initiatives including: the provision of road engineering staff for the Strategic Projects Team; the introduction of fast-tracking procedures for straightforward planning application consultations; and the adoption of on-line working via the Electronic Planning Information for Citizens (ePIC) system.

My Department remains committed to working with DOE Planning Division to seek further improvements to consultation response times, where possible.

NI Water Budget

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) how much of the NI Water budget was returned to his Department; and (i) how much profit NI Water made from its other incomes, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 10573/11-15)

Mr Kennedy:

- (i) The table below shows the DEL (Departmental Expenditure Limit) budget returned by NI Water through the monitoring rounds to my Department in each of the last three years:

NI WATER REDUCED REQUIREMENTS SURRENDERED THROUGH IN YEAR MONITORING ROUNDS

	2009/10 £'000	2010/11 £'000	2011/12 £'000	Total budget surrendered over three years £'000
Resource	0	600	24,500	25,100
Capital	0	42,300	600	42,900
Resource – non cash	0	14,900	10,100	25,000
Total	0	57,800	35,200	93,000

- (ii) I have been advised by NI Water that it made the following estimated profits from its other incomes in each of the past three years:

NIW ESTIMATED NET PROFIT FROM OTHER INCOMES

	2009/10 £'000	2010/11 £'000	2011/12 £'000
Estimated Net Profit	971	712	Not yet available

Notes:

- i) Net profit is taken after deduction of tax and dividend.
- ii) The figures have been extracted directly from NI Water's audited regulatory accounts.
- iii) Non-appointed businesses refer mainly to septic tank emptying, vehicle maintenance services carried out on behalf of others and income associated with aerial masts erected on NI Water property. A reasonable proportion of operating and other costs have been apportioned to these activities based on turnover and assumptions on the costs incurred. This explains why the profit figures are described as "estimated".
- iv) NI Water's 2011/12 regulatory accounts are in the process of being prepared and are therefore not yet available.

Bonds Presented to the Department

Mr McMullan asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 10029/11-15, what is the value of the bonds held by each bank.

(AQW 10578/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I would advise the Member that this information is not readily available. As it is not held centrally, it could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Public Inquiry into the Proposed A5 Dualling Project

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the public inquiry into the proposed A5 dualling project.

(AQW 10594/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the Public Inquiry into the proposed A5 Western Transport Corridor dual carriageway ended on 1 July 2011. The Inspector carried out follow-up site visits and considered all the evidence submitted during the Inquiry to assist with the completion of his Report. Roads Service received the Inspector's Report on the A5 Western Transport Corridor Public Inquiry on 24 February 2012 and officials are now reviewing the issues arising out of this significant body of work.

I anticipate publishing the Departmental Statement, which is the Department's response to the Inspector's Report, along with the Inspector's Report in early summer. The Inspector's Report will also be made available to the public at that time.

Cost of Producing Consultation Documents and Official Reports

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Regional Development what was the cost to his Department of producing (i) consultation documents; and (ii) official reports in the 2010/11 financial year.

(AQW 10599/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The costs to my Department of producing consultation documents and official reports in 2010/11 are set out below.

Financial Year	Consultation Costs	Official Reports Costs
2010/11	£51,366	£2,338

Proposals for Legislation

Mr Byrne asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) what proposals for legislation, subject to Executive approval, he has introduced or intends to introduce between April 2012 and March 2015; (ii) the anticipated timescale for the introduction of each Bill; and (iii) the intention of each Bill.

(AQW 10639/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have set out below the items of legislation that I propose to introduce between the period April 2012 to March 2015. Details of the intention of each Bill have also been provided. I am not in a position to provide dates for the Introduction of any Bills as these will be subject to Executive agreement.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS FOR PRIMARY LEGISLATION RELATING TO MY RESPONSIBILITIES MAY ARISE IN THIS MANDATE.

What proposals for legislation, subject to Executive approval, he has introduced or intends to introduce between April 2012 and March 2015	The intention of each Bill
Harbours Bill	To provide the NI Harbours with wider commercial powers.
Roads (Functions of District Councils) Bill	To provide district councils with certain roads-related powers

Disciplinary Procedures for Roads Service Personnel

Mr Girvan asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) to detail the disciplinary procedures for Roads Service personnel who do not deal with complaints received; and (ii) to outline their relationship with property developers and architects.

(AQW 10647/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I am advised by my officials that the disciplinary procedures contained in the NI Civil Service Human Resources Handbook apply throughout all Departments. Should an official fail to deal appropriately with a complaint from, for example, a member of the public, there is scope under these procedures to take informal or formal disciplinary action. The specific action taken is determined by the seriousness of the offence and the particular circumstances surrounding the matter.

