



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for the Office of the First Minister
and deputy First Minister

OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

June 2014 Monitoring Round:
Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

4 June 2014

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

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Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Mr Alex Attwood
Mr Leslie Cree
Mrs Brenda Hale
Mr Alex Maskey
Ms Bronwyn McGahan
Mr George Robinson
Mr Jimmy Spratt

Witnesses:

Mr Stephen Boyd	Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister
Dr Mark Browne	Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister
Mrs Carol Gilchrist	Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

The Acting Chairperson (Mr Spratt): I welcome Mark Browne, Stephen Boyd and Carol Gilchrist, who will brief us on the June monitoring round. There has been some discussion in the Committee, and I think that all members are concerned about the late supply of papers. We received them just a couple of hours ago. Neither the Chair nor the Deputy Chair was prepared to chair the meeting, so I have been appointed by the other members to chair this session. I ask you to give your briefing and then leave yourself open for questions.

Dr Mark Browne (Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister): Thanks very much, Chair. I appreciate the difficulties that the delivery of papers at such a late time causes the Committee. I can only apologise for the fact that we were not able to get them up any earlier.

We are pleased to be here today to have the opportunity to explain the Department's financial position. I will give the Committee an update on the 2014-15 opening budget position and the June monitoring round.

Following on from the Executive's agreement of the Budget for the 2011-15 period, OFMDFM's opening total resource departmental expenditure limit (DEL) budget for 2014-15 was £70.4 million. When you compare that with the £73.9 million budget for 2013-14, you will see that there has been a reduction of £3.5 million year on year. To help address the situation in our baseline, the Department and its arm's-length bodies (ALBs) had their budget reduced by, on average, 3%. In doing that, we have sought to avoid any impact on front line services and staffing, and we have not reduced funding for victims and survivors, given the high priority and sensitivity of that area.

During last year, the Department received an additional £11 million resource from the monitoring process through a mixture of bids, drawdowns from the Delivering Social Change central funds and technical transfers from other Departments. However, given the pressures across the Northern Ireland block, it is unlikely that we will be as successful in gaining additional resources in the current year. Therefore, the Department is facing a challenging budget allocation for 2014-15.

In the current situation, the Department has overallocated or overprogrammed its opening budget by £2.2 million, and it plans to make bids to cover that over-allocation in the June monitoring round. In that context, we plan to put forward the June monitoring proposals that are before the Committee. I will now go through them and explain the bids.

Our proposals include an inescapable bid of £4.3 million for the historical institutional abuse inquiry. There is no allocation in the opening budgets for the costs associated with the inquiry, and it is not in our baseline. The Executive confirmed in December 2012 that the budget pressures from the inquiry would be met. To date, they have always been met in-year, and DFP has indicated that it will continue to meet that pressure.

There is a bid of £1.3 million for the Hillsborough sites. Those sites were gifted by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) under the Hillsborough agreement, with the intention of early sale to offset some of the pressures associated with the devolution of policing and justice powers. However, owing to the timing of the Hillsborough agreement, no provision was made for maintenance and running costs in our baseline in the 2010 comprehensive spending review (CRS), so we bid regularly in-year for the cost of those sites.

Another inescapable bid is for the Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC) good relations funding, a bid of £1.763 million. That bid would take forward extending the summer intervention scheme and the legislation for the establishment of the equality and good relations commission.

Furthermore, there is a bid of £1.3 million for the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) to enable the level of funding for the VSS to be in line with the amount approved in the business case to establish the service.

There is a bid of £311,000 for the establishment of a China office and an international relations team, both of which have been approved by the Executive.

Those are what we classify as our inescapable bids. On top of those inescapable bids, we have a number of high-priority bids. Those include £2.984 million, again, for Together: Building a United Community good relations funding to extend a number of the good-relations grant schemes.

There is also a bid of £0.767 million for the VSS to enable it to meet the projected increased demand on the individual needs programme and the victims support programme.

There is another bid of £919,000 to meet funding commitments under the minority ethnic development fund in order to fund a programme of interventions to tackle race hate crime and to create a minority ethnic crisis fund. Those are the inescapable and high-priority bids that we will be making on behalf of the Department.

