
OFFICIAL REPORT

(HANSARD)

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NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Friday 17 October 2008

Written Answers to Questions

OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER

Capital Investment Budget

Mr Cree asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister what percentage of the £1.8 bn capital investment budget for 2008/09 has been committed and to which contracts. (AQO 295/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister (Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness): Seventy-one percent of the 2008/2009 Gross Capital Investment budget has been contractually committed.

The 2008/09 element for commitments on contracts of £10 million and more are detailed below. A total figure is provided for smaller works due to the large number of such projects.

Contracts with financial commitments in 2008/09	Value (£m) committed in 2008/09 to contracts with a value of £10m or over
Alpha PPP (Water) - full capital value scores in budget in the year of service commencement	£110.0
Subscription Agreement between DRD and Northern Ireland Water Limited	£189.1
Roads Service DBFO Package 1	£92.0
New Trains Two	£16.7
Disability Discrimination Compliance New Rail Vision	£4.8
Ballymena to Derry/Londonderry Track Remedial Works	£2.2
Ulsterbus 90 Single Deck Buses	£6.3
Royal Group of Hospitals Critical Care Building	£15.1

Contracts with financial commitments in 2008/09	Value (£m) committed in 2008/09 to contracts with a value of £10m or over
Ulster Hospital Phase A	£16.4
Downe Enhanced Local Hospital	£23.9
Portadown Health and Care Centre	£5.1
Craigavon Crisis Resource Centre, 'Bluestone'	£1.0
Altnagelvin Area Hospital Redevelopment Phase 3.2A	£11.3
Altnagelvin Area Hospital Redevelopment Phase 3.2B	£4.2
Omagh Enhanced Local Hospital Enabling Works	£4.8
Bangor Academy - New school building	£23.8
Holy Cross College, Strabane - New school building	£31.3
Abbey G.S. Newry - New school building	£7.2
Assumption G.S. Ballynahinch - extension & refurbishment	£2.7
De La Salle College, Belfast - New school building	£4.2
Drumragh Integrated College, Omagh - New school building	£8.4
St Colman's College, Newry - extension & refurbishment	£3.3
St Dominic's H.S. Belfast - extension & refurbishment	£5.4
Ulster Museum Refurbishment	£3.1
Waterways Ireland HQ	£2.4
New PRONI HQ	£0.5
Metropolitan Arts Centre	£0.8
2008/09 Financial commitment to contracts with a value of £10m and over.	£596.0m

2008/09 Financial commitment to contracts with a value less than £10m	£684.4m
Total	£1,280.4m

At September 2008 departments have committed 71 % of the opening capital investment budget of £1.8 billion

Department Website

Mr Ross asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many page views its Departmental website received each month, for the last 12 months. (AQW 1073/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister:

The number of page views that the OFMDFM website received each month, for the last 12 months, is set out in the table below.

Month	Page Views
October 2007	76,790
November 2007	23,025
December 2007	18,253
January 2008	31,553
February 2008	29,843
March 2008	38,469
April 2008	25,721
May 2008	38,819
June 2008	41,051
July 2008	37,869
August 2008	87,152
September 2008	126,614
Total	575,159

Programme for Government Targets

Ms Anderson asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister how it is performing against its Programme for Government targets; and how this performance is measured. (AQW 1143/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister:

The Office of the First and deputy First Minister is making good progress against its Programme for Government (PfG) targets.

To date in Year 1 of the PfG, the following has been achieved:

- We have extended the Northern Ireland Bureau's representation to New York to develop further key contacts in the US;
- we have provided additional budget cover to fund both the appointment from 1 September of 14 additional Panel Commissioners, and a number of appointments to senior levels within the Planning Appeals and Water Appeals Commission. These additional resources are targeted on addressing the backlog of appeals cases;
- all Departments have nominated a 'Champion for Children and Young People' to liaise on children's issues and to encourage departments to ensure children's and young people's interests are fostered and their views sought on policy and strategy issues. The Children's Champions hold regular meetings chaired by OFMDFM and report to the Children

and Young People's Strategy Planning and Review Group which is chaired by the Junior Ministers;

- the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children was established on 31 January 2008 and there have been 3 meetings held to date. The Sub-Committee has established 6 key priorities and has set up cross departmental sub-groups to take these forward;
- the Ilex Urban Regeneration Company has taken forward the Ebrington masterplan and is developing capital infrastructure projects for site transport, open space, car parking and event infrastructure;
- we have commissioned a new sustainable development strategy – the first draft of which is currently under consideration – and sustained funding for the sustainable development commission;
- through the co-ordination and drafting of the Executive's legislative programme, the Department helped secure the introduction of 17 Bills during the 2008/2009 Assembly Session compared to the 15 which were announced in October last year; and
- we have made significant progress in delivering the 10-year Investment Strategy to renew our vital infrastructure.

We have also taken forward a range of cross-cutting issues in conjunction with DSD and DHSSPS in the delivery of commitments under PSA 7, Making People's Lives Better.

Progress against 3 of the targets allocated to OFMDFM in the PfG has taken a little longer than planned:

- PSA 7 includes a target date of March 2008 for the establishment of a Victims and Survivors Forum – this has not been achieved. Legal responsibility for establishing the Victims and Survivors Forum rests with the Commission for Victims and Survivors, which was not established until the beginning of June 2008. The Commission is currently considering plans for establishing a Forum as part of its overall work programme;
- the target date of July 2008 for the agreement of expected outcomes from the Older People's Strategy, again in PSA 7, has been deferred to Autumn 2008 pending the appointment of the Older Person's Advocate. The appointment of an Older Person's Advocate is progressing and is expected to be complete by October 2008. The newly appointed Advocate will co-chair a reactivated Older People's Panel with OFMDFM officials; and
- the consolidation of 70% of NICS Departmental and agency websites by March 2009, as set out in PSA 20, will not be achieved due to recent problems with the security of some departmental websites.
- OFMDFM's performance against its PfG commitments and targets is measured through a series of Delivery Agreements. These set out:
- the vision espoused by the PSA;

- how progress toward the achievement of the objectives and targets set out in the PSA will be measured;
- the strategy for delivery of the PSA commitments, including the management of identified risks;
- the key delivery milestones; and
- the key stakeholders in the delivery of the PfG commitments set out in each PSA.

A joint Equality Impact Assessment on the Programme for Government, Budget and Investment Strategy was undertaken at a strategic level. It was agreed that following consultation we would publish our final EQIA which will inform the delivery and review of the PfG, Budget and Investment Strategy over the next three years.

Consultation on the draft PfG, Budget and ISNI was launched on 25 October 2007 and closed on 4 January 2008. The draft EQIA consultation was launched on 30 January 2008 and closed on 23 April 2008. The consultation analysis is being finalised and will be published shortly.

Carbon Usage

Mr McKay asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister if records are kept of carbon usage; and what plans the Department has to purchase carbon offsets each time a long distance journey is undertaken. (AQW 1154/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: Our Department does not keep records of carbon usage and, at this time, we have no plans to purchase carbon offsets each time a long distance journey is undertaken. Officials from our Sustainable Development Unit have recently contacted colleagues from across the NICS to ascertain what work, if any, has been undertaken to calculate their department's carbon footprints. We are awaiting the findings of these enquiries before progressing this at a strategic level. This will inform our future plans and actions set out in our earlier response to AQW 8469.

Departmental Private Office

Mr Burns asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many staff are employed in the Departmental private office; and to detail the cost of employing these staff since May 2007. (AQW 1209/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Private Office within the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister is unique in that it provides support to 4 Ministers and 8 Special Advisers, and assists the First Minister and deputy

First Minister in their roles both as departmental Ministers and Chairs of the Executive Committee.

At 1 October 2008 there were 27 full-time and 3 part-time staff employed in the Departmental private office. Of these, 11 staff work to the First Minister and Junior Minister Donaldson, 10 to the deputy First Minister and Junior Minister Kelly and 9 in the shared Central Correspondence Unit.

The cost of employing private office staff (including Advisers) during the 2007/08 financial year was £1,646,432 and for the period 1 April 2008 to 31 August 2008 was £706,302.

Home Start

Mr McNarry asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister what funding it has available to assist Home Start in providing support to parents with young children. (AQW 1406/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister:

The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister has a policy co-ordination role in relation to children and young people and does not provide grant funding to the voluntary and community sector.

We are advised that Homestart projects fall under the remit of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and understand you have submitted your question to that department.

The Planning Appeals Commission

Mr Hilditch asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, given the importance of the Planning Appeals Commission to the delivery of PfG commitments, what consideration it has given to limiting its independence to the determination of individual cases and hearings. (AQO 566/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister:

The Planning Appeals Commission is a Tribunal Body which provides an independent appellate function. It is right and proper that the Commission exercises its independence in its appellate decision making and in reporting on various matters under planning and other legislation, and we have neither given nor intend to give any considerations to limiting this independence.

The Planning Appeals Commission has published its framework for prioritising its workload. Current arrangements do not provide a mechanism for intervention by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

Economic Policy Unit

Mr McNarry asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the role of the Economic Policy Unit in relation to energy policy. (AQO 594/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment has the lead responsibility for mainstream energy policy and represents the main government interface with the energy regulator and energy companies.

The primary role of OFMDFM's Economic Policy Unit is to provide economic advice and support for monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of the delivery of the Programme for Government. It also has the lead role in developing the Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy. In the latter context this will involve supporting the progression of renewable energy policy across government in Northern Ireland. In each of these areas it does, of course, take an interest in energy policy.

Engagement with China

Ms Lo asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister for its assessment of the outcomes achieved following its engagement with the Government of the People's Republic of China. (AQO 598/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: We are keen to build on the existing links that we have with China. We had the opportunity to discuss cultural exchanges and links in the fields of education and trade most recently when we met the Chinese Consul General on 1st October. We also considered the forthcoming trade mission to China being organised by Invest NI.

Impending Business for the Executive

Mr Ford asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to report on impending business for the Executive. (AQO 602/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: A number of papers are being considered for discussion at the Executive meeting scheduled for this Thursday. However, the final agenda for that meeting has not yet been agreed.

Men's Health Seminar

Rev Dr Robert Coulter asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister what

measures junior Minister Kelly proposed to adopt following his attendance at the Men's Health Seminar on 10 September 2008. (AQO 592/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: Junior Ministers have agreed to meet representatives from the Men's Project to discuss issues facing men and boys. This is in response to a recent seminar on Men's Health at Parliament Buildings addressed by Junior Minister Kelly on 10 September.

OFMDFM are also responsible for developing an action plan for Men as part of the Gender Equality strategy. A meeting of this nature will give Ministers the opportunity to hear the views of the sector on what are the most important and pressing issues that need to be addressed, within the Action Plan for Men.

Our commitment to tackling gender inequality is outlined in our Programme for Government which commits the Executive to:

- Progress the work of Departments in mainstreaming gender equality into policies, strategies and activities or promote gender specific action measures to tackle identified gender inequalities.

To take this work forward, a Gender Advisory Panel has been established. This will ensure that the views of key stakeholders will help inform future policy initiatives and future action plans will be the result of discussion, debate and review, with men involved at every stage of the process.

We will use all the evidence gathered in the context of this work and OFMDFM's own quantitative and qualitative research, to inform the Men's Action Plan.

The panel meets with OFMDFM officials on a regular basis.

Senior Civil Servants

Mr Weir asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many senior civil servants are employed in its Department. (AQO 545/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: At 1 October 2008 there were 25 Senior Civil Service staff employed in our Department.

Children and Young People's Issues

Mr P Ramsey asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to demonstrate the priority status it has given to children and young people's issues in its work programme. (AQO 620/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Office of the First Minister and deputy First

Minister does not directly deliver services to children and young people but has a co-ordinating and driving role in the implementation of policy.

The Junior Ministers have been given particular responsibility for children and young people to ensure that their issues remain high on the agenda. This year they have established and Chair the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People which has identified six key priorities and established cross departmental sub groups to take these forward.

One of the key roles of the Junior Ministers and the Sub-Committee is to drive forward the implementation of the 10-year strategy on Children and Young People. To ensure the aims of the strategy are achieved the Junior Ministers asked each department to nominate a Children and Young People's Champion. They have also established a Strategy Planning Review Group (SPRG) the role of which is to provide advice on and to monitor the implementation of the draft Children and Young People's Action Plans. The group includes representatives of statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations and is currently considering a draft strategy action plan for the next three years.

In addition, the Junior Ministers have agreed a personal 12-month work plan in regard to their responsibilities for children and young people. This outlines the actions they will be taking over the year to ensure children's issues remain a priority and includes a programme of engagement with children and young people.

Within this plan is the commitment to develop a safeguarding policy statement which will bind together and integrate existing measures around safeguarding children with new actions and policies. A Play and Leisure Policy Statement has also been developed which aims to improve current play and leisure provision for all children and young people aged 0-18 years. Both policy statements will be brought to the Executive in the near future.

We of course continue to support the Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) whose primary function is to safeguard and promote the rights and best interests of children and young people. We are also encouraging respect for the views of children and young people through support for and promotion of the Participation Network.

The oral examination by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child took place on 23rd and 24th September 2008. We will be drawing the Committee's concluding observations to the attention of Ministerial colleagues for careful consideration.

Energy and Financial Sector

Mr K Robinson asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to give details of their consultations with the energy and financial sector on 24 September 2008; and what measures were discussed at those meetings. (AQO 590/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: As part of our series of 'Cost of Living' meetings, we met with both the Utility Regulator and then with representatives of the energy sector on 24 September.

At these meetings we discussed a range of issues of concern to the local energy market and gained further understanding of how our energy sector operates.

The Utility Regulator agreed to send us some further ideas which can be explored to mitigate the hardship caused by increasing energy prices. We also discussed the potential for renewable energy to play a bigger role in the future supply chain.

We met with representative of the banking sector on 21 July 2008. Both meetings were useful in allowing us to hear directly from those most closely involved with the sectors. The agenda for each meeting was wide and provided an opportunity to discuss a wide variety of measures to mitigate the problems of the current economic downturn.

The Historical Enquiries Team

Mr Burnside asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister if any of its Ministers have met with the historical enquiries team of the Police Service of Northern Ireland; and what plans its Ministers has to meet with this team following public interviews by the junior Minister, Mr Gerry Kelly, during the BBC's screening of the programme 'Breakout' on Monday 23 September 2008. (AQO 593/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: No Ministers from OFMDFM have met with the historical enquiries team of the Police Service of Northern Ireland and there are no such meetings scheduled.

Violence Against Women

Mrs D Kelly asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) its objectives in relation to violence against women; and (ii) how it is measuring its progress against these objectives. (AQO 629/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: Violence against women is completely unacceptable and we are committed to eradicating all forms of such

violence. It not only harms women but can also have a devastating impact on children and the wider family unit. Therefore, one of the nine objectives of our Gender Equality Strategy (2006-2016) is to eliminate gender based violence in society. The Strategy will be implemented through mainstreaming and the actions and programmes of all government departments.

Our departmental officials have recently commissioned the views of all Departments on the report 'Making the Grade 2007' and as a result Junior Ministers have agreed to meet representatives of the End Violence Against Women campaign to discuss. This meeting is scheduled for October 21st. Our Ministerial colleagues from the Department for Social Development, the Department for Employment and Learning and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment have all agreed to hold similar meetings.

Our Department and more importantly colleagues in DHSSPS, DSD and the NIO all play key roles in this matter. An interagency steering group was established to examine the issues around prevention, protection and justice, support, and training and development for practitioners. This strategic group feeds into the Inter Ministerial Group on Domestic and Sexual Violence which was established to ensure the involvement of key service providers, and voluntary and statutory partners. The Group will work together on all the issues associated with domestic violence, sexual violence and abuse. The Junior Ministers represent our Department on that group.

Equality Commission

Lord Browne asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the cost of the Equality Commission in each of the last five years.