For minor disciplinary offences, informal action may result in an oral warning and/or written informal warning. Alternatively, or in tandem, a minor issue may be dealt with under the performance management system and may result in any identified learning or development needs of the official being addressed through the provision of advice, guidance or formal training .

For more serious cases such as those which constitute a breach of employment or a breach of official instructions, formal disciplinary action may be taken. This would involve a preliminary investigation and, if there was a case to answer, would lead to a formal disciplinary charge.

If a formal charge is upheld, the official's employing Department may, depending on the seriousness of the matter, impose a disciplinary penalty or penalties. These range from a written reprimand to dismissal. There is, however, no rigid code which assigns specific penalties to particular offences.

A wide range of Roads Service personnel may come into contact with property developers and architects in the course of their duties. In particular, staff involved in development control, private streets and maintenance activities are likely to have such contact.

Roads Service officials regularly liaise with developers and architects on roads-related issues in connection with their development proposals and works. Typically, issues may include pre-application enquiries and planning applications, technical matters relating to access and design standards, road safety, traffic progression, Transport Assessments, Private Streets Determinations, construction details, and transportation requirements.

Completing Works in Unfinished Housing Developments

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the number of contractors who are currently acting on behalf of his Department and are completing works in unfinished housing developments where the bond has been forfeited; (ii) the number of works requiring completion; and (iii) the estimated completion time for each of the works.

(AQW 10673/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it currently has 14 contractors completing works in unfinished housing developments where the bond will be used to cover the costs of works undertaken. Where a developer does not finish roads in a development within a reasonable time, the Department can take enforcement action under Article 11 of the Private Streets Order 1980 and then use the bond to fund the works required to bring the roads up to adoption standards.

I am further advised that there are currently 83 sites with outstanding works requiring completion. The 14 contractors, acting on behalf of the Department, are currently working on 23 of these sites.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to provide a detailed estimate of the completion time for each of these sites, as the extent of the works does vary and work may also need to be undertaken by other statutory bodies, which Roads Service has no control over. However, it is anticipated that a substantial number of these sites will be completed in this financial year.

Public Funding Allocated to the Port of Belfast for the Harbour Police

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what level of public funding is allocated to the Port of Belfast for the Harbour Police.

(AQW 10689/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The Department for Regional Development does not allocate any public funding to the Port of Belfast for the Harbour Police.

Gritting Footpaths

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development under what conditions are Roads Service staff permitted to grit footpaths.

(AQW 10690/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Staff from my Department's Roads Service are permitted to grit busy town and city centre footpaths during prolonged periods of snow and ice, provided that the resources are available to undertake this largely manual task. However, as Roads Service resources are normally fully utilised on keeping busy roads clear during such conditions, my Department has been establishing partnerships with Councils, which are prepared to assist with this work.

Members of the Travelling Community Residing in Housing Executive Properties

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 10173/11-15, to detail which legislation relates to an excess number of vehicles on public highways, such as in instances where members of the travelling community park caravans and other vehicles around their homes which cause an obstruction to other road users; and what action he is taking to ensure that all communities comply with this legislation and that safety and access for all road users is not compromised.

(AQW 10703/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that travelling community encampments on public roads are controlled through the provisions of the Unauthorised Encampments (NI) Order 2005. It is the responsibility of the PSNI, following a request by Roads Service, to consider eviction of illegal encampments from public roads and car parks.

Parking Tickets

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) how many parking tickets in each council area were issued in 2010/11; (ii) how many were appealed; and (iii) how many of the appeals were (a) successful; (b) unsuccessful; (iii) remain outstanding.

(AQW 10707/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Details of the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCN) issued in 2010/11 by Council area are shown in the table below:

Antrim	1061
Ards	4067
Armagh	2687
Ballymena	4592
Ballymoney	1166
Banbridge	1078
Belfast & Castlereagh	36873
Carrickfergus	1345
Coleraine	3884
Cookstown	1988
Craigavon	3668
Derry	10892
Down	2756
Dungannon	2139
Fermanagh	7153
Larne	709
Limavady	1057
Lisburn	10318
Magherafelt	2329
Moyle	349
Newry And Mourne	5636
Newtownabbey	622
North Down	5021
Omagh	4597
Strabane	2582

Figures relating to PCN Challenges are not compiled on a Council basis. However, officials from my Department's Roads Service Parking Enforcement Unit have advised that approximately 13% of PCNs issued are challenged and approximately 59% of these are successful. All Challenges are processed within 15 days of receipt.

Parking Tickets

Mr Hussey asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the offences for which parking tickets were issued in 2010/11, broken down by (i) parking on double yellow lines; (ii) parking in a disabled bay; (iii) parking in a loading bay; (iii) excess time.