In addition, we have a role in drawing down and recommending to DFP the bids that should be made for the Delivering Social Change central funds. Therefore, we will make a bid of £6 million for the Delivering Social Change central budget on behalf of a number of Departments and our Department. There is £14 million resource in the Delivering Social Change fund, but it is estimated that around £20 million will be required in the current year to take forward the initiatives. In total, the Department will put forward bids of £19.6 million in the June monitoring round.

Finally, on the capital side, the position is slightly different. We have a surplus of capital, of which we will surrender £5.5 million, because there is no political agreement on the Maze/Long Kesh site, and because Ilex has more capital than it requires for the current year.

Chair, that is an outline of the opening position and the bids that we plan to make in June monitoring. We are happy to take any questions that members may have.

The Acting Chairperson: OK, Mark. Thanks for that. From our discussion before you started your presentation, we understand that the Main Estimates document for all Departments was laid in the

Business Office about a week ago. Why is it then that the document was so late coming to us, just a short time ago?

Dr Browne: There are a number of reasons. We, in the Department, obviously have to go through a number of processes. June monitoring comes very early in the year, with the various branches having to identify what their needs will be almost as soon as the year starts. Therefore, almost as soon as we identify opening budgets, branches have to start to identify any bids or easements for June monitoring.

We also had to secure agreement on the extent of the reductions that we would apply in our opening budget in order to live within our allocations. It takes time to work through those things, and securing that agreement in the Department obviously takes time. As I say, I can only apologise that these have taken time to get here and that they came so close to the time of the Committee meeting. I am afraid that we were not able to get them through any quicker than that.

The Acting Chairperson: Which arm's-length bodies have not met the 3% savings target in the savings delivery plan? What has the Department done to try to remedy that failure on the part of some of the ALBs?

Dr Browne: In general, the position that we have in our savings delivery plan is a very positive one. We have achieved total savings of £10.2 million. That is in excess of the amount planned, which was £9.366 million.

When we look at the individual savings delivery plans, we see that a couple of them are red, one of which is for the closure of the Economic Research Institute of Northern Ireland (ERINI). A legal case prevented that from being closed as quickly as we had anticipated, which meant that there was a very small underachievement of the saving of some £20,000.

A larger programme did not meet its objective for the 3% reduction in the administration cost of arm's-length bodies. However, that is actually misleading, because the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) had two savings delivery plans, one of which fed into that general 3% reduction. However, the other one was for its own funding. What happened is that the SIB underachieved in one of those plans but quite significantly overachieved in the other one, because it changed the way in which it employs its staff.

In fact, we have been successful across the range of savings delivery plans in achieving the savings that were expected.

The Acting Chairperson: How was a saving of £1.7 million achieved in the victims and survivors funding? That seems a fair figure, given some of the work that has been ongoing and some of the discussions that we have had about victims and survivors.

Dr Browne: Stephen will pick up on that point.

Mr Stephen Boyd (Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister): The savings from the victims and survivors funding were achieved in the first year of the savings delivery plan for 2011-12. Savings were made on the overall funding allocated to the Department's budget in the previous spending review. Basically, funds were consolidated. Therefore, we rationalised how we delivered some of the programmes using the victims and survivors funding and consolidated those into the new Victims and Survivors Service.

Mr Maskey: Thank you for your presentation. I will not rehearse what has been said, but I echo Jimmy's comments. It is very unfortunate that we have a situation in which the Chair and Deputy Chair felt unable to remain here. I support their frustration and annoyance. I asked the Chair to stay, but I can understand why he did not want to, given the ongoing complaints.

Given where we are at the moment, I want to focus particularly on the ethnic minority funding and the crisis funding. The kinds of figures that I am looking at here may be wrong, because they seem quite small. I am trying to work out what the difference is between crisis funding and other funding. Some of the organisations that I see working at the coalface to try to manage tensions and bad situations are living hand to mouth, even though their structures are dealing with crisis situations. It is almost as though crisis funding is being used to meet mainstream needs in a given area. I am trying to work out how you evaluate need. What impact will this particular monitoring round will have on any of that? I cannot see what benefit it will have.