(AQO 595/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: The annual outturn figures for the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland for each of the last five years are as follows:

2003/04	£6,590k
2004/05	£6,091k
2005/06	£6,996k
2006/07	£6,999k
2007/08	£7,043k

Future Meetings of the Executive

Dr Farry asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to report on dates for future meetings of the Executive. (AQO 603/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: The schedule of dates for Executive meetings for the remainder of 2008 is as follows:

- 16 October 2008
- 30 October 2008
- 13 November 2008
- 27 November 2008
- 11 December 2008

This schedule may be altered in response to changing circumstances.

Shackelton Army Barracks

Mr Dallat asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister what representations it has made to the UK Government to transfer the former Shackelton Army Barracks in Ballykelly to the Executive. (AQO 582/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: We are pressing the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State at every opportunity to have former military sites gifted and our officials are in contact with the Ministry of Defence on a regular basis about this issue.

Regarding Shackelton, we currently have no plans to redevelop Shackelton Barracks, Ballykelly but are aware of some expressed interest from the Department for Social Development, Limavady Council, Road Service and NI Railways in relation to part of the site.

We are also aware that the Ministry of Defence recently vacated the site on 30 June 2008 and are currently developing a planning brief for the site.

It is important to stress that our already stretched budgets make no allowance for the purchase or redevelopment of any of the former military sites, including Shackelton.

We will continue to press the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State to have further sites gifted and will report any progress to the Assembly.

International Offices

Mr T Clarke asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister what plans it has to establish its international offices in addition to Brussels, Washington D.C., and New York. (AQO 551/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: Work has commenced to consider the options for representation in the Far East. The Executive's Programme for Government details 23 Public Service Agreements (PSAs) in support of the plans and priorities for 2008-2011. PSA 1 – Productivity Growth, includes a target to extend the Northern Ireland Bureau's representation to New York and the Far East. A Bureau Manager has been appointed to a New York Office.

Strategic Investment Board

Mr Newton asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister for its assessment of the role of the Strategic Investment Board in delivering major infrastructure projects. (AQO 568/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Executive's Investment Strategy approved by the Assembly in January, is the largest ever commitment to infrastructure development in Northern Ireland. By 2018 we plan to invest approaching £20bn to tackle the legacy of decades of under-investment we inherited.

This determined action will put in place the assets required to support high quality public service, regenerate communities, and enhance the economic competitiveness essential to sustain jobs and prosperity.

Just over 5 years ago infrastructure investment was less than £1bn per annum. Last year it amounted to almost £1.4bn and it is planned to reach £2bn per annum by the end of this Budget period. This is the measure of recent success and our ambition to go further.

But delivering the Investment Strategy involves more than simply spending the money. Our key commitments must be delivered on time, to a high quality standard, and at value for money. It also means investing in projects that offer a good return.

Expectations are high but we must not underestimate the challenges. We are now facing global financial and economic difficulties. Our local construction industry in particular is looking to our investment programme to support local jobs through difficult times ahead – and provide opportunities for more apprenticeships and training. We are determined to ensure that the Investment Strategy helps meet these calls.

SIB performs a vital role in the development, monitoring and communication of our Investment Strategy and in moving forward our key infrastructure investment programmes. It is helping departments to deliver major projects across the full spectrum of services including health care, the environment, schools and colleges, roads, water, waste and public administration.

SIB provides expert commercial, legal and project delivery advice to departments – drawing on advisers' extensive experience of major infrastructure

procurements. This advice is helping us to ensure that the best deal is obtained for the public purse and that risks are identified and appropriately managed.

We recently met with SIB's Chairman and Chief Executive to discuss the progress being made in implementing the Investment Strategy and to consider what additional steps could be taken to bring forward capital projects. We will continue to meet with SIB regularly and we will direct it to work with departments to address concerns being expressed about the pace of delivery.

At present, SIB is actively supporting 26 departmental programmes and projects with an estimated capital value in excess of £3bn. These include:

- advising on the procurement and delivery of the new acute hospital in the South West;
- helping to implement the BELB Strategic Partnership to redevelop our school buildings in Belfast, and with the wider Schools Modernisation programme.
- advising on the best procurement strategy to deliver the A5 and A8 major roads schemes on time and to budget;
- progressing the Workplace 2010 initiative, as part of the wider NICS reform;
- developing proposals for a first class tourism product in the Titanic Quarter;
- evaluating how best to take forward the recommendations from the Capital Realisations Taskforce to improve asset management across the public sector.

SIB also performs a valuable role in liaising with private sector, in particular with the construction industry and CBI, and we expect this to continue.

We believe that SIB's contribution to helping the Executive is essential in delivering infrastructure investment to improve public services, and supporting the local economy.

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Rivers Agency

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what steps the Rivers Agency is taking to prevent future flooding of (i) Masareene Street, Antrim; and (ii) the Meadowlands area, Toomebridge. (AQW 953/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (Ms M Gildernew): (i) Massareene Street in Antrim lies within the floodplain of the Six Mile Water which is a designated watercourse maintained

by Rivers Agency to ensure the free flow of water. The flood 16/17 August 2008 was an extreme event which affected many locations on the Six Milewater and I fully understand the concerns of those who suffered the devastating impacts of it. A comprehensive review of the flood risk to Antrim from the Six Mile Water is needed to determine the scope and viability of any remedial action. To this end Rivers Agency is taking forward the necessary investigations.

(ii) The Meadowlands area in Toomebridge is affected by the Moyola and Annahorish Rivers. As indicated in (i) the Rivers Agency is currently carrying out investigations into all recorded incidents of watercourse related flooding experienced on 16 and 17 August 2008 to determine the scope for and viability of remedial action.

Review of Public Administration

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action she will take to ensure that agricultural businesses will be fully considered within the Review of Public Administration and economic development in councils. (AQW 956/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: I assume the member is referring to the work of Councils in the current NIRD. Under Axis 3 of the new Rural Development Programme, Seven Local Action Groups were ratified in July of this year. Each in conjunction with its respective council joint committee developed a local rural development strategy which set out their local priorities. All 7 strategies were submitted, within a competitive process, to my department on 31st July as applications for rural development funding. The strategies were an assessment of local need and proposals on how these needs could be addressed by the six measures under the programme Axis. Under measure '3.1 diversifying into non agricultural activities' we have £20 million ring fenced for farmers and members of farmer families wishing to diversify on farm. They will also be eligible to apply for funds under the Micro Business creation and support measure for off farm diversification again this measure has a budget of £20 million. All of the strategies we have received have included interventions for agricultural businesses. Over and above this Axis 1 of the RDP provides additional measures to assist agriculture businesses examine the options available to them for, for example, Farm Family Options which might include re-skilling and assessing how their businesses can be improved.

Money Returned to the Department of Finance and Personnel

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much money her Department returned to the Department of Finance and Personnel on 31 March 2008. (AQW 957/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The process for "returning" money to the Department of Finance and Personnel is via the Provisional Outturn exercise which is conducted following the end of each financial year. The 2007/08 DARD Net Provisional Outturn position was £273.24m compared to a Final Budget Control Total of £304.90m, which represents a total Net departmental expenditure limit underspend of £31.66m (10.38%).

This can be broken down into the two main areas of expenditure: Current and Capital.

The Current expenditure underspend was £8.2m (3.4%). Of this, £1.0m was on Administration; £1.9m was in respect of a reduction in pension liabilities; and we earned £1.4m more income than we had budgeted for.

A further £3.7m was in respect of Modulation Match Funding which over the past number of years was carried forward under End of Year Flexibility arrangements to help fund the NI Rural Development Programme until 2013. These EYF arrangements have since changed and carry forward of this £3.7m underspend into 2008/09 was not granted.

The Capital and Capital Grant underspend is £23.5m (34.6%). Some £14.5m was in respect of the Farm Nutrient Management Scheme (FNMS) and to a degree this reflected the demand led nature of Capital Grant schemes. Similarly, expenditure fell short on other demand led Capital Grants – the Integrated Development Funds (£3.7m) and rural development schemes (£1.5m).

We were also slower to spend Capital than we had planned with an underspend of £3.3m on a small number of projects.

The Department continues to endeavour to improve its monitoring and control processes and I expect to report a better position at the end of this financial year.

Mussel Fishermen

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what discussions she has had with mussel fishermen in relation to the closure of fishing grounds in Belfast Lough, from Greys Point to Blackhead. (AQW 958/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The proposal to close Belfast Lough to

fishing with mobile gear was subject to a full public consultation exercise in July 2007. The ban on the use of mobile gear was supported by aquaculture producers licensed by the Department for the bottom culture of mussels on extensive sites within the proposed closed area but opposed by the NI Fish Producers Organisation representing sea fishermen.

Post consultation the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee asked my Department to talk again with both sides with a view to putting in place an arrangement that would permit sea fishermen to access the Lough, primarily, to target cockles.

It was subsequently agreed that the Department would develop a permit scheme to allow access to sea fishermen under certain conditions. I intend to bring forward proposals for consultation on this matter in spring 2009.

In the meantime the Department has worked closely with industry to carry out environmental assessments to permit an experimental small scale dredge fishery for cockles. This is limited to two vessels but the results will inform future decisions on permitting a larger scale cockle fishery.

Badger Culls

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what discussions she has had with her counterparts in (i) the Republic of Ireland and (ii) other regions of the United Kingdom, in relation to badger culls and their use in preventing the spread of tuberculosis. (AQW 960/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: I talk to my Ministerial counterparts in the South and in Britain about a range of animal health issues. On 19 September 2008, I discussed the use of badger removal with my Ministerial counterpart in the South as part of their overall approach to preventing the spread of tuberculosis.

Flooding in Antrim Town

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action she is taking to prevent a recurrence of the flooding in Antrim town. (AQW 962/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Antrim town lies within the catchment of the Six Mile Water. The Six Mile Water is a designated watercourse maintained by Rivers Agency to ensure free flow. The flooding on 16/17 August 2008 arose from exceptional rainfall which overwhelmed existing systems.

In the light of this there is need for a comprehensive study of the protection provided by existing defences to Antrim town to determine the scope and viability of any remedial action. I have therefore tasked Rivers Agency to take forward the necessary investigations.

Animal Welfare

Dr Farry asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if her Department plans to amend the Animals Welfare Act to make it illegal for people to keep animals in a poor condition instead of having to prove the animals are being mistreated. (AQW 972/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: It is already a requirement under animal welfare legislation that anyone who is responsible for a farmed animal must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the animal's needs are met. This principle is also set out in the NI Codes of Recommendation for the Welfare of Livestock, which are published by DARD, and which aim to encourage all those who care for farm animals to follow the highest level of husbandry.

However, I recognise that legislation does not provide the same protection to non farm animals. It may be possible to identify animals which are being cared for inadequately and in some cases this inadequate care may lead to suffering if it continues. However, action can only be taken once cruelty or unnecessary suffering has occurred.

As I indicated in a previous answer on 11 October 2007 with respect to other animal welfare issues, my Department consulted on proposals for new legislation in late 2006. The consultation included a proposal that those who are responsible for animals should be required to ensure that all the animals' physical needs are catered for.

As the 2006 consultation exercise was carried out under a different administration, I wanted to take time to fully consider the responses received. Following my initial consideration of the comments, I have met a number of key stakeholders to hear their concerns at first hand, and the issue of the duty of animal keepers to provide adequate care for their animals was raised during some of these meetings.

The specific provisions of any new legislation that I bring forward will depend on detailed consideration of the responses to the 2006 consultation and on the outcome of my meetings with stakeholders. I also wish to take note of legislative developments in the South and to consider lessons learned in Britain, where new legislation was introduced last year.

However, it is clear that all animal owners should be required to take all reasonable steps to prevent unnecessary suffering from happening.

Animal Welfare

Dr Farry asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how often her officials visit open farms to check on animal welfare. (AQW 974/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The Department has no statutory provision to inspect “open farms” and does not routinely keep records of farms that are open to members of the public. These farms are treated in the same way as other farms for the purposes of checks on animal welfare along with other cross compliance checks and disease testing.

Prevention of Future Flooding

Mr Butler asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action she is taking to ensure that areas that suffered as a result of the recent flooding will have measures put in place to prevent future flooding. (AQW 978/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Since the severe flooding in August Rivers Agency staff have been carrying out emergency repairs to flood defences and attending site meetings with the many affected residents and investigating the various flooding incidents. The latter is essential to supplement the detailed information the Agency is gathering. This enables a formal evaluation of the problem and the identification of action where possible.

It is hoped to resolve some of the problems by relieving blockages in watercourses or undertaking minor works. The Agency is addressing these in co-operation with the other organisations with drainage responsibilities, including NI Water and Roads Service.

Where flooding was severe, such as in Antrim, Banbridge and Beragh, Newcastle, potential solutions will require detailed investigation and consideration. Where appropriate, comprehensive reviews will be made of the protection offered by existing defences that were overwhelmed by the extreme events of August 2008.

It is not possible to guarantee immunity from flooding, however the Agency is committed to the reduction of flood risk in the North. Due to the scale of the August 2008 flooding, the Agency will also consider a bid for additional resources to accelerate the progress of post-flood recovery and viable flood alleviation schemes.

Prevention of Future Flooding

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to provide details of houses that have been built on flood plains in (i) Lagan Valley; and (ii) Northern Ireland; and what plans her Department has to redress this situation in the event of future flooding. (AQW 1024/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: As part of the preparatory work for the release of the Strategic Flood Map, Rivers Agency have carried out analyses of the number of properties at risk of flooding from watercourses and the sea. Early analyses, which are subject to refinement when flood maps are published, indicate that there are approximately 63,000 properties identified as being in the natural flood plain across the North. Following the extreme event of 16 and 17 August 2008 Rivers Agency are currently carrying out investigations into the causes of the flooding and the viability of possible options to reduce the flood risk for the affected areas. In the longer term, in line with the requirements of the EU Floods Directive Rivers Agency intend to produce more detailed flood maps where areas are at significant risk. Detailed flood risk management plans will then be produced for these areas by the EU deadline of December 2015.

Clea Lakes

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) what were the full details of the agreement that allowed the present owner to obtain lake rights for the Clay Lakes at Shrigley; and (ii) if there was a separate agreement with the private business owners. (AQW 1082/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The Lake rights for the Clay Lakes at Shrigley are associated with private land and property transactions and are a matter of private law. Such details may be usually obtained by search in the Land Registry Division of Land and Property Services.

Clea Lakes

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for the details of any agreement made with United Chrome Tanners in Shrigley about the Clay Lakes. (AQW 1083/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The United Chrome Tanners relied on abstraction of water from the Clay Lakes for their tannery operation. The Lakes are affected by a minor watercourse known as the Dibney Upper which was

designated for maintenance by the then Ministry of Agriculture. When undertaking a drainage scheme on the Dibney River the Ministry entered into a historic agreement with the Tannery, as landowners, in August 1969, whereby post scheme the Tannery would continue to be able to draw the necessary levels of water from the lakes, but would be responsible for maintaining the water levels below a maximum level of 66.0 feet Ordnance Datum Poolbeg. United Chrome Tanners no longer operate at the site and transfer of obligations on water level maintenance depends on private contractual arrangements with their successors.

Drainage on Hollybank Road

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what plans her Department has to improve the drainage on Hollybank Road, Templepatrick, to prevent a recurrence of flooding to property. (AQO 565/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Properties on the Hollybank Road are affected by a designated watercourse, the Four Mile Burn, which flows to the rear of the houses.

The extreme rainfall experienced locally during August overwhelmed the existing flood defences causing flooding to a number of houses.

Rivers Agency is presently assessing and repairing damage to defences and removing shoals and is also further investigating the existing flood defences with a view to reducing flood risk. Any measures identified would be subject to cost benefit analysis and, if viable, these would be placed in the Agency's programme along with other competing priorities.