(AQW 10708/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that in 2010/11, the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCN's) issued in respect of vehicles illegally parked in restricted streets, i.e. on yellow lines, was 32,042.

During the same period, 6264 PCNs were issued for vehicles parked in disabled parking spaces, without clearly displaying a valid Blue Badge. This figure includes on-street and off-street contraventions.

4449 PCNs were issued in respect of vehicles parked in loading spaces during restricted hours and 15,771 PCNs were issued for vehicles parked on-street for longer than permitted.

The Member should note that the figure of 15,771 referred to above, does not include contraventions relating to Pay and Display parking.

Sewage Treatment Works at Ballyhornan, Co Down

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline any plans for an upgrade of the sewage treatment works at Ballyhornan, Co Down, including a timeframe of the implementation of the plans.

(AQW 10716/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that it plans to improve the sewerage system at Ballyhornan by undertaking some network alterations, provision of fine screening facilities and remedial work to the sewer outfall. In the longer term, NIW proposes to intercept the screened flows and to pump the sewage to an upgraded Ardglass Wastewater Treatment Works.

Unfortunately, progress on the upgrade work at Ballyhornan has not been completed as quickly as NIW would have wished owing to difficulties encountered with land acquisition and a right of way agreement. Agreement has now been reached on the purchase of land for the screening facility and the pump transfer station site but negotiations are still ongoing in relation to a right of way which will provide access to the new screen works.

NIW has assured me of its continuing commitment to maintaining the existing sewerage system in the area until the outstanding issues are resolved.

Logistics Solutions for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development what work his Department has carried out on improving logistics solutions for small and medium sized enterprises.

(AQW 10722/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: I can advise the Member that, in addition to investing in the strategic road network, my Department's Road Service undertakes an annual programme of minor local road improvements and road safety schemes.

Over the past decade, transport investment by my Department has increased substantially, initially through proposals in the Regional Transportation Strategy and subsequently through the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland. My Department's Roads Service has advised that recent improvements to the strategic road network include a 20 km dual carriageway between Dungannon and Ballygawley and the final 12 km link of dualling, around Newry, on the Eastern Seaboard Corridor between Belfast and Dublin. In addition, dual carriageways on the A26 at Ballymena and the A2 from Londonderry to the City of Derry Airport were completed during the 2010/11 financial year. A single carriageway bypass of the village of Carland, north of Dungannon, was also completed.

Roads Service officials further advise that, over the next three years, it is envisaged that in the region of £500 million of investment will be taken forward on the Strategic Road Network. This will include significant elements of the A5 dual carriageway project, between Londonderry and Strabane, and Omagh and Ballygawley, along with the A8 Belfast to Larne project and a scheme to dual the A2 Shore Road at Greenisland. These measures will benefit the local economy by enhancing access to our ports, airports and cross-border links and facilitate easier movement of goods and people throughout Northern Ireland.

Officials also report that development work is continuing on a range of other major projects, including the A26 Glarryford, the A6 Randalstown to Castledawson, the A6 Londonderry to Dungiven, the York Street Interchange and the A24 Ballynahinch Bypass. Delivery of these projects will be determined by the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2011-21 and subsequent Budget settlements.

The Roads Service programme of minor local road improvements embraces a range of categories including carriageway widening schemes, Bridge Strengthening, Local Transport and Safety Measures and large minor works on local roads. All of these schemes comprise a dominant safety theme. The large minor and carriageway widening schemes, which are mainly on the strategic road network, provide safe overtaking opportunities. Bridge strengthening works are targeted at those bridges which require improvements to meet the required standard.

Officials have advised that the local transport and safety measures programme is, in itself, a wide ranging programme of predominately small schemes incorporating collision remedial measures, traffic calming, traffic management, safer routes to school, and improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

Funding targeted at these commitments in 2010/2011 by Roads Service achieved 19 collision remedial schemes; Traffic calming measures on 22 projects; 22 school safety zones and safety projects; 18.8km of new cycle lanes; 15.5km of new footway; 23 controlled pedestrian crossings; £1.45m spent on travel information schemes and the use of Intelligent Transport Systems to provide traffic control and travel information to road users; and £11.2m spent on, mainly rural, network development schemes.

Recycling of Disused Railway Carriages

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the contractual arrangements in place for the recycling of disused railway carriages.

(AQW 10772/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised that it recently conducted a tender exercise and the first tranche of vehicles was sold for scrapping to the highest bidder.

Translink: Cost of Desk and Pocket Diaries

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost to Translink of acquiring and distributing complimentary desk and pocket diaries in each of the last five years.

(AQW 10774/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: Translink has advised that in each of the last five years the following annual costs have been incurred on the acquisition and distribution of complementary desk and pocket diaries to a range of key stakeholders including political contacts/passengers/business contacts (and up until 2012 Translink employees).