Dr Browne: The budget for the funding of the minority ethnic development fund is £1.1 million and has been for the past three years. That fund aims to promote good relations between people of different ethnic backgrounds, the building of community cohesion and the promotion of integration.

In the June monitoring round, we are putting forward a bid in that area of £919,000 to further enhance the fund. The intention is for the money to support a programme of intervention to tackle race hate crime. For example, it will look at current tensions and at raising awareness of the importance of good relations.

It will also put additional money into the budget to meet the project funding of groups. A number of groups have had their funding reduced over the past number of years, and some £200,000 will go into the creation of a crisis fund, which is designed to help those minority ethnic people who, through no fault of their own, fall on hard times or are victims of attacks. Therefore, there will be a reasonably significant increase in the amount of funding that is available, provided that the bid is met. That will be a high-priority bid for Ministers.

Mr Maskey: Is the £200,000 for individuals who are experiencing hard times?

Dr Browne: Yes, it is for any individuals who get into difficult circumstances, whatever the reasons for that, or if they are victims of attacks.

The Acting Chairperson: You described the central good relations funds as being "inescapable" and you described one as being "high priority". Are those the two that you just referred to?

Dr Browne: No, there is a distinction but some overlap between the good relations bids that we make, which are for broader good relations between the various communities in Northern Ireland and the minority ethnic community, and the specific funding for this minority ethnic development fund, which is targeted at minority ethnic groups. Some of the good relations funding may go towards minority ethnic groups, but it is designed to promote good relations in the broader sense.

There are two bids for good relations, some of which include summer interventions and summer camps, and so on, and there is a further bid of £900,000 for the minority ethnic development fund, which is targeted specifically at minority ethnic groups.

Mr Attwood: Obviously, anything that I ask is without prejudice, given that the papers were received so late and we did not have the time to assess them fully. My sense is that bids for moneys for the institutional abuse inquiry, for the Victims and Survivors Service and for ethnic and race relations issues are imperative.

These are only preliminary questions, because that is the best that I can do. Was the delay in releasing papers to the Committee at an official level or a ministerial level?

Dr Browne: There is a whole range of processes that we have to go through in the Department to get papers to a point at which they can be released to the Committee. Therefore, a range of reasons, including the need to make decisions, the need to gather the necessary information and the need to have a full discussion, led to the situation.

Mr Attwood: Was the delay at an official level or a political level?

Dr Browne: The delay was in the Department.

Mr Attwood: Was there any delay at an official level?

Dr Browne: There were delays in the broader process in the Department.

Mr Attwood: You are the senior official responsible for the monitoring returns, are you?

Dr Browne: I am.

Mr Attwood: Was there a delay at your desk?

Dr Browne: As I said, there is a whole range of processes that have to be gone through, and that involves —

Mr Attwood: I understand the processes. I may well have some idea about what the processes might be. I did not have this problem with those processes when I was a Minister. Do you think that you are responsible for the failure to get papers to the Ministers quickly enough and, thereafter, the failure to get papers to the Committee quickly enough?

Dr Browne: It is about all aspects of the process. There are parts of it which perhaps could have been done more quickly, but circumstances were difficult, and, unfortunately, we were not able to get them to the Committee on time.

Mr Attwood: I am none the wiser, Chair.

There is a bid in for £1.3 million for security matters at the Hillsborough sites. From what I can pick up, the papers state that a quick sale was anticipated in 2010 and that, consequently, there was no provision made in the 2010 Budget for security and other related costs. Is that correct?

Dr Browne: The issue was that the sites were gifted at a time when the CSR budget had been determined, so no money was put into the baseline for the Department. Therefore —

Mr Attwood: The papers also state that there was anticipation of quick sale.

Dr Browne: Yes, there was also anticipation of quick sale, so there was no expectation of the need to maintain over a longer period. It was both those factors.

Mr Attwood: I sat on the Budget subcommittee of the Executive, where the SIB and others, when it came to advice about the potential disposal of assets, were forever saying that there was no chance of any quick sales unless they were revenue-generating, such as car parks. Even then there have not been any quick sales. How did your Department make an assessment that there could be a quick sale when the SIB and other people were saying that there was no chance of a quick sale? That judgement, in part, contributed to the fact that you are now looking for £1.3 million to cover security and other related costs.