Clea Lakes

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why the decision to replace the sluice gates at the Clea lakes, Shrigley, was postponed. (AQW 1122/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Responsibility for maintenance and / or replacement of sluice gates at Clea Lakes, Shrigley, rests with Dunbia, the current landowners. Work is ongoing to legally transfer responsibility for water level maintenance to Rivers Agency.

Clea Lakes

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why the water level at the Clea lakes in Shrigley were not maintained at the agreed

level of 66 inches above sea level; and why checks on the water level were not completed. (AQW 1146/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Responsibility for maintenance of the water level at Clea lakes, Shrigley, rests with the current landowners, Dunbia. Checks on water level are a matter for Dunbia.

It should be noted, however, that it is not possible to guarantee a minimum level for the lakes as this is dependant on weather conditions.

Clea Lakes

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development who is responsible for controlling and maintaining the water levels at the Clea lakes in Shrigley. (AQW 1147/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Responsibility for water level management at Clea Lakes in Shrigley rests with the current private landowners Dunbia (formerly known as Dungannon Meats). Work is ongoing to legally transfer responsibility to Rivers Agency for drainage purposes.

Fisheries Bill

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if she intends to bring forward a Fisheries Bill. (AQW 1148/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The need for and scope of any future Fisheries Bill is still being considered. The Marine Bill being brought forward by Defra contains provisions for new enforcement powers and powers to introduce administrative penalties for domestic fisheries offences, and powers to improve the licensing and management of fisheries. I believe it is important that there is consistency between regulation and control regimes and fishermen here are treated no differently in Britain or in the rest of Ireland.

My Department will bring forward appropriate legislation to ensure that is the case and will wish to consult with other Fisheries Administrations before firm proposals are made.

Department Website

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many page views her Department's website received each month, for the last 12 months. (AQW 1165/09)

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT:

Month/Year	Page Views	Month/Year	Page Views
Sep 2008	380,007	Mar 2008	322,958
Aug 2008	386,630	Feb 2008	324,089
Jul 2008	294,054	Jan 2008	413,806
Jun 2008	405,997	Dec 2007	228,567
May 2008	358,280	Nov 2007	283,854
Apr 2008	333,454	Oct 2007	415,981

Clea Lakes

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if her Department has the power to transfer the water rights at the Clea lakes, Shrigley to private business other than United Chrome Tanners; and if so, why no legal stipulation is in place to prevent these rights being passed on when the company denies lakeside dwellers and farmers their water rights. (AQW 1173/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has no powers in relation to the transfer of water rights at the Clea Lakes, Shrigley. Water rights are generally covered in contractual arrangements in private property transactions and outside the drainage remit of the Rivers Agency. The Agency has no responsibility for maintenance of water levels at the Clea Lakes or access to water rights.

Department Projects

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the projects her Department has successfully completed in the North Down constituency, in the last 12 months. (AQW 1176/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The following table lists successful projects for the period of 6 October 2007 to 6 October 2008.

Name of Project	Brief description of Project
Successful Projects Completed by Forest Service	
Deer Management	Forest Service established a Deer Management Group within the Clandeboye Forest area, in liaison with local land owners.
Maintenance of recreation facilities	Forest Service has carried out routine maintenance of recreation facilities at Ballysallagh Forest.

Clea Lakes

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action she is taking to ensure that cattle do not wander across the Clea lakes, Shrigley, and onto the main road, when the water level has receded. (AQW 1177/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: My Department is responsible for enforcing compliance with the provisions of the Tuberculosis Control Order (NI) 1999 and the Brucellosis Control Order (NI) 2004 as regards the separation of animals for disease control purposes. These provisions include the requirement that the keeper of a herd prevents herd contact with animals on adjoining land, and prevents the herd from straying, by maintaining fences. These provisions only apply where there is deemed to be a Tuberculosis or Brucellosis disease control risk. My Department has no responsibility to take action as regards wandering cattle, except where it is a case of preventing the spread of Tuberculosis or Brucellosis.

The general issue of cattle wandering onto main roads is one of civil liability. The Department of Finance and Personnel is responsible for amending The Animals (NI) Order 1976, which sets out the liability rules governing the responsibility of the owner of an animal for any damage it may cause.

The Department of Finance and Personnel has advised that an owner of an animal is under a duty of care to prevent damage from animals straying onto the public highway. However, where damage is caused by an animal straying from unfenced land onto a public road, the owner of the animal will not have breached his duty of care if the land is situated in an area where fencing is not customary and the owner had a right to place the animals on that land.

Equality Impact Assessment

Ms Anderson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) to update the progress of the Equality Impact Assessment on the DARD Direct proposals and (ii) when an announcement regarding location is likely to be made. (AQW 1349/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development:

- (i) The formal consultation phase of the EQIA was completed on 5th September 2008. The Department received 29 responses during the consultation phase. The key issues arising from the consultation were accessibility of offices, for both staff and customers; quality and flexibility of service; and disruption to staff and customers. The Department is in the process of preparing a final EQIA report,

which includes the findings of that consultation exercise and appropriate recommendations for mitigating actions for the emerging issues. The final EQIA report is scheduled to be discussed by the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development in the first week of December.

- (ii) No decisions will be made on the number and locations of DARD Direct offices until all feedback, including from the ARD Committee, has been carefully considered.

Damage Caused by Flooding

Mr Savage asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to provide the provisional cost estimates of damage caused by flooding on 16 August 2008, to the farming industry. (AQW 1518/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Although the final assessment is not yet available, the current cost estimate of damage is in the order of £670,000. This represents losses in respect of potatoes of £466,000, cereals of £144,000 and vegetables of £60,000. These figures are based on input costs.

CULTURE, ARTS AND LEISURE

Ulster Scots Groups

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) the Ulster Scots groups funded by his Department; and (ii) the amount of funding provided to Ulster-Scots groups in the Mid-Ulster constituency over the past 3 years. (AQW 995/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (Mr G Campbell): The only Ulster-Scots Group funded directly by my Department is the Ulster-Scots Agency, which along with Foras na Gaeilge, the Irish language agency, comprises the North/South Language Body.

The payments made by the Ulster-Scots Agency are not held by specific constituency area; however the Agency has endeavoured to list those groups in the Mid-Ulster constituency who have received funding between 2006 and 2008. Also shown in the tables below are payments made by the Arts Council to Ulster-Scots Groups in the Mid-Ulster constituency between 2006 and 2008.

ULSTER-SCOTS AGENCY

Year	Detail	Award
2008	Aughrim Fife & Lambeg Drumming Club	£1,600.00
	Ballinacross Accordion Band	£1,200.00
	Centre for Migration Studies	£2,000.00
	Cranny Cultural & Community Group	£2,150.00
	Derganagh Training & Development Association	£250.00
	Desertmartin Accordion Band	£1,200.00
	Magherafelt Highland & Country Dancing Group	£3,715.50
	Salterstown Flute Band	£1,800.00
	Sandholes Accordion Band	£1,672.50
	Dunamoney Community Group	£2,560.00
	South Londonderry Ulster Scots Association	£1,200.00
	Kilcronaghan Community Association	£2,140.00
2007	Maghera Sons of William Flute Band	£1,400.00
	South Londonderry Ulster Scots Association	£4,725.00
	Salterstown Flute Band	£900.00
	Ballymoughan Flute Band	£1,600.00
	Cranny Cultural and Community Group	£4,500.00
	Magargy Cultural & Community Group	£500.00
2006	Moree Community Association	£250.00
	Ulster-Scots Dance Alliance	£35,000.00
	South Londonderry Ulster-Scots Association	£1,673.25
	Dunamoney Flute Band	£250.00
	Cranny Cultural & Community Group	£1,600.00
	Pomeroy Historical Society	£1,855.00
	Newmills Lambeg Drumming Club	£2,430.00
	Gortagilly Musical Society	£1,770.00
	Drumnaglough Flute Band	£1,833.00
	Magherafelt Highland & Country Dance Group	£3,977.37

THE ARTS COUNCIL

07/08	Cranny Pipe Band & Gortagilly Musical Society	£5,000
06/07	Cranny Pipe Band & Gortagilly Musical Society	£3,000
05/06		NIL

Sports Grounds

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what grants are available to (i) create; and (ii) improve sports grounds, in preparation for the 2012 Olympics. (AQW 1034/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) is responsible for the development of sport in Northern Ireland including the distribution of funding. SNI is currently operating and planning a number of Exchequer and Lottery programmes to which sports clubs and the owners of sports grounds, including football grounds, may apply. These presently include the Awards for All and Places for Sport: Surfaces programmes but other programmes are likely to come on stream. Details of these can be found in due course on the SNI website, www.sportni.net.

Grants Available to Sports Clubs

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what grants are available to sports clubs associated with the 2012 Olympics. (AQW 1035/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) is responsible for the development of sport in Northern Ireland including the distribution of funding. SNI is currently operating and planning a number of Exchequer and Lottery programmes to which sports clubs and the owners of sports grounds, including football grounds, may apply. These presently include the Awards for All and Places for Sport: Surfaces programmes but other programmes are likely to come on stream. Details of these can be found in due course on the SNI website, www.sportni.net.

Department Website

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many page views his Department's website received each month, for the last 12 months. (AQW 1074/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The table below lists the number of website page views received by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure's website for each month during the past 12 months.

This report was generated by Web Trends 8, Version: 8.0d, Build: 28635. Thursday, 2 October 2008 10:57:56

Page Views Trend	
Time Interval	Page Views
October 2007	47,738
November 2007	22,935

Page Views Trend	
Time Interval	Page Views
December 2007	29,758
January 2008	33,093
February 2008	33,567
March 2008	43,534
April 2008	44,406
May 2008	53,047
June 2008	44,024
July 2008	25,134
August 2008	36,024
September 2008	37,975
1st Oct – 2nd Oct 2008	1,538

Money Returned to the Department of Finance and Personnel

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much money his Department returned to the Department of Finance and Personnel on 31 March 2008. (AQW 1079/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: For the financial year 2007-08, the Estimate for the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure was £138,500,000 against an actual expenditure of £130,436,000. The resulting under spend for the Department was £8,064,000. Further details can be found in the Department's 2007-08 Resource Accounts which were laid on 4 July 2008.

Sports Grounds

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what grants are available from the Sports Council for new and existing football and other sports grounds,. (AQW 1088/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) is responsible for the development of sport in Northern Ireland including the distribution of funding. SNI is currently operating and planning a number of Exchequer and Lottery programmes to which sports clubs and the owners of sports grounds, including football grounds, may apply. These presently include the Awards for All and Places for Sport: Surfaces programmes but other programmes are likely to come on stream. Details of these can be found in due course on the SNI website, www.sportni.net.

An Gaeláras Centre

Mr McCausland asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the (i) revenue; and (ii) project funding, awarded to the An Gaeláras Centre in Derry/Londonderry, in each of the last 3 years.
(AQW 1090/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The An Gaeláras Centre has received revenue and project funding from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Foras na Gaeilge and project funding administered by Inland Waterways and Inland Fisheries Branch in DCAL. Funding provided by each organisation over the last three years is set out in the tables below.

FORAS NA GAEILGE

Year	Revenue (£)
2008	99,081 (amount paid to 30 September 2008)
2007	117,962
2006	115,017

ARTS COUNCIL

Year	(Exchequer) Revenue (£)	Lottery (£)
2007/08	44,550	
2006/07	44,550	45,000 (Access project)
2005/06	26,000	

IWIF

Year	Project Costs (£)
2006	65,134.22

An Gaeláras Centre

Mr McCausland asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) the funding provided for the new An Gaeláras building in Derry/Londonderry; (ii) the sources of the funding; and (iii) the total cost of the project.
(AQW 1092/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The total cost of the An Gaeláras building is £3.43m. A range of funders are providing funding for the building as detailed below:

Funder	Amount allocated	Amount paid to date
An Gaeláras	£272k	0
Ilex (Integrated Development Fund)	£500k	£220,607

Funder	Amount allocated	Amount paid to date
Arts Council of Northern Ireland	£650k	0
Foras na Gaeilge	£600k	£275,561
International Fund for Ireland	£353k	£141,200
The Local Strategy Partnership for Derry City Council Area	£330k	£330,000
Dept. of Foreign Affairs (ROI)	£65k	0
Ulster Community Investment Trust	£100k	£100,000
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure		
North West Cultural Challenge Fund	£363k	£310,908
Department of Social Development	£200k	£160,000
Total	£3.43m	£1,538,276

Midnight Soccer Initiatives

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what support is available from his Department for midnight soccer initiatives.
(AQW 1099/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) is responsible for the development of sport in Northern Ireland and the distribution of funding. SNI is currently operating a number of Exchequer and Lottery programmes to which the organisers of midnight soccer may apply. These include the Awards for All and Sport in out Community programmes.

Carbon Usage

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure if records are kept of carbon usage; and what plans the Department has to purchase carbon offsets each time a long distance journey is undertaken.
(AQW 1106/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure does not currently keep records of carbon usage nor has the Department currently any plans to purchase carbon offsets each time a long journey is undertaken.

Location of Public Sector Jobs

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) what engagements he had with Professor Bain in relation to the review of the location of public sector jobs; and (ii) any offers he made to relocate jobs in his Department. (AQW 1138/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: I have not had any engagements with Professor Bain in relation to the review of the location of public sector jobs.

Events Unit

Mr Paisley Jnr asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (i) to list the events that have been funded since the inception of the Events Unit in the Department; and (ii) the dates the grants were awarded. (AQW 1160/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Since the inception of the Events Unit, the Department has approved or is appraising applications from the following events.

Event Name	Fund	Date of Decision to Award	Letter of Offer Issued
Aquarama Carrickfergus Incorporating Annual Sea Cadet Corps National Sailing Regatta 2008	EGF	18-06-08	25-06-08
Atlantic Tall Ships Challenge 2009	MEF	Subject to economic appraisal	TBA
August Feile - West Belfast Festival 2008	MEF	18-06-08	25-06-08
Blues on the Bay 2008	EGF	05-03-08	14-03-08
European FIM Trials 2008	MEF	05-03-08	14-03-08
Garden Show Ireland 2008	EGF	05-03-08	14-03-08
Guinness Folk Festival 2008	EGF	18-06-08	25-06-08
Hillsborough International Oyster Festival 2008	EGF	18-06-08	25-06-08
International Indoor Athletics 2009	EGF	18-06-08	25-06-08
Kennedy International North West 200 - 2008	MEF	Subject to economic appraisal	TBA
Lough Neagh Fest	EGF	27-08-08	01-09-08
Magner's Big Tickle Comedy Festival 2008	EGF	18-06-08	25-06-08

Event Name	Fund	Date of Decision to Award	Letter of Offer Issued
Milk Cup International Youth Football Tournament 2008	MEF	05-03-08	19-03-08
NI Dance Awards 2008	EGF	23-05-08	27-05-08
Northern Ireland International Air Show 2008	EGF	18-06-08	25-06-08
Out to Lunch 2009	EGF	18-06-08	25-06-08
Rally Ireland	MEF	17-09-08	03-10-08
Trans/Urban Arts Academy 2008	EGF	18-06-08	25-06-08
Ulster Grand Prix Bike Week 2008	MEF	18-06-08	25-06-08
University of Ulster Foyle Cup Tournament 2008	MEF	27-05-08	27-05-08
World Indoor Bowling Championship	EGF	27-08-08	03-09-08
World Junior & Cadet Fencing Championships 2009	MEF	Subject to economic appraisal	TBA

Departmental Private Office

Mr Burns asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many staff are employed in his Departmental private office; and the annual cost of employing these staff. (AQW 1292/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: A total of 5 staff are employed in the DCAL Departmental Private Office. This figure excludes the Minister's Special Advisor.