2008	£32,448
2009	£30,173
2010	£30,553
2011	£30,502
2012	£18,811

Roads Service Section Offices

Mr I McCreagh asked the Minister for Regional Development why Roads Service Section Offices have not yet been allocated budgets for the 2012/13 financial year; and when the budgets will be allocated.

(AQW 10808/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the maintenance allocations for 2012/13 were approved by the Roads Service Board on 26 April 2012. Details of the confirmed allocations have been forwarded to Divisions and will be communicated to Section Offices shortly.

However, the annual maintenance allocation process begins in the autumn of the preceding year, with the aim of making confirmed allocations as close to the beginning of the financial year as possible. As part of the allocation process for 2012/13, Roads Service Divisions were given indicative budget figures in December 2011. These indicative budget figures did not change significantly between December 2011 and March 2012. Therefore, Divisions were afforded a good indication of 2012/13 budgets allocations.

Office of National Statistics of NI Water

Mr Dickson asked the Minister for Regional Development what are the financial implications of the classification by the the Office of National Statistics of NI Water as a non-departmental public body.
(AQW 10826/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: The financial implications of the classification by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) of NI Water as a non-departmental public body (rather than a public corporation as had previously been the case) are that the majority of its expenditure forms part of the DRD budget. This has been the case since the 2008/09 financial year. Prior to the reclassification, it was only the cash transactions (subsidy, loan draw downs, interest and dividend) between DRD and NI Water that formed part of the DRD budget.

The ONS decision was a direct consequence of NI Water continuing to receive the majority of its revenue through subsidy from the Executive in lieu of domestic charging. This has meant that the company has not been able to act as intended when it was established – as a regulated utility with an independent income stream from charging operating at arm's length from Government.

Defibrillators in Buildings

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what action his Department is taking to increase the number of defibrillators in buildings used by his Department or its arm's-length bodies.
(AQW 10894/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department currently meets its legislative requirements for the provision of first aid (including Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)) in all buildings under its control. There is no legislative requirement to have defibrillators in buildings at present and there are no immediate plans to introduce them.

Similarly I am also advised by Northern Ireland Water that defibrillators are not available at any of its premises and that there are no plans to introduce them. Translink, however, provides defibrillators at a number of key transport locations across Northern Ireland.

Department-Owned Public Space in Portadown Town Plaza

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Regional Development whether planning permission was granted to erect an obelisk on his Department-owned public space in Portadown town plaza; and if so, what consultation was carried out, including an Equality Impact Assessment.
(AQW 10986/11-15)

Mr Kennedy: My Department's Roads Service is a key consultee in respect of planning applications/ planning appeals and, as such, it provides an opinion to DOE Planning on traffic management and road safety issues.

Roads Service had no objections on road safety grounds to the proposal to erect the obelisk under Planning Application N/2012/0032/F, which was approved by DOE Planning on 21 March 2012.

Informative 2 on the Planning Approval, recommended by Roads Service, requires the applicant to seek a permit under Article 78 of the Roads (NI) Order 1993 from Roads Service prior to commencement of work.

I would further advise the Member that Roads Service is not required to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment when assessing planning applications.

Department for Social Development

Eligibility Criteria for Benefits

Mr Wells asked the Minister for Social Development what steps have been taken to ensure that the eligibility criteria for benefits are applied consistently so that claimants who are blind or partially sighted do not lose benefits.

(AQW 10362/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The eligibility criteria for Social Security Benefits are prescribed in legislation. Detailed procedural advice, guidance and instructions are provided to decision makers on how to apply Social Security law in a consistent manner and this is reviewed and updated when changes to the benefit rules occur. Staff within my Department undergo a comprehensive training and lengthy consolidation programme in the specific benefit they administer based on the appropriate guidance and instructions and ongoing support to staff is available from dedicated specialist teams of benefit experts in the Department. A rigorous checking regime is also in place across the range of different benefits to ensure staff apply their training properly and comply with the rules when making decisions on benefit claims. This continuous checking programme and monitoring of standards is validated on an annual basis by an Independent Standards Committee and the Northern Ireland Audit Office. The overall approach and the specific measures in place are designed to ensure that the eligibility rules are applied consistently across all customers including those who are blind or partially sighted, to ensure that everyone receives their proper benefit entitlement.

Social Housing Development in Ballymena

Mr Swann asked the Minister for Social Development how much land is held by his Department for social housing development in Ballymena; and how much would be required to meet the current demand for social housing in that area.

(AQW 10370/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There are currently eight sites located within the Ballymena District area on the Housing Executive Undeveloped Land Schedule and the details of these sites are attached below. Of these eight sites, there is only need at this time for future development at Tobar Court, Cullybackey and Brooke Park, Ballymena.