Dr Browne: I am not sure that I would necessarily accept that.

Mr Attwood: That is the view of the SIB and all the advice given to —

Dr Browne: Yes, but the sites came as part of an agreement under the Hillsborough agreement. They were made available in order to be revenue-raising. The hope was that they would be revenue-raising. As it turned out, given the economic circumstances, the possibility of quickly realising that revenue was not there. That meant that they had to be held for longer than might have been wished for or was anticipated, and, therefore, there was a cost associated with that. That had not been foreseen, so that element of cost had not been built into our baseline budget. As a result, we have to have an arrangement with DFP where we get that money in-year to meet those costs.

Mr Attwood: Do you not accept now that, whatever was going on in 2010, you were working on a false assumption — one that no one else in government seemed to share — that somehow or other something could be sold quickly?

Dr Browne: As well as the possibility of a quick sale, there was also a view taken, particularly about Shackleton Barracks, that there could be wider economic and social benefit for the community other than just a quick sale. The perception of how the sites might be used —

Mr Attwood: That is not an argument that you rely on in your papers. There, you have argued that there might have been a quick sale. It seems to me that that was a false assessment made by your Department at that time.

Dr Browne: I think that the —

Mr Attwood: Anyway, moving on —

The Acting Chairperson: I am sorry, but let the official answer the question. You asked a question, yet you were going to move on to something else. Let Mark answer the question.

Dr Browne: The point is that, when the sites were originally made available, the intention was that they could be sold and money realised. It turned out that there was not that possibility. Given that that possibility was not there, there was also a view that, rather than just sell the sites for whatever they could go for and realise some sort of funding, it would be better to hold on to them and try to develop their economic and social potential because, in the longer run, that would be of greater benefit to the community. Ministers had to react to the circumstances in which they found themselves.

Mr Attwood: Can you provide, subsequent to this meeting, a breakdown of precisely what the bid allocations of £6 million are for Delivering Social Change? You refer to additional budgets for a number of programmes, but you do not give a breakdown of what the budget allocations are in each of those programmes. It is at annex B of the paper.

Dr Browne: The additional bid of £6 million is the amount that is required for the range of projects that are intended to be taken forward this year. It is for small elements to each part of a whole range of projects.

Mr Attwood: I am looking for a breakdown for each of the projects that you have to take forward that make up £6 million. Not now, but, subsequently, you can provide that information. It is a headline figure, but it does not say what the individual figures might be for SIF, the Children's Hospice or whatever it might be. What is the biggest one from that £6 million?

Dr Browne: The biggest one is the signature programmes. Over this year, on current plans, we would have intended that somewhere in the region of £13 million be spent on signature programmes. SIF is a smaller proportion, at around £2.4 million. The shortfall when you take the range of things, which also includes Bright Start, funding for PlayBoard and the Children's Hospice, totals £20 million. We have £14 million, so there is a shortfall of £6 million. That will all relate to elements of those projects, but the breakdown would depend on whether this bid is met. If it is not met, there will be ministerial decisions on which projects they will advance more quickly than others and which ones they might seek departmental contributions to, so it is quite difficult to break down the £6 million across those individual elements. We can say that the planned amount was £20 million and that we have £14 million and a shortfall of £6 million. How that will break down will have to be determined subsequently when we find out whether we are successful and by the decisions that Ministers want to make on the priorities between those different elements.

Mr Attwood: I am looking for a breakdown of the £6 million and how it is planned to allocate it if DFP grants your bid in full.

Dr Browne: I can give you a breakdown of the £20 million for what we intended to spend. Decisions have not yet been taken on, if there is a shortfall, where that amount would be taken from. That is the point that I am trying to make. That would require a subsequent decision.

Mr Attwood: I appreciate that, but I am trying to work out the breakdown of your current bid. You are looking for £6 million across the spread of individual programmes. I just want to know what the spread is across the individual programmes.

Dr Browne: OK.

Mr Attwood: From my quick maths, the money that is being requested for VSS resource works out at 6%, 7% or 8% of the original resource bid. So, you are looking for £760,000 on top of an existing resource budget of £11.5 million. Is that right?