The annual costs of employing the staff during the financial years 2007/2008 and 2008/09 to date (1 April to 30 September 2008) are:

2007/08	£123,750
2008/09	£64,216

TV Licenses

Mr W Clarke asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure if he will make representations to the BBC calling for an exemption from paying the TV License for people registered as blind. (AQW 1303/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport is responsible for policy on the television licence fee in the UK. The issue of concessions was fully addressed

in the BBC Charter review, which completed in 2006. Respondents to the Charter review consultations put forward a very wide range of groups which they felt merited special concessions but there was little consensus as to who should have concessions, the criteria on which they should be allocated or how they should be funded. The conclusion was that there should be no changes to the existing concessions and there are no plans to re-open the issue. Any representation would therefore not be appropriate at this point in time.

Football Pitch Improvements

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what money will be available for football pitch improvements for (i) councils; (ii) community groups; (iii) football clubs; (iv) youth clubs; and (v) junior teams, in this financial year. (AQW 1315/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) is responsible for the development of sport including the distribution of funding. SNI is currently operating an Exchequer programme called Places for Sport: Surfaces which focuses on providing pitches and sports surfaces and is open to voluntary sports clubs, community associations, education boards, governing bodies, charities, local authorities and other statutory bodies. The programme has a budget for this financial year of £1.5 million and the maximum award for each project is up to £245,000 towards construction costs.

Home Start

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what funding is available from his Department to assist Home Start in providing support to parents with young children. (AQW 1344/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The Department does not directly provide grant funding to organisations. The Department will, through its Arms Length Bodies, provide advice and support to any organisation considering an application for funding.

Sport NI currently has the following programmes that may be appropriate to Home Start: Awards for All, Places for Sport and Active Communities.

The Member should note that Arts Council programmes offer a premium payment within their grants to cover costs of childcare and crèche facilities which enables organisations to run programmes which will assist parents to participate in the arts.

NI Events Company

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline when his Department will complete the investigation into the NI Events company. (AQO 662/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Investigations carried out by KPMG, on behalf of the Department, into how the financial deficit at the Northern Ireland Events Company arose were completed in April 2008. The former Minister made a statement to the Assembly on 3rd June 2008 on the findings of KPMG Report.

These investigations have raised serious questions in relation to how the affairs of the Company were conducted. The report into these investigations contains matters of a sensitive legal and financial nature which will be subject to further investigation.

These matters have been referred to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment which is in the process of selecting and appointing inspectors.

I am unable, at this time, to state when these further investigations will be completed.

Performer Development Centres

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure if his Department and Sport NI will consider designating a number of facilities in Co. Tyrone as performer development centres to assist local athletes. (AQO 667/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) has sought expressions of interest for establishing Performer Development Centres as part of a pilot programme aimed at addressing short-term sport science and sports medicine support to developing athletes throughout Northern Ireland. To date SNI has considered four proposals, two of which have already been successful. SNI will continue to seek further expressions of interest to facilitate geographical spread of development centres.

Elite Facilities Programme

Mr Simpson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the remaining budget for the Elite Facilities Programme. (AQO 548/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The Elite Facilities Capital Programme is a competition being managed by Sport Northern Ireland on behalf of my Department.

A competition is currently underway and the number of potential projects cannot be identified until the Outline Business Cases have been assessed.

The 2008/2011 Budget provides circa £145m for all sport including £111.6m for all sports capital projects. The amount that will be available for the Elite Facilities Capital Programme will be determined once the Outline Business Cases have been assessed, the number of priority projects have been identified and the consequential spending profile considered.

Sport Northern Ireland is responsible for the allocation of the capital budget and will work closely with project sponsors on the delivery of the programme.

Training Camps

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) the total number; and (ii) the location, of sports facilities that will be used as training camps by athletes training for the 2012 Paralympic Games, broken down by parliamentary constituency. (AQO 660/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Eight of Northern Ireland's sports facilities are included in the Pre-Games Training Camp (PGTC) Guide for the 2012 Paralympic Games.

The location of the eight venues broken down by parliamentary constituency, are as follows:-

- Antrim Forum Complex, South Antrim;
- Ballyholme Yacht Club, North Down;
- Bangor Castle Leisure Centre, North Down;
- Bangor Sportsplex, North Down;
- Mary Peters Athletics Track, Belfast South;
- University of Ulster at Jordanstown, East Antrim;
- Carrickfergus Sailing Club, East Antrim;
- Queen's Sport, Queen's University Belfast, Belfast South.

Capital Projects

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what proportion of the 2008-11 sports budget has been allocated to capital projects. (AQO 575/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The Budget 2008/2011 provided a total of £145.3 million for Sport. £111.6 million of this has been allocated for all sports capital projects. This amounts to 76.8% of the Sport budget.

Community Sports

Mrs M Bradley asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the funding available for community sports infrastructure in the financial year 2008/09. (AQO 657/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) is currently developing a number of programmes which will help address the need for new, improved and shared sports facilities including new investment in places for sport in communities and training of coaches and leaders in communities and clubs across Northern Ireland.

SNI has advised that in the financial year 2008/09 it is likely to achieve spend of £6.35m under the Building Sport programme and £536,250 under the Elite Facilities Programme. In addition to this, SNI is currently reviewing its capital budget to ensure funding is available for the recently launched Places for Sport programme.

World Police and Fire Games

Lord Browne asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure when a decision will be taken on who will deliver the World Police and Fire Games in 2013. (AQO 599/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: BDO Stoy Hayward has been commissioned to prepare a Business Case, which will include recommendations on the most appropriate delivery mechanism for the 2013 Games. Once the Business Case has been submitted to the Department and reviewed I will then be in a position to make a recommendation on how best the Games can be delivered.

North-South Ministerial Council

Mr W Clarke asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the outcomes of the North-South Ministerial Council meeting in waterway sectoral format held on 4 July 2008. (AQO 665/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: I refer the member to the Statement I made to the Assembly on 23rd September on this matter.

Ulster Scots Agency

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail efforts being made by his Department to improve governance and management systems in the Ulster Scots Agency. (AQO 659/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: My Department and the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs the Sponsor Departments of the North/South Language Body have agreed with the Ulster-Scots Agency to a review of its procedures and processes being carried out along with a structural review to enable its Corporate Governance to be strengthened and improved.

Ulster Museum

Mr Burnside asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how the staff of the Ulster Museum have been employed during the period in which it has been closed. (AQO 558/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Staff from the Ulster Museum have been engaged on a range of activities central to the success of the re-furbishment project. Key aspects of this work include decanting more than 800,000 objects in the collections to suitable off-site storage facilities which included their safe transport and documentation; undertaking an extensive outreach programme taking the Ulster Museum's collections to schools, libraries and regional museums across Northern Ireland; planning new interpretation approaches and gallery layouts for the refurbished museum and in the coming months preparing for the recant of the collections for the reopening in the summer of 2009.

Paralympic Games in Beijing

Mr Kennedy asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what action he is taking to honour the Northern Ireland athletes who competed with such distinction at the Paralympic Games in Beijing. (AQO 557/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: I hosted a reception in Parliament Buildings on Monday 6th October 2008 to recognise the achievements of all Northern Ireland athletes who participated in the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Beijing.

Public Record Office

Rev Dr Robert Coulter asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what plans he has to extend the evening and weekend opening hours of the Public Record Office to improve public access. (AQO 561/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: There are currently no plans to extend the present opening hours of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland in advance of its move to new accommodation.

EDUCATION

Revised Curriculum

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Education, given the uncertainty over the 11-plus test, what measures are being put in place to ensure effective delivery of the Revised Curriculum. (AQW 641/09)

The Minister of Education (Ms C Ruane): There is no uncertainty over the 11-plus Transfer Test. I have been very clear that the Transfer Test to be held this November will be the last Transfer Test. Schools are required by law to deliver the statutory curriculum for pupils of compulsory school age. We are in the middle of a three year phased programme of implementing a revised statutory curriculum. Teachers are receiving training, and teaching materials and support are being provided to help all schools to deliver the revised curriculum. Until such time as the revised curriculum becomes statutory, the previous curriculum remains a requirement.

Schools are also required by law to provide assessment outcomes for pupils at the end of Key Stages 1-3 to the Department, through the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment. In addition, schools are required by law to report to parents.

The Education and Training Inspectorate conducts inspections in schools and is an independent means of reporting any occasions of the statutory curriculum being distorted by tests for the purposes of selection.

Chuir mé in iúl go soiléir nár mhian liom go mbeadh drochthionchar ag na socrúithe aistrithe ar an churaclam athbhreithnithe. Éilítear ar gach scoil an curaclam reachtúil agus socrúithe gaolmhara measúnaithe agus tuairiscithe a sholáthar.

I am clear that I do not want the transfer arrangements to impact negatively on the revised curriculum. All schools are required to deliver the statutory curriculum and associated assessment and reporting arrangements.

Admissions Criteria

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Education what criteria will be used by secondary schools to determine admission in a fair and equitable manner for all children. (AQW 642/09)

The Minister of Education: De réir na moltaí a chuir mé faoi bhráid an Fheidhmeannais ar 15 Bealtaine 2008, seo mar a leanas na critéir iontrála nach critéir acadúla iad a mbainfidh scoileanna úsáid astu:

In accordance with the proposals which I brought before the Executive on 15 May 2008 the non-academic admissions criteria for use by schools will be the following:

- Geography
 - Parish
 - Catchment Area
 - Nearest Suitable School
- Family criteria:
 - Currently attending sibling only
 - Eldest/first child
- Community:
 - Feeder primary school
- Socially disadvantaged criteria
 - looked after children
 - children entitled to Free School Meals
- Tie-breakers eg.
 - Random Selection

Nearly all of these criteria are similar to those operated by many schools already. In addition to these, I have stated that we will bring forward measures to ensure that rural and outlying applicants are not disadvantaged in transfer.

Teachers Suspended

Mr Elliott asked the Minister of Education how many teachers (i) were suspended (a) with pay; and (b) without pay, in the 2007-08 academic year; and (ii) are currently suspended. (AQW 691/09)

The Minister of Education: Cuireadh 17 múinteoir ar fionraí le pá agus níor chuireadh múinteoir ar bith ar fionraí gan phá i scoileanna rialaithe agus faoi chothabháil sa bhliain acadúil 2007/08. Tá seisear astu siúd atá ar fionraí le pá fós ar fionraí. Níl aon eolas ar fáil faoi láthair maidir le scoileanna deonacha gramadaí.

In the 2007/08 academic year 17 teachers were suspended with pay and none without pay in controlled and maintained schools. Of those suspended with pay 6 remain on suspension. Information is not currently available for voluntary grammar schools.

Education and Skills Authority

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education how the management of voluntary grammar schools will change under the Education and Skills Authority. (AQW 759/09)

The Minister of Education: Beidh freagracht ar an Údarás um Oideachas agus Scileanna as gobharnóirí pobail a cheapadh chuig na suíocháin sin ar Bhoird Ghobharnóirí scoileanna gramadaí deonacha atá anois ag gobharnóirí a cheap an Roinn agus na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne.

The Education and Skills Authority will have responsibility for appointing community governors to the seats on voluntary grammar school Boards of Governors that are currently occupied by governors appointed by the Department and the education and library boards. The Boards of Governors of voluntary grammar schools will continue to have the right to be consulted about these appointments.

Neighbourhood Renewal

Ms Ní Chuilín asked the Minister of Education to provide details of the neighbourhood renewal posts and services that her Department will fund from March 2009. (AQW 887/09)

The Minister of Education: Chomhaontaigh mo Roinn aistriú teicniúil de £44k ó DSD sa bhliain airgeadais 2009/10 a chuirfidh le forbairt leanúnach pobail oiliúnaigh taobh istigh de Ballysally Primary School.

My Department has agreed to a technical transfer of £44k from DSD in the 2009/10 financial year which will provide for the continued development of a tutoring community within Ballysally Primary School.

I do fully support the objectives of the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and, through my focus on raising standards in education and, particularly, on tackling educational underachievement I am confident that education can and will make a real contribution to the success of that strategy. I am also encouraged that most of the Neighbourhood Partnerships have identified education as a key issue for their areas and I can assure them that Education and Library Boards and other education bodies will work closely with them, including through programmes such as Achieving Belfast and Achieving Derry, to deliver improvements. The interest and involvement of local communities in education is a key factor in supporting the work of principals and teachers and in encouraging our young people to succeed and do well at school. I have seen at first hand through programmes such as Extended Schools and the Full Service School programme at the Belfast Boys and Girls Model schools examples of how schools are developing working relationships with parents, the wider community, health and social services and childcare agencies.

Education and Library Board Headquarters

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education the number of vacancies in the headquarters of each of the 5 Education and Library Boards. (AQW 936/09)

The Minister of Education: Thug na boird oideachais agus leabharlainne an t-eolas seo a leanas

maidir le líon na mball foirne atá fostaithe ag oifigí ceanncheathrún:

The education and library boards have provided the following information on headquarters staff employed:

NUMBER OF PEOPLE EMPLOYED AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARDS (AT 1 JANUARY IN EACH OF THE LAST 5 YEARS)

Board	2004		2005		2006		2007		2008	
	P	T	P	T	P	T	P	T	P	T
Belfast	178	26	174	26	159	23	162	28	155	37
Western	133	31	140	19	137	27	126	43	126	43
North Eastern	272	51	274	44	247	65	239	75	174	80
South Eastern	193	12	200	5	176	69	159	99	110	123
Southern	212	24	212	24	221	17	216	23	209	29

'P' indicates the number of people employed in a permanent capacity

'T' indicates the number of people employed in a temporary or agency capacity

These figures include services that are operated within a Board on behalf of all 5 Boards (e.g. SEELB's Joint Legal Service). They exclude staff whose base is at headquarters buildings but who work in frontline services (e.g. the Education Welfare Service, the Curriculum Advisory Support Service and the Transport and Catering Services).

Data on the number of vacancies is not available from the five Boards on a comprehensive and consistent basis. To minimise the potential for future compulsory redundancies when the new Education and Skills Authority is established, vacancies are being covered largely by acting-up arrangements, or through the use of temporary/agency staff as indicated in the table.

Irish Medium Schools

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Education how many pupils have attended Irish medium (i) primary; and (ii) post-primary schools, in each of the last 10 years, broken down by parliamentary constituency.

(AQW 938/09)

The Minister of Education: Seo a leanas an t-eolas a iarradh.

The information requested is as follows.

PRIMARY1 AND POST PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS ENROLLED IN IRISH MEDIUM SCHOOLS AND UNITS2 BY CONSTITUENCY – 1998/99 – 2007/08

Constituency Name	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
Primary					
Belfast East	0	0	0	0	0

Constituency Name	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
Primary					
Belfast North	82	101	111	124	164
Belfast South	0	0	0	63	77
Belfast West	704	743	776	823	873
East Antrim	0	0	0	0	0
East Derry	0	0	0	0	14
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	0	0	0	0	0
Foyle	218	211	208	202	253
Lagan Valley	0	0	0	0	0
Mid Ulster	0	0	0	73	157
Newry And Armagh	60	60	64	71	179
North Antrim	0	0	0	0	0
North Down	0	0	0	0	0
South Antrim	0	0	0	0	0
South Down	0	0	0	0	40
Strangford	0	0	0	0	0
Upper Bann	0	0	0	0	61
West Tyrone	0	0	0	65	107
Total	1,064	1,115	1,159	1,421	1,925
Post Primary					
Belfast West	268	308	332	342	364
Foyle	0	0	0	0	51

Constituency Name	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
Primary					
Newry And Armagh	0	0	0	0	10
Total	268	308	332	342	425

Constituency Name	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Primary					
Belfast East	0	0	0	0	0
Belfast North	162	175	192	199	190
Belfast South	79	86	82	89	103
Belfast West	901	934	951	963	951
East Antrim	0	0	0	0	0
East Derry	24	31	37	56	51
Fermanagh And South Tyrone	0	12	18	22	27
Foyle	279	296	289	279	294
Lagan Valley	0	0	0	0	0
Mid Ulster	173	182	186	212	236
Newry And Armagh	196	214	224	249	290
North Antrim	35	43	61	71	75
North Down	0	0	0	0	0
South Antrim	0	0	0	0	31
South Down	87	108	120	123	123
Strangford	0	0	0	0	0

Constituency Name	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Upper Bann	85	107	121	142	159
West Tyrone	143	166	179	193	216
Total	2,164	2,354	2,460	2,598	2,746
Post Primary					
Belfast West	406	442	470	489	506
Foyle	48	42	36	34	27
Newry And Armagh	26	37	64	88	99
Total	480	521	570	611	632

Source: Annual school census

Note:

1. Primary includes nursery, reception and year 1 – 7 classes.
2. Pupils in Irish medium units were not recorded prior to the 2002/03 year
3. Enrolments in Irish Medium schools and units are based on the constituency of the school, which may differ from the constituency in which the pupil resides.