Site Location	Site Size (HA)
Garvaghy Avenue, Portglenone	1.45
Ballee Drive, Ballymena	1.92
Sandown Park, Doury Road, Ballymena	0.87
Tobar Court, Cullybackey	1.45
Coronation Crescent, Clough	0.41
Brooke Park, Ballymena	0.07
Wyncroft, Antrim Road, Ballymena	0.10
Ballee Drive, Ballymena	0.24

Policies for Equality Impact Assessments

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development, from May 2011 to date, to detail (i) the number of staff involved in the (a) screening out; and (b) screening in of policies for Equality Impact Assessments; (ii) the number of policies his Department and its arm's-length bodies have (a) screened out as having no equality impact; and (b) screened in as having an equality impact; and (iii) the cost of the screening process.

(AQW 10395/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Since May 2011, my Department and its arm's-length bodies have

- (a) screened out 73 policies as having no equality impact; and
- (b) screened in 2 policies as having an equality impact.

As equality screening is an integral part of the policy development process it is not possible to provide details of the numbers of staff involved in, or the cost of, the screening process.

Boiler Replacement Scheme

Mr McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development when the Boiler Replacement Scheme will be introduced; and what changes will be made to the qualifying criteria.

(AQW 10420/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The pilot Boiler Replacement Scheme has been very successful. Almost 1700 households have had inefficient boilers replaced under the scheme. I am now examining the evaluation of the pilot and I expect to make an announcement about the criteria for a new Boiler Replacement Scheme in the near future.

Housing Stock

Mr Agnew asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 8115/11-15, what is the (i) total asset value of the 6,000 Housing Executive properties that require multi-element improvements; and (ii) estimated total cost of carrying out the improvements.

(AQW 10423/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The total asset value of the Housing Executive properties that require multi-element improvements is not currently available, however, this will be assessed as part of the economic appraisal which will be completed for each scheme. The estimated cost of improvements to these properties is approximately £228 million.

Universal Credit

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister for Social Development what provision is in place to facilitate the Housing Executive under the new plans for Universal Credit, given that the proposal is to pay Housing Benefit straight to the tenant.

(AQW 10507/11-15)

Mr McCausland: It is currently planned to introduce Universal Credit from October 2013 to replace a range of existing in and out of work benefits, including Housing Benefit. The new Universal Credit will include a contribution towards eligible housing costs. I am currently giving active consideration to the best means of making the payments of the housing costs elements and have discussed this matter with Executive colleagues who are members of the Welfare Reform Executive Sub Committee. In parallel, I have asked my officials to explore different payment approaches that might be possible, as I recognise that the introduction of Universal Credit will present challenges for some benefit customers. I am committed to putting measures in place to ensure that the Universal Credit payment system does not disadvantage customers or place them in undue hardship.

The planned migration of existing benefit claims to Universal Credit will mean that Housing Benefit for working age customers will be phased out by 2017. This will impact the Northern Ireland Housing

Executive, which currently has responsibility for the administration of Housing Benefit. My Department is working with those parts of the public sector directly affected by the introduction of Universal Credit, including the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, to understand the implications for these organisations.

Regional Infrastructure Programme

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the organisations funded under the Regional Infrastructure Programme; and (ii) the level of funding allocated to each organisation in the (a) 2009/10; (b) 2010/11; and (c) 2011/12 financial years.

(AQW 10528/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Department for Social Development has provided Regional Infrastructure Programme funding for the (a) 2009/10; (b) 2010/11; and (c) 2011/12 financial years as detailed below.

LEVEL OF FUNDING

Organisations funded	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Advice Northern Ireland	£274,607.47	£246,381.47	£241,453.84
Advice Services Alliance	£1667.00	£11,800.00	£0.00
Citizens Advice Bureau	£652,853.00	£669,806.00	£649,898.41
Churches' Community Work Alliance	£102,820.63	£104,673.36	£104,096.56.56
Community Evaluation Northern Ireland.	£105,095.46	£107,879.91	£97,337.00
CO3 - Chief Officers 3rd Sector	£114,403.71	£100,475.90	£94,748.15
Community Change	£209,225.19	£213,544.51	£198,680.81
Groundwork Northern Ireland	£62,609.92	£0.00	£0.00
Law Centre	£669,171.34	£680,210.00	£663,283.00
Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action	£650,000.00	£650,000.00	£611,000.00
Volunteer Now	£289,066.82	£249,384.64	£234,422.88
Women's Centres Regional Partnership	£362,257.31	£346,238.84	£325,464.49
Total	£3,493,777.85	£3,380,394.63	£3,220,385.14

Housing Stress in the Dunmurry Area

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of people (i) on the housing waiting list; and (ii) in Housing Stress in the Dunmurry area.