Dr Browne: There are two bids. There is an inescapable bid of £1.3 million, and then there is the further one that you describe of high priority.

Mr Attwood: That is for the supported programmes, is it not?

Dr Browne: The £1.3 million would bring the VSS back up to the amount that was set out in the original business case, as it would effectively bring it back to that approved level of funding.

Mr Attwood: That is for programme costs as opposed to resource, is it not?

Dr Browne: That element is for a mixture of things. It includes some funding for the individual needs review and for the victim support programme.

Mr Boyd: The £1.3 million covers the running costs for organisation and the individual programmes as well.

Mr Attwood: I have no issue about funding individual programmes. I am just a bit concerned that, a year into the VSS, you are looking for so much money to deal with resource issues, including around governance. It seems to me that, given that the development of VSS took such a long time, it is another example of how, when the VSS was set up, some critical errors were made, including the ones where you are trying to pick up moneys to support, if you like, corporate work at the VSS. I think that it is just a collaboration of failures in the run down to the creation of the VSS in the first instance. That is outwith your responsibility because you are on the finance side of the Department as opposed to the VSS management side, but it is further corroboration of the concerns about how all this was managed way back then.

Dr Browne: I am on the finance side, and I am not going to get into the detail of the policy because it would take me beyond the extent of my knowledge. Part of the issue here, as well as the issues around the governance of VSS, which are well known to this Committee because there have been presentations on that, and which are being addressed at the moment, is that, as part of the processes that are in place, additional needs have been identified as well as victims who previously had not been identified. Pressures have been emerging from the needs that have been identified in the community. To be fair to my policy colleagues and those who would have been trying to identify what the needs would be in this area, it is very difficult to project with any precision the extent of the problems that are presenting themselves. The reality is that more victims have been presenting themselves over time, which has created a pressure on the service. Many of those pressures have been very difficult to predict, so it is appropriate that the Department responds as best it can, and that is what these bids are seeking to do.

Mr Attwood: My final question was to ask you to provide in an appropriate way the salary scale for the senior staff in the VSS. Not now, obviously, but at a subsequent meeting.

Mr Cree: Do you have any figures on the year-end for the Department?

Dr Browne: Yes. Our provisional out-turn is that we spent 99.2% of our budget, so there was an underspend of 0.8%, which is just over £600,000 on our resource.

Mr Cree: How much was there in overcommitment then?

Dr Browne: I am sorry —

Mr Cree: There was an overcommitment; how much of that was overcommitment?

Dr Browne: We started off the year with a programme overcommitment, as we are planning to this year. Stephen may be able to identify the actual amount. That £616,000 did not so much emerge from an overcommitment as reduced requirements in the last element of the year. That 0.8% is fairly tight financial management. The general rule of thumb that DFP applied to the Department is that underspends should be within 1.5%; that is what most Departments would work to.

Mr Cree: Yes, but I am not looking at the overall picture. It is much easier to hide behind the overall figure. I am trying to see how the nuts and bolts put it together. There was an overcommitment, which, in fact, used to be referred to as a slush fund. There was also a ceiling figure. Were those met, or did they contribute to something that was in the Budget exchange?

Dr Browne: I would not accept that an overcommitment is the same as what could be described as a slush fund. An overcommitment would be in a situation where the budget that has been allocated is not sufficient at the outset to meet the identified pressures. A calculated and considered over-programming is put in place to ensure that priorities can be met. That allows for what will inevitably happen, which is that, over the year, some funding will become available in the Department and,

therefore, services are not cut back only for us to find that resource has become available and they could have been taken forward. Over-programming is a prudent approach to ensure that we use the budget as tightly as we can to the final outcome. Getting within 0.8% is a reasonable outcome in that regard.

Mr Cree: I take issue with that, because I can tell you that other people have been explaining the rationale for overcommitment, which was quite different; it was to make sure that the budget, which was originally set down and is at risk of not being spent, covers other projects that can be moved forward to take up the slack. That money is not returned to the Treasury; that is quite a different definition from yours.