Education and Library Board Headquarters

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education how many people have been employed at the headquarters of each Education and Library Board, in each of the last 5 years. (AQW 939/09)

The Minister of Education: Thug na boird oideachais agus leabharlainne an t-eolas seo a leanas maidir le líon na mball foirne atá fostaithe ag oifigí ceanncheathrún:

The education and library boards have provided the following information on headquarters staff employed:

NUMBER OF PEOPLE EMPLOYED AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARDS (AT 1 JANUARY IN EACH OF THE LAST 5 YEARS)

Board	2004		2005		2006		2007		2008	
	P	T	P	T	P	T	P	T	P	T
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Southern	212	24	212	24	221	17	216	23	209	29

‘P’ indicates the number of people employed in a permanent capacity

‘T’ indicates the number of people employed in a temporary or agency capacity

These figures include services that are operated within a Board on behalf of all 5 Boards (e.g. SEELB’s Joint Legal Service). They exclude staff whose base is at headquarters buildings but who work in frontline services

(e.g. the Education Welfare Service, the Curriculum Advisory Support Service and the Transport and Catering Services).

Data on the number of vacancies is not available from the five Boards on a comprehensive and consistent basis. To minimise the potential for future compulsory redundancies when the new Education and Skills Authority is established, vacancies are being covered largely by acting-up arrangements, or through the use of temporary/agency staff as indicated in the table.

After School Sports Activities

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education what grants are available from her Department to assist with transport costs for after school sports activities. (AQW 941/09)

The Minister of Education: Ní fios dom aon deontais a bheith ar fáil ó mo Roinn faoi láthair le cúnaimh a thabhairt do chostais taistil do ghníomhaíochtaí spóirt iarscoile. Bíonn freagracht ar Bhoird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne as seirbhísí taistil baile go scoil a sholáthar ag gnáthamanna tosaigh agus críochnaithe na scoileanna.

I am not aware of any grants that are currently available from my Department to assist with transport costs for after school sports activities. The Education and Library Boards have a responsibility to provide home to school transport services to coincide with schools' normal opening and closing times. The Boards are not required to make additional arrangements to facilitate pupils' attendance at after school activities. However, as a concession, Translink permits pupils who are in receipt of a sessional ticket to travel on later services, where they are available.

Asbestos in Schools

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education to name all schools in the North Down area that need work to replace asbestos structures. (AQW 1003/09)

The Minister of Education: The South Eastern Education and Library Board has responsibility for the maintenance of controlled and maintained schools in the North Down constituency area. The Board has advised that it does not currently have plans for removal of asbestos structures in North Down schools.

The two voluntary grammar schools in North Down, Bangor Grammar School and Sullivan Upper Grammar School, have informed my Department that they do not currently have plans for removal of asbestos structures.

Nuair nach síltear é bheith riachtanach an aispeist a bhaint, bíonn na Boird agus na húdaráis eile scoile freagrach as bainistiú na haispeiste ar bhealach sábháilte.

Where it is not considered necessary to remove the asbestos, Boards and other school authorities are responsible for managing the asbestos safely.

Slemish College

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education for an update on providing a sports hall at Slemish College, Ballymena. (AQW 1005/09)

The Minister of Education: Aitnhníonn an Roinn an gá le halla spóirt bheith ann agus tá bainisteoir tionscadail á cheapadh le staidéar feidearthachta a thabhairt chun tosaigh in éineacht leis an scoil.

The Department recognises the need for a sports hall and is in the process of appointing a project manager to take forward a feasibility study with the school.

Education and Skills Authority

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Education what processes are in place to decide which functions currently undertaken in (i) Rathgael House; and (ii) Waterside House; will be transferred to the Education and Skills Authority. (AQW 1015/09)

The Minister of Education: Rinne an Roinn Oideachais athbhreithniú ar na feidhmeanna i dTeach Ráth Giall agus i dTeach Thaobh an Uisce a bhaineann go hiomlán nó go formhór le seachadadh oibriúcháin agus go ndéanfar iad a aistriú chuig an tÚdarás um Oideachas agus Scileanna (ESA) mar gheall air.

The Department of Education has reviewed the functions in both Rathgael House and Waterside House which relate wholly or mainly to operational delivery and would therefore transfer to the Education and Skills Authority (ESA). The results of the review, which detailed by division, branch and function, the functions which will remain in the DE, those which will transfer to the ESA and those which will be shared, were issued to all staff on 27 February 2008.

Where it was not clear from the review that a function should transfer to ESA, a more detailed functional analysis is needed. This work is underway and staff in the affected branches and trade unions are being fully consulted. The outcome of this analysis should be completed by the end of the year.

Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Education why a teacher who has been vetted under the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Order 2003 and has worked for an Education and Library Board, is required to pass through a similar check when moving to teach in another board area. (AQW 1018/09)

The Minister of Education: Níl aon cheanglas ann go ndéantar athsheiceáil ar bhaill foirne múinteoireachta agus neamh-mhúinteoireachta, a ndearnadh seiceáil réamhfhostaíochta orthu i limistéar Boird amháin agus nach raibh briseadh seirbhíse acu, má aistrionn siad go limistéar Boird eile.

There is no requirement for teaching and non teaching staff who have had a pre employment check in one Board area and who have not had a break in service, to be re-vetted when moving to another Board area. The Department reiterated that this was unnecessary in the advice issued on 8 August 2008 to education authorities.

Schools' Admissions Criteria

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education what action she is taking to ensure that children from rural areas are not disadvantaged by schools' admissions criteria. (AQW 1068/09)

The Minister of Education: Sna tograí a chuir mé faoi bhráid an Fheidhmeannais ar 15 Bealtaine 2008 thug mé gealltanas nach mbeadh páistí ó cheantair tuaithe faoi aon mhíbhuntáiste mar gheall ar na socruithe nua.

In my proposals that I put to the Executive on 15 May 2008 I made a commitment that children from rural areas would not be disadvantaged under the new arrangements. Work has taken place over the summer period to develop ways of meeting this commitment. The results of that work will be shared with colleagues in the Executive and Education Committee prior to being published.

Administrative Costs

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education for her assessment of the additional administrative costs incurred by operating a wide range of school types. (AQW 1069/09)

The Minister of Education: Léiríonn éagsúlacht an chórais oideachais traidisiúin sheanbhunaithe agus prionsabal rogha na dtuismitheoirí agus bíonn na costais riaracháin a thabhaítear mar thacaíocht leis seo.

The diversity of the education system reflects long established traditions and the principle of parental choice and the administrative costs incurred are in support of this. The Review of Public Administration in education will introduce a common administrative structure for all schools here but it will not introduce a single education system. Government will continue to support a diverse range of schools giving parents and young people a real choice in the type of education available to best meet their needs.

Education Issues in Upper Bann

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education to detail the (i) educationalists; (ii) interest groups and individuals; and (iii) political parties, with whom she has consulted on education issues in the Upper Bann constituency, since taking up office. (AQW 1070/09)

The Minister of Education: Sa tábla atá faoi iamh, liostaítear (i) oideachasóirí; (ii) grúpaí sainleasa agus daoine eile; agus (iii) páirtithe polaitíochta, a ndeachaigh mé i gcomhairle leo maidir le saincheisteanna oideachais i dtoghcheantar na Banna Uachtaraí, ó thosaigh mé sa phost.

The attached table lists the (i) educationalists; (ii) interest groups and individuals; and (iii) political parties, with whom I have consulted on education issues in the Upper Bann constituency, since taking up office.

Date of contact	Name	Event/Meeting
Educationalists		
13/06/07	Principal & Staff of St Paul's JHS, Lurgan	Prizegiving
20/06/07	Principal & Staff of Lismore HS, Craigavon	To meet and talk to staff
20/06/07	Principal & Staff of Ceara Special School, Lurgan	School visit
27/06/07	Principal & Staff of St Mary's PS, Banbridge	School visit/to talk about new build
27/06/07	Principal & Staff of St Patrick's HS, Banbridge	School visit/to talk about new build
18/09/07	Lismore HS, Craigavon	Prizegiving
14/11/07	Principals of Special Schools in SELB area	Meeting
30/09/08	Principals of St Patrick's HS, Banbridge HS and New-Bridge Integrated College, Banbridge	Dinner with school principals to discuss transfer proposals
Interest Groups & Individuals		
14/05/07	Meeting with all ELB Chief Executives	Meeting re transfer proposals

Date of contact	Name	Event/Meeting
31/05/07	All members of SELB	Lunch meeting
14/08/07	'Creative I', Banbridge	Launch of project
08/10/07	Students from Upper Bann Institute	Discussion about underage drinking
10/10/07; 16/01/08; 09/04/08; 26/06/08; 17/09/08	Chairs of Education Organisations (including Marie Donnell, SELB Chair)	To discuss RPA in education
09/04/08	Travellers Support Project, Lismore, Craigavon	Visit/Meeting
Political Parties		
10/05/07	Dolores Kelly MLA - SDLP	Launch of Youth Project
23/01/08	George Savage MLA - UUP	Meeting re Buddy Bear Trust
12/05/08; 19/05/08; 02/06/08; 09/06/08; 23/06/08; 30/06/08; 08/09/08; 15/09/08; 22/09/08; 29/09/08	John O'Dowd MLA - SF	Meetings re Education Issues

Asbestos in Schools

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education what action her Department is taking to remove asbestos from schools. (AQW 1084/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá suirbhéanna agus measúnuithe riosca aispeiste déanta ag na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne in scoileanna. Tá na hoibreacha ardtosaíochta bainte aispeiste ar fad curtha i gcrích.

The Education and Library Boards have completed asbestos surveys and risk assessments in schools. All top priority asbestos removal works have been completed. Where it is not considered necessary to remove the asbestos immediately, the Boards and other school authorities are responsible for managing the asbestos safely.

As part of the September Monitoring Round a bid for £2,116k was made to assist the Education and Library Boards in carrying out their statutory obligation to manage asbestos.

Department Website

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education how many page views her Department's website received each month, for the last 12 months. (AQW 1115/09)

The Minister of Education: Sa tábla seo a leanas, léirítear an méid uaireanta a breathnaíodh ar leathanaigh ar láithreán gréasáin na Roinne Oideachais gach mí le dhá mhí dhéag anuas go dtí deireadh mhí Mheán Fómhair 2008.

The number of page views received by the Department of Education's website each month during the last twelve months up to the end of September 2008 is contained in the table below.

Year	Month	Page Views
2007	October	191,110
	November	144,407
	December	110,543
2008	January	172,648
	February	149,282
	March	132,162
	April	197,762
	May	187,124
	June	136,615
	July	102,759
	August	126,833
	September	163,535

St. Coleman's Primary School

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Education (i) how many pupils have attended St. Coleman's primary school, Moira; and (ii) how many teaching and non-teaching staff the school employed, in each of the last 5 years, including the current academic year. (AQW 1128/09)

The Minister of Education: Seo a leanas an t-eolas a iarradh: Níl an t-eolas don scoilbhliain 2008/09 ar fáil go fóill.

The information requested is as follows. Information for the 2008/09 school year is not yet available.

ENROLMENT FIGURES AT ST COLMAN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL 2003/04 – 2007/08

Year	Total enrolment
2003/04	32

Year	Total enrolment
2004/05	29
2005/06	31
2006/07	20
2007/08	18

Source: Annual school census

Note: Primary includes nursery, reception and year 1 – 7 classes.

FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT NUMBER OF TEACHERS AT ST COLMAN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL 2003/04 – 2007/08

Year	FTE Teachers
2003/04	1.0
2004/05	1.0
2005/06	2.0
2006/07	2.2
2007/08	2.0

Source: Teachers' Payroll and Pensions Administration System

NON-TEACHING STAFF AT ST COLMAN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL 2003/04 – 2007/08

Year	Non-teaching staff
2003/04	10
2004/05	8
2005/06	12
2006/07	10
2007/08	6

Source: South Eastern Education and Library Board

North Antrim Schools

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Education for a breakdown by percentage, of pupils' 11+ grades accepted by all secondary and grammar schools in North Antrim, in the last 3 complete academic years.
(AQW 1155/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá an t-eolas a iarradh ar fáil sna tablaí seo a leanas:

The information requested is provided in the following tables:

School Name	Breakdown by % of 11 plus grades accepted by all post-primary schools in the North Antrim Constituency, in the 2007/08 school year						
	A %	B1 %	B2 %	C1 %	C2 %	D %	Others %
Ballycastle HS	2	0	5	2	5	17	69
Ballymoney HS	1	1	3	7	6	27	55
Cullybackey HS	1	0	0	2	5	49	43
Dunclug College	0	0	0	1	9	46	44
Dunluce School	0	0	0	2	4	47	47
Ballee Community HS	0	0	0	0	5	55	40
St Aloysius HS	0	0	0	0	0	0	100
Our Lady of Lourdes HS	0	3	3	3	7	26	58
St Patrick's College	0	0	3	3	3	36	55
Cross & Passion College	5	1	4	3	1	23	63
Slemish College	12	10	11	4	8	34	21
Cambridge House GS	18	10	15	23	19	13	2
St Louis GS	55	14	10	11	7	3	0
Ballymena Academy	78	10	11	1	0	0	0
Dalriada School	82	15	1	0	0	0	2

School Name	Breakdown by % of 11 plus grades accepted by all post-primary schools in the North Antrim Constituency, in the 2006/07 school year						
	A %	B1 %	B2 %	C1 %	C2 %	D %	Others %
Ballycastle HS	2	2	0	2	0	17	77
Ballymoney HS	0	2	1	6	9	24	58
Cullybackey HS	2	1	0	2	5	42	48
Dunclug College	1	0	0	1	5	45	48

School Name	Breakdown by % of 11 plus grades accepted by all post-primary schools in the North Antrim Constituency, in the 2006/07 school year						
	A %	B1 %	B2 %	C1 %	C2 %	D %	Others %
Dunluce School	0	1	1	0	9	34	55
Ballee Community HS	0	0	0	2	4	42	52
St Aloysius HS	7	0	0	0	0	36	57
Our Lady of Lourdes HS	3	3	0	6	5	22	61
St Patrick's College	0	0	3	1	11	50	35
Cross & Passion College	4	2	2	5	3	13	71
Slemish College	25	7	8	7	8	27	18
Cambridge House GS	14	8	25	18	22	12	1
St Louis GS	63	14	18	2	0	2	1
Ballymena Academy	78	17	3	0	0	0	2
Dalriada School	67	13	6	9	2	0	3

School Name	Breakdown by % of 11 plus grades accepted by all post-primary schools in the North Antrim Constituency, in the 2005/06 school year						
	A %	B1 %	B2 %	C1 %	C2 %	D %	Others %
Ballycastle HS	2	2	0	9	5	16	65
Ballymoney HS	2	1	3	4	5	18	67
Cullybackey HS	1	2	1	0	10	43	43
Dunclug College	0	1	2	0	9	49	39
Dunluce School	1	0	4	2	6	40	47
Ballee Community HS	2	0	0	2	5	40	51
St Aloysius HS	0	0	0	0	0	47	53
Our Lady of Lourdes HS	2	0	2	0	2	26	68

School Name	Breakdown by % of 11 plus grades accepted by all post-primary schools in the North Antrim Constituency, in the 2005/06 school year						
	A %	B1 %	B2 %	C1 %	C2 %	D %	Others %
St Patrick's College	0	0	4	2	4	42	48
Cross & Passion College	5	1	0	3	4	11	76
Slemish College	13	8	4	9	10	40	16
Cambridge House GS	19	21	22	24	7	5	2
St Louis GS	56	12	16	11	2	2	1
Ballymena Academy	88	10	1	0	0	0	1
Dalriada School	73	22	2	0	0	0	3

The numbers shown in each table are taken from returns made to the Department by the North Eastern and Education and Library Board in October each year. The numbers shown under the heading of "Others" refer to pupils admitted without transfer test grades.