(AQW 10557/11-15)

Mr McCausland: There is no specific waiting list for Dunmurry, it is contained within a Common Landlord Area (CLA) called Upper Dunmurry Lane/Areema and Beattie Park, as well as a separate waiting list for Seymour Hill/Conway. The latest information that is available is for 30 April 2012 and is detailed in the table below. The information is based on applicants only and their 1st preference of choice. It should be noted that in terms of gauging demand for any new development in Dunmurry, applicants appearing on wider lists may be interested and may therefore change their preferences as necessary.

Area	Applicants on Waiting List	Applicants in Housing Stress
Upper Dunmury Lane/Areema	77	55
Beattie Park	12	8
Seymour Hill/Conway	137	76

The Information provided is an Official Statistic. The Production and dissemination of all such Statistics is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Housing Waiting List in the Dunmurry

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of people on the housing waiting list in the Dunmurry area who are aged over 55, broken down by the housing type requested. (AQW 10558/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not hold figures on the number of applicants aged 55 years and above. However, in the Upper Dunmurry Lane/Areema, Beattie Park and Seymour Hill/Conway areas there are a total of 31 applicants on the waiting list which have a member of the household aged at least 60 years old.

Pilot Boiler Replacement Scheme

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 9742/11-15, when the findings of the evaluation of the pilot Boiler Replacement Scheme will be published. (AQW 10583/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The pilot Boiler Replacement Scheme has been very successful. Almost 1700 households have had inefficient boilers replaced under the scheme. I am now examining the evaluation of the pilot and I expect to make an announcement about a new Boiler Replacement Scheme in the near future.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr Wells asked the Minister for Social Development how many heating systems were installed under the Warm Homes Scheme in 2011/12; and the total cost of this work. (AQW 10612/11-15)

Mr McCausland: During the 2011/2012 financial year, 978 heating systems were installed through the Warm Homes Scheme. The total cost of these installations was £4.4m.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr Wells asked the Minister for Social Development how much it cost to deliver the Warm Homes Scheme in the 2011/12 financial year. (AQW 10613/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Housing Executive is still processing accrued invoices but they anticipate that the total spend on Warm Homes in 2011/2012 will be in the region of £13.9m.

Anti-Social Behaviour or Neighbourhood Disputes

Ms Lo asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Executive tenants have been evicted as a result of anti-social behaviour or neighbourhood disputes in each of the last three years. (AQW 10618/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The number of Housing Executive houses repossessed as a result of anti social behaviour is detailed in the table below:

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Possession following NSP/NOP	4	10	5
Possession following court	15	10	7
Possession EJO	6	5	5
Possession without NSP/NOP	29	37	34
Total Possession	54	62	51

Key:

NSP – Notice Seeking Possession

NOP – Notice of Proceedings

EJO – Enforcement of Judgements Office

The number of tenants evicted in the last three years are those where the Housing Executive had to resort to the Enforcement of Judgements Office in order to gain possession of the property. “Evicted”, however, is generally used for cases where the Housing Executive repossessed a property, even if the repossession happened at an earlier point in the process without the need for enforcement action. For that reason those cases are also shown as part of the totals above.

The Information provided is an Official Statistic. The Production and dissemination of all such Statistics is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.

Anti-Social Behaviour or Neighbourhood Disputes

Ms Lo asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Association tenants have been evicted as a result of anti-social behaviour or neighbourhood disputes in each of the last three years. **(AQW 10619/11-15)**

Mr McCausland: The number of tenants evicted by Housing Associations as a result of anti-social behaviour or neighbourhood disputes in each of the last three years was as follows:

2009/10	6
2010/11	7
2011/12	1

Housing Associations: Anti-Social Behaviour Policies

Ms Lo asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has any plans to standardise the neighbourhood dispute or anti-social behaviour policies across the Housing Associations.

(AQW 10621/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Housing legislation in Northern Ireland provides all social housing landlords, including registered housing associations, with a common set of statutory tools for tackling anti-social behaviour affecting or caused by their tenants or others residing with or visiting their tenants.

The Department’s Housing Association Guide sets out the standards expected of all registered housing associations. The Guide places a requirement on all registered housing associations to have published policy and procedures for dealing with anti-social behaviour and provides a model statement of policy and procedures by way of guidance.

Within the Department's inspection process, the Inspection Team reviews the anti-social behaviour policies and practices in place within registered housing associations to ensure that they comply with the Department's guidance and that they are being applied effectively and consistently.