Dr Browne: It is certainly the case in our Department. We usually start the year with what we consider to be a baseline deficiency and with pressures in key areas. That circumstance is not arising. We are trying to make sure that we can take forward all the programmes that are within our responsibility and, in doing that, make best use of the resource we have and bid for what we need. Over the year, we did not give up any resource. We did not hand back any resource that we had in our budget, and, indeed, we drew down an additional £11 million of resource. So, I do not think that there is a case of us not managing resource effectively and ending up giving money back.

Mr Cree: Was any money carried forward under the Budget exchange scheme?

Dr Browne: The Budget exchange scheme does not operate on a departmental level. It operates at a block level, and you would have to ask DFP about that.

Mr Cree: You do not know how that contributes to that.

Dr Browne: I do not think that ours will have contributed in any significant way. We have a very small budget in the overall scheme of things.

Mr Cree: OK. Can we look at some of the individual figures? You mentioned a net requirement of £79 million, was it? We do not have the papers yet.

Dr Browne: It was £78.6 million.

Mr Cree: The net cash requirement was £94.7 million. How do you explain the difference?

Mr Boyd: That is the resource requirement. We also have capital spend, which also goes into our net cash requirement. The figures that Mark talked about were for resource spend. I am just trying to see what we spent on capital last year.

Mr Cree: That is on page 277 of the Estimates.

Mr Boyd: We do not have the Estimates.

Mr Cree: Sorry, do you not have the Estimates? Have you not seen this book?

Mr Maskey: That is the electronic page number you are looking at.

Dr Browne: We do not have the Estimates with us.

Mr Cree: Then you know what it is like when you do not have all of the figures. It can be embarrassing.

Mr Boyd: We also had capital spend —

Mr Cree: How much? How much? Give me detail. How much? There is a difference of £15 million there. What was spent on or what was it spirited away on?

Mr Boyd: Last year, we spent £34 million on capital. That was £25 million for the new financial transactions capital scheme for the loan that the Strategic Investment Board made to the University of

Ulster, and we spent roughly £9 million on developments at Ilex and on Crumlin Road Gaol and the Maze/Long Kesh centre.

Mr Cree: Under net capital, how much will the expenditure of non-departmental public bodies be this year? There is a blank here. It was £26.5 million last year.

Mr Boyd: How much are we spending on arm's-length bodies this year?

Mr Cree: NDPBs, as we call them here.

Dr Browne: In the opening budget, we have set out £35.5 million in the paper that we provided to the Committee.

Mr Cree: That is very interesting. This shows that there is nothing.

On the equal pay claim, £6.8 million has disappeared.

Mr Boyd: The equal pay claim would have been basically funding that we would have —

Mr Cree: If you do not know, just say so.

Dr Browne: Let us come back to it. Part of the difficulty is —

Mr Boyd: You are looking at the Estimates. They are two separate issues.

Dr Browne: They are not the same. We are running across different definitions and different publications, and because we were not expecting questions on the Estimates, we do not have the Estimates with us. There are important differences between the ways that the figures are set out in those two areas.

Mr Cree: Did you prepare these Estimates?

Dr Browne: Yes, absolutely.

Mr Cree: So, I thought that you would know about them.

Dr Browne: We can come back to you on that.

Mr Cree: Will you come back on that £6.8 million?

Mr Boyd: Yes.

Mr Cree: This is hopefully something that you can tell me about. Can you give me a split of how the £919,000 of good relations money will be made up? That is an extra bid.

Mr Boyd: Give us the figure again; the £700 —

Mr Cree: It was £919,000 for good relations. You are making a bid for that.

Mr Boyd: There is roughly £919,000. There is £200,000 for the crisis fund.

Dr Browne: There is £555,000 for the programme of interventions to tackle race hate crime, £111,000 for the restoration of funding for a number of groups that were previously unable to be funded and £30,000 for the delivery of the crisis fund. There is funding for when the equality strategy goes out to consultation.

Mr Cree: This is my last question. You used an interesting term: minority ethnic. What is the difference between minority ethnic and ethnic?

Dr Browne: I could get into a very philosophical discussion, but I am not a policy person and, perhaps, I would be treading into an area in which I do not have expertise. I might duck that one, to an extent. It is those who do not form the majority in this community; who are not of what would generally be seen as the majority in this community. I do not want to stand over that definition.

Mr Cree: All ethnics would fall into that category, would they not?