Donaghadee High School

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education how many pupils at Donaghadee High School are placed in the special needs unit. (AQW 1162/09)

The Minister of Education: Bhí 78 dalta in aonad na riachtanas speisialta ag Donaghadee High School le linn na bliana acadúla 2007/08. Níl eolas don scoilbhliain 2008/09 ar fáil go fóill.

There were 78 pupils placed in the special needs unit at Donaghadee High School during the 2007/08 academic year. Information for the 2008/09 school year is not yet available.

Donaghadee High School

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education, in the next academic year, what schools in the North Down area will be able to take the children with special needs currently attending Donaghadee High School. (AQW 1163/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá curtha in iúl ag príomhfheidhmeannach Bhord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Oirdheisirt (SEELB) dom go ndéanfar athbhreithniú bliantúil ar ráitis, i gcás gach páiste atá ag freastal ar Donaghadee High School a

bhfuil ráiteas ar riachtanais oideachais speisialta (SEN) ag an SEELB fúthu, de réir na gceanglas reachtúil.

I have been advised by the Chief Executive of the South – Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) that each child currently attending Donaghadee High School for whom the SEELB holds a statement of special educational needs (SEN) will, in line with statutory requirements, undergo an annual review of their statements. On completion of this process, which will take account of all factors relating to the child's SEN in the form of professional advice, parental and school input, a conclusion will be reached on the appropriate educational placement. The SEELB will facilitate this process and will approach all relevant schools in North Down area as well as schools in the wider geographical area, once it has been ascertained how many parents wish their children to go to a particular school.

Bangor Academy

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education why her Department is unable to approve two additional places in Bangor Academy to admit two Year 8 pupils from Bangor who are still unplaced, when the school has spare capacity in other year groups. (AQW 1169/09)

The Minister of Education: There is no shortage of school places for children in the North Down area within a reasonable travelling distance of their homes. The admissions and enrolment numbers of Bangor Academy are set in accordance with the accommodation available at the new school. There are no plans to increase the admissions and enrolment numbers of Bangor Academy. The South-Eastern Education and Library Board have advised the Department that one of the two young people you refer to has now taken up

a place at another school and there are places available at alternative schools for the other pupil.

Bíonn an Roinn toilteanach i gcónaí breithniú a dhéanamh ar iarrtais ó scoileanna maidir lena líon iontrálacha agus lena líon rollaithe.

The Department is always willing to consider request from schools for temporary variations to their admissions and enrolment numbers. However when considering such requests, the Department must take account of the availability of alternative school places in order to maintain a viable schools' estate.

Children with Special Needs

Miss McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to detail the total cost, in each of the last five years, of (i) buses; and (ii) taxis, used to transport children with special needs, broken down by Education and Library Board area. (AQW 1179/09)

The Minister of Education: Is féidir liom a dheimhniú gur tabhaíodh an caiteachas seo a leanas ar bhusanna (lena n-áirítear feithiclí de chuid na mBord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne, iompar poiblí agus comhlachtaí príobháideacha) agus ar thacsaithe ó sholáthar iompair bhaile go scoile do dhaltá a bhfuil Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachais acu, i ngach bliain le cúig bhliain anuas:

I can confirm that the provision of home to school transport for pupils with Special Educational Needs incurred the following expenditure on buses (which includes Education and Library Board vehicles, public transport and private operators) and taxis, in each of the last five years:

		BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	TOTAL
School Buses	2003/04	£2,169k	£1,391k	£1,417k	£240k	£252k	£5,526k
	2004/05	£2,302k	£1,492k	£2,415k	£235k	£339k	£6,783k
	2005/06	£2,625k	£1,409k	£2,316k	£180k	£347k	£6,877k
	2006/07	£2,726k	£1,295k	£4,189k	£210k	£397k	£6,883k
	2007/08	£2,687k	£1,319k	£3,125k	£297k	£412k	£7,840k

		BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	TOTAL
Taxis	2003/04	£659k	£1,055k	£2,285k	£1,010k	£152k	£5,161k
	2004/05	£434k	£1,230k	£1,907k	£1,057k	£181k	£4,809k
	2005/06	£425k	£1,295k	£1,795k	£1,616k	£212k	£5,343k
	2006/07	£447k	£1,129k	£1,546k	£1,511k	£121k	£4,754k
	2007/08	£531k	£978k	£1,648k	£1,440k	£110k	£4,707k

Maintained Primary Schools

Miss McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to detail the (i) former; and (ii) current, maintained primary schools that have applied to be granted integrated status in each of the last 10 years.
(AQW 1180/09)

The Minister of Education: Níor chuir aon scoileanna faoi chothabháil iarratas isteach ar stádas imeasctha le 10 mbliana anuas.

No maintained schools applied for integrated status in the last 10 years.

Irish Medium Post-Primary Schools

Miss McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to detail the total cost, in each of the last five years, of

	BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	TOTAL
2004/05	-	-	£4k	-	£9k	£13k
2005/06	-	-	£4k	-	£4k	£8k
2006/07	£6k	-	£3k	-	£4k	£13k
2007/08	£6k	-	-	-	£2k	£8k

Controlled Primary Schools

Miss McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to detail the total cost of taxis in each of the last 5 years, for pupils attending controlled primary schools, broken down by Education and Library Board. (AQW 1182/09)

The Minister of Education: Unfortunately not all of the information requested is available in the required format. Home to school transport expenditure details are not currently held separately for controlled and maintained primary schools, also, separate statistics are only available for Grant-Maintained

taxis for pupils attending Irish medium post-primary schools, broken down by Education and Library Board.
(AQW 1181/09)

The Minister of Education: Detailed expenditure statistics are not held by the Department prior to 2004/05, as such, information pertaining to the Irish-Medium sectors cannot be split between primary and post-primary prior to 2004/05.

Is féidir liom a dheimhniú gur tabhaíodh an caiteachas ar sholáthar tacsaithe mar mhódh iompair idir an baile agus an scoil do pháistí a d'fhreastail ar Iarbhunscoileanna Ghaeilge ón scoilbhliain 2004/2005.

I can confirm that the provision of home to school transport for pupils attending Irish-Medium post-primary schools incurred the following expenditure on taxis, since 2004/2005.

Integrated schools – not the integrated sector as a whole. Furthermore, detailed expenditure statistics are not held by the Department prior to 2004/05, as such, information pertaining to the Grant-Maintained Integrated and Irish-Medium sectors cannot be split between primary and post-primary prior to 2004/05.

Léiríonn an tábla thíos an caiteachas a thabhaítear ar sholáthar tacsaithe le cúig bhliain anuas i ngach Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne

The table below shows expenditure incurred through the provision of taxis, over the last five years in each of the Education and Library Boards:

		BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	TOTAL
Controlled & Maintained Primary Schools	2003/04	£78k	£517k	£169k	£508k	£344k	£1,616k
	2004/05	£38k	£481k	£141k	£522k	£410k	£1,592k
	2005/06	£29k	£373k	£133k	£299k	£385k	£1,219k
	2006/07	£83k	£337k	£115k	£219k	£501k	£1,255k
	2007/08	£92k	£242k	£81k	£189k	£267k	£871k
Grant-Maintained Integrated Primary Schools	2003/04	#	#	#	#	#	#
	2004/05	£1k	£32k	£18k	£5k	£24k	£80k
	2005/06	£5k	£32k	£17k	-	£26k	£80k
	2006/07	£9k	£48k	£15k	£5k	£24k	£101k
	2007/08	£10k	£44k	£8k	£11k	£21k	£94k

		BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	TOTAL
Irish-Medium Primary Schools	2003/04	#	#	#	#	#	#
	2004/05	£1k	£46k	-	-	£84k	£131k
	2005/06	-	£28k	-	-	£41k	£69k
	2006/07	-	£12k	-	-	£24k	£36k
	2007/08	-	£22k	£8k	£2k	£23k	£55k

Figures not held prior to 2004/05

Maintained Primary Schools

Miss McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to detail the total cost of taxis in each of the last 5 years, for pupils attending maintained primary schools, broken down by Education and Library Board.

(AQW 1183/09)

The Minister of Education: Unfortunately not all of the information requested is available in the required format. Home to school transport expenditure details are not currently held separately for controlled and maintained primary schools, also, separate statistics are only available for Grant-Maintained Integrated schools

– not the integrated sector as a whole. Furthermore, detailed expenditure statistics are not held by the Department prior to 2004/05, as such, information pertaining to the Grant-Maintained Integrated and Irish-Medium sectors cannot be split between primary and post-primary prior to 2004/05.

Léiríonn an tábla thíos an caiteachas a thabhaítear ar sholáthar tacsaithe le cúig bhliain anuas i ngach Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne

The table below shows expenditure incurred through the provision of taxis, over the last five years in each of the Education and Library Boards:

		BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	TOTAL
Controlled & Maintained Primary Schools	2003/04	£78k	£517k	£169k	£508k	£344k	£1,616k
	2004/05	£38k	£481k	£141k	£522k	£410k	£1,592k
	2005/06	£29k	£373k	£133k	£299k	£385k	£1,219k
	2006/07	£83k	£337k	£115k	£219k	£501k	£1,255k
	2007/08	£92k	£242k	£81k	£189k	£267k	£871k
Grant-Maintained Integrated Primary Schools	2003/04	#	#	#	#	#	#
	2004/05	£1k	£32k	£18k	£5k	£24k	£80k
	2005/06	£5k	£32k	£17k	-	£26k	£80k
	2006/07	£9k	£48k	£15k	£5k	£24k	£101k
	2007/08	£10k	£44k	£8k	£11k	£21k	£94k
Irish-Medium Primary Schools	2003/04	#	#	#	#	#	#
	2004/05	£1k	£46k	-	-	£84k	£131k
	2005/06	-	£28k	-	-	£41k	£69k
	2006/07	-	£12k	-	-	£24k	£36k
	2007/08	-	£22k	£8k	£2k	£23k	£55k

Figures not held prior to 2004/05

Free Transport

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Education has she any plans to examine the criteria for free transport to and from school. (AQW 1190/09)

The Minister of Education: Is dócháil go mbeidh impleachtaí móra ar sholáthar chúnaimh iompair baile

go scoil mar gheall ar na tograí le haghaidh athraithe ar na socruithe um aistriú iarbhunscoile.

The proposals for changes to the post-primary transfer arrangements are likely to have major implications for the provision of home to school transport assistance. Therefore, the Department has decided to postpone

work on a review until the way forward in relation to the transfer arrangements has been finalised.

Primary and Post-Primary Schools Funding

Mr Newton asked the Minister of Education to outline her plans to address the funding differential between primary and post-primary schools.

(AQW 1202/09)

The Minister of Education: As outlined in my announcement of 12 February 2008 on Education funding, provision has been made to increase the proportion of funding made available to primary schools under the delegated Local Management of Schools funding formula, alongside additional funding outside of the formula in support of primary schools.

Under the delegated funding formula, I have increased the primary Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) which is the main funding factor in the formula. This means that, on average, additional primary per pupil increases in 2008/09 are higher than those for post primary schools. I have also signalled my intentions to increase further the primary AWPU weighting over the next two years of this budget period.

Over the next three years, I have been able to secure additional funding of almost £12 million to help primary school teaching principals and a further £32 million to support primary schools with the delivery of the Foundation Stage of the revised curriculum. Additional provision is also planned, over the next three years, for Literacy and Numeracy measures, implementation of the Special Education Needs and Inclusion Review, an Emotional Health and Wellbeing programme in primary and special education, and additional Early Years provision, etc.

Tá mé tiomanta dona chinntiú go mbeidh an deis ag ár leanaí agus ár ndaoine óga go léir an acmhainn atá iontu a bhaint amach trí sheirbhísí oideachais den scoth bheith ar fáil, agus thug mé le fios go bhfuil sé ar intinn agam go mbeidh cothromaíocht níos fearr ann maidir leis an maoiniú a chuirtear ar fáil do scoileanna bunoidreachais agus iarbhunoidreachais, agus é sin a dhéanamh laistigh de na hacmhainní atá ar fáil.

I am committed to ensuring that all our children and young people have the opportunity to fulfil their potential through quality education services, and have signalled my intention, within available resources, to improving the balance of funding between primary and post-primary schools.

Schools are to be consulted over the autumn on proposals for changes to the current Common Funding Formula including changes, which if approved, would

see increases in the levels of delegated funding provided to primary schools.

Primary Schools Projects

Mr Newton asked the Minister of Education why money allocated for primary school activities/teaching is ring fenced; and if under spent why it cannot be used for other approved primary schools projects.

(AQW 1204/09)

The Minister of Education: Ní srianta é maoiniú atá dáilte chuig scoileanna faoi na socrúithe Comh-mhaoiniú do bhainisteoireacht áitiúil na scoileanna – tá údarás iomlán ag scoileanna le caiteachas a shocrú bunaithe ar a gcuid riachtanas agus a gcuid tosaíochtaí.

Funding distributed to schools under the Common Funding arrangements for the Local Management of Schools is not ring fenced – schools have full delegated authority to determine spending based on their needs and priorities.

Maintained Post-Primary Schools

Miss McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to detail the (i) former; and (ii) current, maintained post-primary schools that have applied for integrated status in each of the last 10 years.

(AQW 1211/09)

The Minister of Education: Níor chuir aon scoileanna faoi chothabháil iarratas isteach ar stádas imeasctha le 10 mbliana anuas.

No maintained schools applied for integrated status in the last 10 years.

Integrated Primary Schools

Miss McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to detail the total cost of taxis in each of the last 5 years, for pupils attending integrated primary schools, broken down by Education and Library Board.

(AQW 1212/09)

The Minister of Education: Unfortunately not all of the information requested is available in the required format. Home to school transport expenditure details are not currently held separately for controlled and maintained primary schools, also, separate statistics are only available for Grant-Maintained Integrated schools – not the integrated sector as a whole. Furthermore, detailed expenditure statistics are not held by the Department prior to 2004/05, as such, information pertaining to the Grant-Maintained Integrated and Irish-Medium sectors cannot be split between primary and post-primary prior to 2004/05.

Léiríonn an tábla thíos an caiteachas a thabhaítear ar sholáthar tacsaithe le cúig bhliain anuas i ngach Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne

The table below shows expenditure incurred through the provision of taxis, over the last five years in each of the Education and Library Boards:

		BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	TOTAL
Controlled & Maintained Primary Schools	2003/04	£78k	£517k	£169k	£508k	£344k	£1,616k
	2004/05	£38k	£481k	£141k	£522k	£410k	£1,592k
	2005/06	£29k	£373k	£133k	£299k	£385k	£1,219k
	2006/07	£83k	£337k	£115k	£219k	£501k	£1,255k
	2007/08	£92k	£242k	£81k	£189k	£267k	£871k
Grant-Maintained Integrated Primary Schools	2003/04	#	#	#	#	#	#
	2004/05	£1k	£32k	£18k	£5k	£24k	£80k
	2005/06	£5k	£32k	£17k	-	£26k	£80k
	2006/07	£9k	£48k	£15k	£5k	£24k	£101k
	2007/08	£10k	£44k	£8k	£11k	£21k	£94k
Irish-Medium Primary Schools	2003/04	#	#	#	#	#	#
	2004/05	£1k	£46k	-	-	£84k	£131k
	2005/06	-	£28k	-	-	£41k	£69k
	2006/07	-	£12k	-	-	£24k	£36k
	2007/08	-	£22k	£8k	£2k	£23k	£55k

Figures not held prior to 2004/05

Irish Medium Primary Schools

Miss McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to detail the total cost of taxis in each of the last 5 years, for pupils attending Irish medium primary schools, broken down by Education and Library Board.