Proposals for Legislation

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) what proposals for legislation, subject to Executive approval, he has introduced or intends to introduce between April 2012 and March 2015; (ii) the anticipated timescale for the first reading of each Bill; and (iii) the intention of each Bill.
(AQW 10640/11-15)

Mr McCausland: From 1 April 2012 I have not introduced any legislative proposals. However, I have identified the following legislative proposals that may need to be introduced during the period up to March 2015:

- Welfare Reform Bill – to introduce a wide range of reforms to the social security system.
- Licensing of Pavement Cafés Bill – to enable district councils to regulate pavement cafes.
- Reform of Liquor Licensing Bill – to help address the concerns surrounding alcohol consumption
- Gambling Bill – to update the gambling legislation within Northern Ireland.
- Charities Bill – to amend the “public benefit” test of the Charities Act 2008.
- Business improvement District Bill – to allow the establishment of statutory Business Improvement Districts in Northern Ireland.
- Regeneration and Housing Bill – to transfer a number of functions and powers to new councils.
- Housing Reform Bill – to give effect to the outcomes of the review of the Housing Executive.

As the above proposals are subject to Executive agreement I am unable to give any timescales for introduction. Moreover, further proposals may emerge on foot of ongoing work.

Implementation of Customer First

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development whether a decision has been made on the timetable for the implementation of Customer First.

(AQW 10663/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I have not yet made a final decision on the timetable for the implementation of Customer First. I am currently considering the Social Security Agency's proposals in relation to the future roll-out of Customer First across the Social Security Agency's Working Age Network and will make a final decision once I have fully considered all of the available information.

Location of Contact Centres and Processing Centres for Customer First

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development whether a decision has been made on the number and location of contact centres and processing centres for Customer First,

(AQW 10664/11-15)

Mr McCausland: No final decisions have been made as yet on the number and location of Benefit Processing Centres for Customer First as I am currently considering proposals on how best to rollout the Customer First service delivery model to the remaining Social Security offices.

Central to my consideration is the need to ensure our customers continue to have access to the necessary advice and support channels and I am committed to maintaining a network of front line offices throughout Northern Ireland.

Jobs and Benefits Offices

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development whether he has plans to close any Jobs and Benefits Offices.

(AQW 10665/11-15)

Mr McCausland: I am committed to maintaining a network of front line offices throughout Northern Ireland that meets the needs of customers and have no plans to close any Jobs & Benefit offices.

Implementation of Customer First

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to the implementation of Customer First, whether front-line services will remain at all Jobs and Benefits Offices.

(AQW 10669/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Under Customer First, all Jobs and Benefits offices will continue to deliver front-line services as they do now.

Redevelopment of the Loch Cuan Facility in the West Winds, Newtownards

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) when work on the redevelopment of the Loch Cuan facility in the West Winds, Newtownards, will commence; and (ii) to outline the details of the scheme and the amount of investment it represents.

(AQW 10701/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Apex Housing has been nominated to deliver this new facility on the site of the former Loch Cuan residential home.

The Loch Cuan site will accommodate two long-term supported housing schemes comprising a total of 34 units of accommodation. Although the two schemes will share the site they will be distinct services and will provide separate housing accommodation.

Loch Cuan will consist of 24 units of accommodation for frail elderly/dementia clients. The 24 units will be:

- 10 X 2 person 2 bed apartments (wheelchair) and
- 14 X 1 person 1 bed apartments (wheelchair)

Ward House will consist of 10 units of accommodation for learning disability clients. The 10 units will be

- 2 X 2 person 2 bedroom apartments (wheelchair)
- 8 X 2 person 2 bedroom apartments (Lifetime Homes)

The total value of Housing Association Grant payable for the schemes (34 units) is £3.5 million (capital). Additionally, Supporting People funding for the schemes amounts to

- Loch Cuan (24 units) - £280k (out of a total revenue requirement of £609k)
- Ward House (10 units) – £178k.

I understand that construction work is now underway and is expected to complete in September 2013.

Indicative Quantities for Housing Executive Maintenance Contracts

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Social Development what process is followed to determine indicative quantities for Housing Executive maintenance contracts.

(AQW 10713/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The size of Housing Executive response maintenance contracts is based on the existing geographical Housing Executive districts, housing stock, and the indicative value of these contracts is derived from historical spend within each district office area.

With regard to Housing Executive planned maintenance contracts the indicative quantities used in the procurement of contracts to form a pricing model are based upon an anticipated programme of work over a set period of time. The methodology used to determine the indicative quantities is dependant upon the contract type.

Cases 102/06 FET and 164/08 FET

Mr McDevitt asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the costs incurred by his Department in relation to cases (i) 102/06 FET; and (ii) 164/08 FET.

(AQW 10753/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Please note the following summary information regarding the above cases.