Dr Browne: It has been argued that we are a community of minorities, but it all comes down to definition. This is about those who are recognised as such. I am sure that there is a definition in the policy of who is eligible.

Mr Cree: If you ever find that out, could you let me know?

Dr Browne: I should stress that the funding that is available there is not all directed towards ethnic minorities. It is also directed towards the wider community and their understanding and appreciation of and contact with those who are in minority ethnic groups. It is about good relations between those in the minority ethnic communities and the wider community. That is what that funding is used for.

The Acting Chairperson: I have no other indications. George Robinson?

Mr Attwood: I have a more technical question.

The Acting Chairperson: George Robinson first, then I will bring you back in, Alex.

Mr G Robinson: Thanks, Chair, and thanks to the officials as well. I have a couple of questions, the first of which is about the historical institutional abuse inquiry. Will the moneys that have been spent or are going to be spent be enough? Do you anticipate more spend on it?

The Acting Chairperson: I will come in on the back of George's question. There were indications from Lord Justice Hart that the inquiry will have to go on for another year. Does that £4.282 million cover the additional period?

Mr G Robinson: That is basically my question.

Dr Browne: That funding is for the 2014-15 year. Any additional funding that is required will have to be bid for next year. That is obviously a pressure on the wider public funds. From OFMDFM's perspective, our commitment is that, if there is agreement to that extension, that funding will be met by DFP. Obviously, however, all steps are taken to make sure that expenditure is constrained as far as possible within the confines of the inquiry's operating procedures.

Mr G Robinson: But it could need more moneys.

Dr Browne: If it goes beyond that time, yes it will. This is only for this current year.

The Acting Chairperson: My understanding is that that costs around £2 million a year. Are you now saying that it costs around four and a quarter million pounds a year?

Mr Boyd: Last year, we spent, I think, about £3.7 million on the historical institutional abuse inquiry. It is ramping up this year, so we need more expenditure.

Mr G Robinson: Do not get me wrong, I do not begrudge it, because it is very important. My other question is about the Shackleton site. Where are we at with the Shackleton site? I realise that there is a possibility that DARD's headquarters might move there in the next couple of years or so, but what are the plans for the rest of the site?

Dr Browne: The current position is that a soft market testing exercise was carried out, which concluded on 24 January. It looked at various options for the use of the site and invited those who were interested in it to come forward with a range of proposals. Those have been pulled together and are currently being considered by the Department. As you mentioned, the other aspect of this is the proposal that DARD would move there, and we are watching that carefully. When the soft market testing was going out, provision was made for that headquarters to be situated at Shackleton. We

have had a range of proposals, some of which are for the whole purchase of the site and some are for renting or purchasing part of it. There are a whole range of proposed uses, and we are considering how best to take forward the disposal or use of the site.

Mr G Robinson: When should that all be complete?

Dr Browne: That will depend on the decision that is made, but it has not yet been made. It will particularly rest on whether the decision is taken to dispose of the site in whole or in part or to try to develop it out.

Mr Attwood: My question is a more technical one. In the correspondence from the DALO, there is an appendix that shows resource and capital budgets for last year and this year. It does not show the closing budgets last year. In order to have a full understanding, that would be helpful. In Mr Boyd's answers, he referred to capital spend last year that must be greater than what the opening budget line was, inevitably. It would be useful to see what the closing budget is on the resource and capital sides in order to get a sense of not just where we opened but where we ended.

The Acting Chairperson: I think there is a briefing coming up on 2 July on that, Alex.

Mr Attwood: Having that charted would be useful in future monitoring rounds.

The Acting Chairperson: I have no other indications of questions. To sum up, a number of requests have been made. There has been a request for further information from the Department on the budget allocation for the Delivering Social Change programme, which you indicated you would provide. There was a request from Mr Attwood about the salary scale for senior VSS staff. There was also an issue about the £6.8 million provision for equal pay and, finally, a request for a definition of "minority ethnic". I think those were all the points. Do members have any other requests that I have not covered? If not, I thank all three of you for your presentation. Please let us have the answers to those queries reasonably quickly, because members may want to use them next week.

Dr Browne: We will get back to you as soon as we can, Chair.

The Acting Chairperson: Thank you.