(AQW 1213/09)

The Minister of Education: Unfortunately not all of the information requested is available in the required format. Home to school transport expenditure details are not currently held separately for controlled and maintained primary schools, also, separate statistics are only available for Grant-Maintained

Integrated schools – not the integrated sector as a whole. Furthermore, detailed expenditure statistics are not held by the Department prior to 2004/05, as such, information pertaining to the Grant-Maintained Integrated and Irish-Medium sectors cannot be split between primary and post-primary prior to 2004/05.

Léiríonn an tábla thíos an caiteachas a thabhaítear ar sholáthar tacsaithe le cúig bhliain anuas i ngach Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne

The table below shows expenditure incurred through the provision of taxis, over the last five years in each of the Education and Library Boards:

		BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	TOTAL
Controlled & Maintained Primary Schools	2003/04	£78k	£517k	£169k	£508k	£344k	£1,616k
	2004/05	£38k	£481k	£141k	£522k	£410k	£1,592k
	2005/06	£29k	£373k	£133k	£299k	£385k	£1,219k
	2006/07	£83k	£337k	£115k	£219k	£501k	£1,255k
	2007/08	£92k	£242k	£81k	£189k	£267k	£871k

		BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	TOTAL
Grant-Maintained Integrated Primary Schools	2003/04	#	#	#	#	#	#
	2004/05	£1k	£32k	£18k	£5k	£24k	£80k
	2005/06	£5k	£32k	£17k	-	£26k	£80k
	2006/07	£9k	£48k	£15k	£5k	£24k	£101k
	2007/08	£10k	£44k	£8k	£11k	£21k	£94k
Irish-Medium Primary Schools	2003/04	#	#	#	#	#	#
	2004/05	£1k	£46k	-	-	£84k	£131k
	2005/06	-	£28k	-	-	£41k	£69k
	2006/07	-	£12k	-	-	£24k	£36k
	2007/08	-	£22k	£8k	£2k	£23k	£55k

Figures not held prior to 2004/05

Controlled Primary Schools

Miss McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to detail the total cost of school transport by bus in each of the last 5 years, for pupils attending controlled primary schools, broken down by Education and Library Board. (AQW 1214/09)

The Minister of Education: Unfortunately not all of the information requested is available in the required format. Home to school transport expenditure details are not currently held separately for controlled and maintained primary schools, also, separate statistics are only available for Grant-Maintained Integrated schools – not the integrated sector as a whole. Furthermore, detailed expenditure statistics

are not held by the Department prior to 2004/05, as such, information pertaining to the Grant-Maintained Integrated and Irish-Medium sectors cannot be split between primary and post-primary prior to 2004/05.

Léiríonn an tábla thíos caiteachas a tabhaidh trí sholáthar na gcineálacha áirithe bhusanna scoile (feithiclí de chuid na mBord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne, iompar poiblí agus tiománaithe príobháideacha), le cúig bhliain anuas i ngach ceann de na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne:

The table below shows expenditure incurred through the provision of the various types of school buses (Education and Library Board vehicles, public transport and private operators), over the last five years in each of the Education and Library Boards:

		BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	TOTAL
Controlled & Maintained Primary Schools	2003/04	£313k	£3,158k	£1,987k	£3,063k	£2,827k	£11,348k
	2004/05	£327k	£3,656k	£1,480k	£3,282k	£3,127k	£11,872k
	2005/06	£360k	£3,295k	£1,443k	£2,981k	£3,171k	£11,250k
	2006/07	£394k	£3,089k	£1,423k	£2,756k	£3,517k	£11,179k
	2007/08	£256k	£3,097k	£704k	£2,783k	£3,124k	£9,964k
Grant-Maintained Integrated Primary Schools	2003/04	#	#	#	#	#	#
	2004/05	£99k	£397k	£31k	£171k	£150k	£848k
	2005/06	£95k	£353k	£36k	£75k	£186k	£745k
	2006/07	£85k	£322k	£43k	£116k	£140k	£706k
	2007/08	£75k	£308k	£109k	£108k	£133k	£733k
Irish-Medium Primary Schools	2003/04	#	#	#	#	#	#
	2004/05	£10k	£105k	£1k	-	£43k	£159k
	2005/06	£4k	£73k	£0.5k	-	£61k	£138.5k
	2006/07	£2k	£48k	£1k	£16k	£38k	£105k
	2007/08	£2k	£75k	£2k	£28k	£49k	£156k

Figures not held prior to 2004/05

Maintained Primary Schools

Miss McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to detail the total cost of school transport by bus in each of the last 5 years, for pupils attending maintained primary schools, broken down by Education and Library Board. (AQW 1215/09)

The Minister of Education: Unfortunately not all of the information requested is available in the required format. Home to school transport expenditure details are not currently held separately for controlled and maintained primary schools, also, separate statistics are only available for Grant-Maintained Integrated schools – not the integrated sector as a whole. Furthermore, detailed expenditure statistics

are not held by the Department prior to 2004/05, as such, information pertaining to the Grant-Maintained Integrated and Irish-Medium sectors cannot be split between primary and post-primary prior to 2004/05.

Léiríonn an tábla thíos caiteachas a tabhaidh trí sholáthar na gcineálacha áirithe bhusanna scoile (feithiclí de chuid na mBord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne, iompar poiblí agus tiománaithe príobháideacha), le cúig bhliain anuas i ngach ceann de na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne:

The table below shows expenditure incurred through the provision of the various types of school buses (Education and Library Board vehicles, public transport and private operators), over the last five years in each of the Education and Library Boards:

		BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	TOTAL
Controlled & Maintained Primary Schools	2003/04	£313k	£3,158k	£1,987k	£3,063k	£2,827k	£11,348k
	2004/05	£327k	£3,656k	£1,480k	£3,282k	£3,127k	£11,872k
	2005/06	£360k	£3,295k	£1,443k	£2,981k	£3,171k	£11,250k
	2006/07	£394k	£3,089k	£1,423k	£2,756k	£3,517k	£11,179k
	2007/08	£256k	£3,097k	£704k	£2,783k	£3,124k	£9,964k
Grant-Maintained Integrated Primary Schools	2003/04	#	#	#	#	#	#
	2004/05	£99k	£397k	£31k	£171k	£150k	£848k
	2005/06	£95k	£353k	£36k	£75k	£186k	£745k
	2006/07	£85k	£322k	£43k	£116k	£140k	£706k
	2007/08	£75k	£308k	£109k	£108k	£133k	£733k
Irish-Medium Primary Schools	2003/04	#	#	#	#	#	#
	2004/05	£10k	£105k	£1k	-	£43k	£159k
	2005/06	£4k	£73k	£0.5k	-	£61k	£138.5k
	2006/07	£2k	£48k	£1k	£16k	£38k	£105k
	2007/08	£2k	£75k	£2k	£28k	£49k	£156k

Figures not held prior to 2004/05

Special Needs Assessment

Mrs M Bradley asked the Minister of Education how many children are currently awaiting special needs assessment in each Education and Library Board area. (AQW 1224/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá curtha in iúl ag Príomhfheidhmeannaigh na mBord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne gur mar seo a leanas líonta na bpáistí atá ag fanacht ar mheasúnú riachtanas speisialta.

I have been advised by the Chief Executives of the Education and Library Boards that the following numbers of children are currently awaiting special needs assessment.

BELB	267
NEELB	593
SEELB	421
SELB	516
WELB	242

These figures are in regard to children with a variety of need, including Stage 3 (non-statutory assessments) and Stage 4 (statutory assessments) of the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs, reviews at Stage 3 and Stage 5 of the Code of Practice, special testing at transfer stage between primary and post-primary, pre-school and examination arrangements.

Electricity, Gas and Oil Price Increases

Lord Browne asked the Minister of Education what action she is taking to assist (i) Education and Library Boards; and (ii) schools, in relation to electricity, gas and oil price increases. (AQW 1244/09)

The Minister of Education: Bíonn gach eagraíocht freagrach as brúnna airgeadais a bhainistiú i gcoinne tosaíochtaí iomaíocha laistigh de na hacmhainní a leithdháileadh orthu.

It is the responsibility of all organisations to manage financial pressures against competing priorities within the resources allocated to them.

In recognition of the additional in year pressure on both Education & Library Board's and schools, caused by the increase in the cost of electricity, gas and oil, a significant bid for additional resources to meet these pressures was submitted in the course of the formal June monitoring round and again in September when the former was not successful. We are currently awaiting the outcome of the September monitoring round.

Special Needs Assessment

Mrs M Bradley asked the Minister of Education how many children had a special needs assessment in (i) 2006/07; (ii) 2007/08; and (iii) 2008/09, broken down by Education and Library Board area. (AQW 1253/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá tugtha le fios dom ag príomhfheidhmeannaí na mBord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne go ndearnadh measúnú riachtanais speisialta ar na líonta páistí seo a leanas sna blianta 2006/07, 2007/08 agus 2008/09

I have been advised by the Chief Executives of the Education and Library Boards that the following numbers of children had a special needs assessment in 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09.

ALL PUPILS ON THE SEN REGISTER (STAGES 1 – 5 OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE) BY SCHOOL SECTOR AND ELB – 2007/08

School sector	ELB					Total
	BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	
Vol. & Private Preschools	39	97	127	131	110	504
Nursery	255	174	238	251	82	1,000
Primary	6,088	6,307	6,089	6,506	6,677	31,667
Post primary	5,721	4,354	3,365	3,595	4,021	21,056
Special	1,275	740	1,012	1,166	418	4,611
Total	13,378	11,672	10,831	11,649	11,308	58,838

Source: Annual school census 2007/08

Note: Primary includes nursery, reception and year 1 – 7 classes.

1. 2006/07

BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB
2,405	1,648	4,139	2,277	2,885

2. 2007/08

BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB
2,850	1,833	5,122	2,182	3,028

3. 2008/09 (TO END OF SEPTEMBER 2008)

BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB
183	89	498	163	726

All of the above figures are in respect of academic years with the exception of WELB which has been provided in financial years.

These figures are in regard to children with a variety of need, including Stage 3 (non-statutory assessments) and Stage 4 (statutory assessments) of the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs, reviews at Stage 3 and Stage 5 of the Code of Practice, special testing at transfer stage between primary and post-primary, pre-school and examination arrangements.

Special Needs Assistance

Mrs M Bradley asked the Minister of Education how many children currently receive special needs assistance in each Education and Library Board area. (AQW 1254/09)

The Minister of Education: Seo mar a leanas an t-eolas a iarradh.

The information requested is as follows.

Assistance for Dyslexia

Mrs M Bradley asked the Minister of Education how many children received assistance for dyslexia in (i) 2006-07; (ii) 2007-08; and (iii) 2008-09, broken down by Education and Library Board area. (AQW 1255/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá an t-eolas a iarradh liostaithe sa tábla thíos. Níl sonraí ar fáil go fóill don scoilbhliain 2008/09.

The information requested is listed in the table below. Data for the 2008/09 school year are not yet available.

All pupils with dyslexia by school sector and ELB – 2006/07 and 2007/08

Year	ELB					Total
	BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	
2006/07	834	1,987	501	1,318	905	5,545
2007/08	895	2,008	519	1,308	949	5,679

Source: Annual school census

Note:

- Totals include preschool centres, nursery schools, children in nursery, reception and Year 1 – 7 classes in primary schools, post primary and special schools.
- Figures relate to pupils at Stages 1 – 5 of the Special Educational Needs Code of practice.

Specialised Reading Centres

Mrs M Bradley asked the Minister of Education what criteria are applied when allocating places at specialised reading centres in each Education and Library Board area. (AQW 1256/09)

The Minister of Education:

Tugadh le fios dom ag príomhfheidhmeannaigh Bhoird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne Bhéal Feirste agus an Oirdheiscirt go gcuirtear na critéir atá léirithe thíos i bhfeidhm nuair a chionnroinntear áiteanna ar ionaid léitheoireachta speisialta. Níl aon ionad speisialta léitheoireachta ag Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Oirthuaiscirt, an Dheiscirt ná an Iarthair.

I have been advised by the Chief Executives of the Belfast and South Eastern Education and Library Boards that the criteria outlined below are applied when allocating places at specialised reading centres. The North Eastern, Southern and Western Education and Library Boards do not have specialised reading centres.

Belfast Education and Library Board

Priority is given to:-

- Children of average cognitive ability (IQ 90 or more) who have below average reading ability (standardised test scores of less than 85 and reading ages of less than 9 years) and who exhibit a large discrepancy between cognitive test scores and reading test scores (fewer than 2% of children would exhibit such discrepancies).
- Children who have not responded well to support already provided in their own mainstream school including support for one or two years from the peripatetic support service.
- Children who are approaching transfer age before embarking on post primary education.

Consideration is also given to whether the child has additional difficulties such as social, emotional, behavioural or organisational difficulties which are related to their specific learning difficulties and also to the likely impact on the child's general emotional wellbeing of being placed in a specialist setting. The views of the parents and the child are given central importance in the decision making process.

South- Eastern Education and Library Board

Priority is given to:-

- Children whose standardised test results indicate that cognitive functioning lies at or above the 25th centile i.e. an IQ of 90 or above
- Children who demonstrate a discrepancy between expected and actual attainments in standardised tests.
- Children whose test scores for word reading, reading comprehension or spelling are less than 85
- Children whose standardised test scores indicate that word reading age or reading comprehension age or spelling age is below 9 years.

The major qualifying criteria for direct teaching support are word reading and reading comprehension. In circumstances where spelling attainment is the only qualifying criterion advisory support will be offered to the school in order to help staff to formulate an appropriate spelling programme.

School Children Statemented

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education (i) what percentage of school children were statemented in the South Eastern Education and Library Board area, in each of the last 5 years; and (ii) how this compares with the other four Education and Library Board areas. (AQW 1259/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá an freagra cuimsithe sa tábla thíos.

The answer is contained in the table below.

PERCENTAGE OF ALL PUPILS STATEMENTED BY EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD - 2003/04 – 2007/08

Year	ELB					Total
	BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	
2003/04	2.7	2.8	2.8	4.5	3.1	3.2
2004/05	2.7	3.1	3.0	4.8	3.3	3.4
2005/06	2.7	3.3	3.1	4.9	3.6	3.5
2006/07	3.0	3.4	3.3	5.1	3.8	3.7
2007/08	3.3	3.6	3.4	5.1	4.1	3.9

Source: Annual school census

Note:

1. Figures are based on the location of the school and include preschool centres, nursery schools, nursery, reception and Year 1 – 7 classes in primary schools, post primary and special schools.
2. A pupil is classed as being statemented when they reach Stage 5 of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.

Statutory Assessment

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education how many requests for statutory assessment were made in each primary school in the South Eastern Education and Library Board area, in each of the last 5 years; and to detail this figure as a percentage of the primary school population. (AQW 1260/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá tugtha le fios dom ag príomhfheidhmeannach Bhord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Deiscirt nach gcoinnítear an t-eolas san fhormaid a iarradh agus go mbeadh costas díréireach i gceist leis an eolas seo a chur i láthair.