Case Reference	Costs Incurred
FET 102/06	Legal Expenses Totalling £2350.00
FET 164/08	No Legal Expenses Incurred

Cost of Employment and Support Allowance Appeal Hearing

Mr Lynch asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the average cost to his Department of an Employment and Support Allowance appeal hearing, including room hire, payment of Board members, administration costs and an appearance by a General Practitioner; and how many ESA appeal hearings were held in 2011.

(AQW 10802/11-15)

Mr McCausland: The Appeals Service does not distinguish administration costs between individual benefits, so it is not possible to provide the average cost of Employment Support Allowance (ESA) appeal hearings. However the provisional annual expenditure of the Appeals Service for the financial year 2011/12 including room hire, payment of Board members, administration costs etc. was approximately £5.97m.

The total number of hearings held in 2011/12 was 17,467 of which 8,417 were for ESA appeals (note appeal hearings held may not equate to the number of applications received in the same period).

An ESA tribunal panel consists of a legally qualified chairperson and a registered medical practitioner who may be a general practitioner. The fee for a medical member is £155 per session (each session has three ESA appeal hearings). This fee increases to £185.50 per session when the member has attended over 40 sessions in the year. The fee for a legally qualified chairperson is £218.

The provisional expenditure for room hire in 2011/12 for all appeal hearings was £125,908.

Decontamination Contract for Fort George

Mr Eastwood asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 10588/11-15, why the decontamination contract for Fort George was not awarded by the end of 2011.

(AQW 10916/11-15)

Mr McCausland: Tenders were received for the Design element of the Fort George decontamination project at the end of 2011. The assessment and award process took place in line with the necessary public sector procurement guidelines and continued into January and February 2012, with the contract being awarded in February 2012.

Housing Selection Scheme

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of whether the current points-based Housing Selection Scheme has played a part in bringing about the number of Housing Executive tenants who are not in work and are benefit dependent.

(AQW 10981/11-15)

Mr McCausland: It is important that social housing does not create unintended disincentives to work. As part of my Housing Strategy, which I will outline in the coming months, I will be seeking to examine social housing allocation policy and ensure that the current ways of accessing the social housing waiting list and allocating social housing make the most effective use of scarce public resources in identifying and meeting housing need in the context of Government's policy priorities, including economic development, job creation and socio-economic regeneration.

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 4 May 2012

(AQW 9785/11-15)

The total amount of financial assistance paid to tourism related businesses by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board in each of the last five financial years is broken down in the table attached at Annex A.

(please see table on the following pages)

ANNEX A**BREAKDOWN OF CAPITAL INVESTMENT FOR DISTRICT COUNCIL AREAS BY FINANCIAL YEAR.**

District Council Area	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	Total
Antrim			£5,000.00	£58,382.50	£145,000.00	£208,382.50
Ards			£214,284.00	£53,428.00	£120,655.27	£388,367.27
Armagh			£1,029.00	£375,926.50	£356,506.12	£733,461.62
Ballymena			£2,800.00		£5,875.00	£8,675.00
Ballymoney						£0.00
Banbridge						£0.00
Belfast		£612,085.00		£39,703,021.00	£89,000.00	£40,404,106.00
Carrickfergus			£126,055.00		£2,875.00	£128,930.00
Castlereagh						£0.00
Coleraine	£110,000.00	£68,650.00	£5,000.00	£497,655.00	£168,814.25	£850,119.25
Cookstown				£27,000.00	£500,000.00	£527,000.00
Craigavon				£263,697.00		£263,697.00
Derry		£778,225.45	£3,467,006.00	£333,087.00	£812,500.00	£5,390,818.45
Down		£275,769.00	£6,750.00	£4,763.00	£1,812,845.58	£2,100,127.58
Dungannon					£132,971.00	£132,971.00
Fermanagh	£194,997.00	£50,000.00		£217,145.00		£462,142.00
Larne		£204,500.00		£29,918.00	£132,777.09	£367,195.09
Limavady		£64,534.75			£7,202.75	£71,737.50
Lisburn		£29,072.00				£29,072.00

District Council Area	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	Total
Magherafelt					£35,753.00	£35,753.00
Moyle		£76,752.00	£142,005.00	£283,772.38	£9,487,532.29	£9,990,061.67
Newry and Mourne			£8,750.00	£363,330.25	£494,083.10	£866,163.35
Newtownabbey				£669,359.00		£669,359.00
North Down				£4,970.00	£37,521.30	£42,491.30
Omagh		£206,790.25		£150,000.00	£32,500.00	£389,290.25
Strabane						£0.00
Cross		£443,269.80		£199,769.00	£32,800.00	£675,838.80
Total	£304,997.00	£2,809,648.25	£3,978,679.00	£43,235,223.63	£14,407,211.75	£64,735,759.63



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