I have been advised by the Chief Executive of the South – Eastern Education and Library Board that this information is not held in the format requested and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Integrated Primary Schools

Miss McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to detail the cost of school bus transportation for pupils attending integrated primary schools broken down by Education and Library Board, for each of the last 5 years. (AQW 1273/09)

The Minister of Education: Unfortunately not all of the information requested is available in the required format. Home to school transport expenditure details are not currently held separately for controlled and maintained primary schools, also, separate statistics are only available for Grant-Maintained Integrated schools – not the integrated sector as a whole. Furthermore, detailed expenditure statistics are not held by the Department prior to 2004/05, as such, information pertaining to the Grant-Maintained Integrated and Irish-Medium sectors cannot be split between primary and post-primary prior to 2004/05.

Léiríonn an tábla thíos caiteachas a tabhaíodh trí sholáthar na geineálacha áirithe bhusanna scoile (feithiclí de chuid na mBord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne, iompar poiblí agus tiománaithe príobháideacha), le cúig bhliain anuas i ngach cearn de na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne:

The table below shows expenditure incurred through the provision of the various types of school buses (Education and Library Board vehicles, public transport and private operators), over the last five years in each of the Education and Library Boards:

		BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	TOTAL
Controlled & Maintained Primary Schools	2003/04	£313k	£3,158k	£1,987k	£3,063k	£2,827k	£11,348k
	2004/05	£327k	£3,656k	£1,480k	£3,282k	£3,127k	£11,872k
	2005/06	£360k	£3,295k	£1,443k	£2,981k	£3,171k	£11,250k
	2006/07	£394k	£3,089k	£1,423k	£2,756k	£3,517k	£11,179k
	2007/08	£256k	£3,097k	£704k	£2,783k	£3,124k	£9,964k
Grant-Maintained Integrated Primary Schools	2003/04	#	#	#	#	#	#
	2004/05	£99k	£397k	£31k	£171k	£150k	£848k
	2005/06	£95k	£353k	£36k	£75k	£186k	£745k
	2006/07	£85k	£322k	£43k	£116k	£140k	£706k
	2007/08	£75k	£308k	£109k	£108k	£133k	£733k

		BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	TOTAL
Irish-Medium Primary Schools	2003/04	#	#	#	#	#	#
	2004/05	£10k	£105k	£1k	-	£43k	£159k
	2005/06	£4k	£73k	£0.5k	-	£61k	£138.5k
	2006/07	£2k	£48k	£1k	£16k	£38k	£105k
	2007/08	£2k	£75k	£2k	£28k	£49k	£156k

Figures not held prior to 2004/05

Irish Medium Primary Schools

Miss McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to detail the cost of school bus transportation for pupils attending Irish-medium primary schools, broken down by Education and Library Boards, for each of the last 5 years. (AQW 1274/09)

The Minister of Education: Unfortunately not all of the information requested is available in the required format. Home to school transport expenditure details are not currently held separately for controlled and maintained primary schools, also, separate statistics are only available for Grant-Maintained Integrated schools – not the integrated sector as a whole. Furthermore, detailed expenditure statistics

are not held by the Department prior to 2004/05, as such, information pertaining to the Grant-Maintained Integrated and Irish-Medium sectors cannot be split between primary and post-primary prior to 2004/05.

Léiríonn an tábla thíos caiteachas a tabhaíodh trí sholáthar na gcineálacha áirithe bhusanna scoile (feithiclí de chuid na mBord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne, iompar poiblí agus tiománaithe príobháideacha), le cúig bhliain anuas i ngach ceann de na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne:

The table below shows expenditure incurred through the provision of the various types of school buses (Education and Library Board vehicles, public transport and private operators), over the last five years in each of the Education and Library Boards:

		BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	TOTAL
Controlled & Maintained Primary Schools	2003/04	£313k	£3,158k	£1,987k	£3,063k	£2,827k	£11,348k
	2004/05	£327k	£3,656k	£1,480k	£3,282k	£3,127k	£11,872k
	2005/06	£360k	£3,295k	£1,443k	£2,981k	£3,171k	£11,250k
	2006/07	£394k	£3,089k	£1,423k	£2,756k	£3,517k	£11,179k
	2007/08	£256k	£3,097k	£704k	£2,783k	£3,124k	£9,964k
Grant-Maintained Integrated Primary Schools	2003/04	#	#	#	#	#	#
	2004/05	£99k	£397k	£31k	£171k	£150k	£848k
	2005/06	£95k	£353k	£36k	£75k	£186k	£745k
	2006/07	£85k	£322k	£43k	£116k	£140k	£706k
	2007/08	£75k	£308k	£109k	£108k	£133k	£733k
Irish-Medium Primary Schools	2003/04	#	#	#	#	#	#
	2004/05	£10k	£105k	£1k	-	£43k	£159k
	2005/06	£4k	£73k	£0.5k	-	£61k	£138.5k
	2006/07	£2k	£48k	£1k	£16k	£38k	£105k
	2007/08	£2k	£75k	£2k	£28k	£49k	£156k

Figures not held prior to 2004/05

Controlled Post-Primary Schools

Miss McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to detail the cost of school bus transportation for pupils attending controlled secondary schools, broken down by Education and Library Board, for each of the last 5 years. (AQW 1275/09)

The Minister of Education: Unfortunately not all of the information requested is available in the required format. Home to school transport expenditure details are not currently held separately for controlled and maintained post primary schools, also, separate statistics are only available for Grant-Maintained Integrated schools – not the integrated sector as a whole. Furthermore, detailed expenditure statistics

are not held by the Department prior to 2004/05, as such, information pertaining to the Grant-Maintained Integrated and Irish-Medium sectors cannot be split between primary and post-primary prior to 2004/05.

Léiríonn an tábla thíos caiteachas a tabhaíodh trí sholáthar na gcineálacha áirithe bhusanna scoile (feithiclí de chuid na mBord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne, iompar poiblí agus tiománaithe príobháideacha), le cúig bhliain anuas i ngach ceann de na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne:

The table below shows expenditure incurred through the provision of the various types of school buses (Education and Library Board vehicles, public transport and private operators), over the last five years in each of the Education and Library Boards:

		BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	TOTAL
Controlled & Maintained Post-Primary Schools	2003/04	£138k	£3,795k	£2,024k	£5,887k	£3,903k	£15,747k
	2004/05	£96k	£4,264k	£2,516k	£6,195k	£4,407k	£17,478k
	2005/06	£57k	£4,375k	£2,591k	£6,596k	£5,383k	£19,002k
	2006/07	£54k	£4,540k	£2,756k	£5,369k	£4,309k	£17,028k
	2007/08	£57k	£4,677k	£2,037k	£5,614k	£3,842k	£16,227k
Grant-Maintained Integrated Post-Primary Schools	2003/04	#	#	#	#	#	#
	2004/05	£453k	£476k	£859k	£639k	£630k	£3,057k
	2005/06	£507k	£503k	£873k	£503k	£614k	£3,000k
	2006/07	£532k	£549k	£915k	£595k	£558k	£3,149k
	2007/08	£636k	£622k	£927k	£646k	£687k	£3,518k
Irish-Medium Post-Primary Schools	2003/04	#	#	#	#	#	#
	2004/05	£26k	£3k	£56k	-	£3k	£88k
	2005/06	£35k	£4k	£59k	-	£2k	£100k
	2006/07	£38k	£5k	£64k	£10k	£7k	£124k
	2007/08	£33k	£7k	£29k	£73k	£6k	£148k

Figures not held prior to 2004/05

Maintained Post-Primary Schools

Miss McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to detail the cost of school bus transportation for pupils attending maintained secondary schools, broken down by Education and Library Board, for each of the last 5 years. (AQW 1276/09)

The Minister of Education: Unfortunately not all of the information requested is available in the required format. Home to school transport expenditure details are not currently held separately for controlled and maintained post primary schools, also, separate statistics are only available for Grant-Maintained Integrated schools – not the integrated sector as a whole. Furthermore, detailed expenditure statistics are not held by the Department prior to 2004/05, as such, information

pertaining to the Grant-Maintained Integrated and Irish-Medium sectors cannot be split between primary and post-primary prior to 2004/05.

Léiríonn an tábla thíos caiteachas a tabhaíodh trí sholáthar na gcineálacha áirithe bhusanna scoile (feithiclí de chuid na mBord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne, iompar poiblí agus tiománaithe príobháideacha), le cúig bhliain anuas i ngach ceann de na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne:

The table below shows expenditure incurred through the provision of the various types of school buses (Education and Library Board vehicles, public transport and private operators), over the last five years in each of the Education and Library Boards:

		BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	TOTAL
Controlled & Maintained Post-Primary Schools	2003/04	£138k	£3,795k	£2,024k	£5,887k	£3,903k	£15,747k
	2004/05	£96k	£4,264k	£2,516k	£6,195k	£4,407k	£17,478k
	2005/06	£57k	£4,375k	£2,591k	£6,596k	£5,383k	£19,002k
	2006/07	£54k	£4,540k	£2,756k	£5,369k	£4,309k	£17,028k
	2007/08	£57k	£4,677k	£2,037k	£5,614k	£3,842k	£16,227k
Grant-Maintained Integrated Post-Primary Schools	2003/04	#	#	#	#	#	#
	2004/05	£453k	£476k	£859k	£639k	£630k	£3,057k
	2005/06	£507k	£503k	£873k	£503k	£614k	£3,000k
	2006/07	£532k	£549k	£915k	£595k	£558k	£3,149k
	2007/08	£636k	£622k	£927k	£646k	£687k	£3,518k
Irish-Medium Post-Primary Schools	2003/04	#	#	#	#	#	#
	2004/05	£26k	£3k	£56k	-	£3k	£88k
	2005/06	£35k	£4k	£59k	-	£2k	£100k
	2006/07	£38k	£5k	£64k	£10k	£7k	£124k
	2007/08	£33k	£7k	£29k	£73k	£6k	£148k

Figures not held prior to 2004/05

Integrated Post-Primary Schools

Miss McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to detail the cost of school bus transportation for pupils attending integrated secondary schools, broken down by Education and Library Board, for each of the last 5 years. (AQW 1277/09)

The Minister of Education: Unfortunately not all of the information requested is available in the required format. Home to school transport expenditure details are not currently held separately for controlled and maintained post primary schools, also, separate statistics are only available for Grant-Maintained Integrated schools – not the integrated sector as a whole. Furthermore, detailed expenditure statistics

are not held by the Department prior to 2004/05, as such, information pertaining to the Grant-Maintained Integrated and Irish-Medium sectors cannot be split between primary and post-primary prior to 2004/05.

Léiríonn an tábla thíos caiteachas a tabhaíodh trí sholáthar na gcineálacha áirithe bhusanna scoile (feithiclí de chuid na mBord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne, iompar poiblí agus tiománaithe príobháideacha), le cúig bhliain anuas i ngach ceann de na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne:

The table below shows expenditure incurred through the provision of the various types of school buses (Education and Library Board vehicles, public transport and private operators), over the last five years in each of the Education and Library Boards:

		BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	TOTAL
Controlled & Maintained Post-Primary Schools	2003/04	£138k	£3,795k	£2,024k	£5,887k	£3,903k	£15,747k
	2004/05	£96k	£4,264k	£2,516k	£6,195k	£4,407k	£17,478k
	2005/06	£57k	£4,375k	£2,591k	£6,596k	£5,383k	£19,002k
	2006/07	£54k	£4,540k	£2,756k	£5,369k	£4,309k	£17,028k
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Grant-Maintained Integrated Post-Primary Schools	2003/04	#	#	#	#	#	#
	2004/05	£453k	£476k	£859k	£639k	£630k	£3,057k
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		BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB	TOTAL
Irish-Medium Post-Primary Schools	2003/04	#	#	#	#	#	#
	2004/05	£26k	£3k	£56k	-	£3k	£88k
	2005/06	£35k	£4k	£59k	-	£2k	£100k
	2006/07	£38k	£5k	£64k	£10k	£7k	£124k
	2007/08	£33k	£7k	£29k	£73k	£6k	£148k

Figures not held prior to 2004/05

Departmental Private Office

Mr Burns asked the Minister of Education how many staff are employed in her Departmental private office; and the annual cost of employing these staff.
(AQW 1290/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá na sonraí a iarradh mar a leanas

The details requested are as follows:

Number of staff employed in DE Private Office	Cost: 2007/08	Cost: 2008/09 (1 April to 30 September 2008)
8	£154,491	£85,580

Children with Dyslexia

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education how many mainstream schools in the Fermanagh/ South Tyrone area have a dedicated teacher for children with dyslexia.
(AQW 1295/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá sé tugtha le fios dom ag Príomhfheidhmeannaí Bhord Oideachais agus Leabhairlainne an Deiscirt agus an Iarthair go mbíonn séirbhísí ionad bhunaithe ag na Boird a thugann tacaíocht do pháistí a fhreastlaíonn ar ghnáthscoileanna a bhfuil deachrachtaí litearthachta ar leith acu.

I have been advised by the Chief Executives of the Southern and Western Education and Library Boards that the Boards have centre-based services that support children with specific literacy difficulties who are in a mainstream school. In addition selected schools have obtained dyslexia friendly status to support a whole school approach to meeting the needs of the child. Some mainstream schools may appoint a dedicated teacher for children with dyslexia, although this is at the discretion of the school.

Papers and Policy Documents

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Education if references to Northern Ireland are changed to North

of Ireland in relation to papers and policy documents from the departmental unit responsible for children and young people who do not use English as a first language.
(AQW 1310/09)

The Minister of Education: Is fearr liom tuaisceart na hÉireann a úsáid agus léirítear é seo i ngach cumarsáid ó mo Roinn.

It is my personal preference to use north of Ireland and reflect this in all my Departmental communications.

Department Website

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Education to detail the annual cost to maintain her Departmental website.
(AQW 1330/09)

The Minister of Education: It is not possible to provide a figure on the annual cost of maintaining my Department's website, as it is hosted on a server with other government websites within the Civil Service and a disaggregated figure for site maintenance is not held.

Tá roinnt ball foirne ón Roinn Oideachais a mbíonn sé de dhualgais orthu an t-eolas atá ar an láithreán gréasáin a nuashonrú.

A number of Department of Education staff contribute to updating the information held on the site as part of their duties.

Irish Medium Post-Primary Schools

Miss McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to detail the cost of school bus transportation for pupils attending Irish medium secondary schools, broken down by Education and Library Board, for each of the last 5 years.
(AQW 1398/09)

The Minister of Education: Unfortunately not all of the information requested is available in the required format. Home to school transport expenditure details are not currently held separately for controlled and maintained post primary schools, also, separate statistics are only available for Grant-Maintained Integrated schools – not the integrated sector as a whole. Furthermore, detailed expenditure statistics are not held by the

Department prior to 2004/05, as such, information pertaining to the Grant-Maintained Integrated and Irish-Medium sectors cannot be split between primary and post-primary prior to 2004/05.

Léiríonn an tábla thíos caiteachas a tabhaíodh trí sholáthar na gcineálacha áirithe bhusanna scoile (feithiclí de chuid na mBord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne, iompar poiblí agus tiománaithe

príobháideacha), le cúig bhliain anuas i ngach ceann de na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne:

The table below shows expenditure incurred through the provision of the various types of school buses (Education and Library Board vehicles, public transport and private operators), over the last five years in each of the Education and Library Boards:

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Figures not held prior to 2004/05

EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING

Computer Training Officers

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to his answer to AQW 6891/08, if he will (i) give an update on the review by the University of Ulster on the number of computer training officers; (ii) indicate whether redundancies of computer training officers are being considered at any location. (AQW 1013/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning (Sir Reg Empey): The University advises that its Faculty of Computing and Engineering is carrying out a review of its staffing requirements on each of the three campuses on which it currently operates. This includes academic, technical, and academic-related staff including Computer Training Officers.

It is the University's protocol that, once the review is complete, discussions are held with the respective Trade Unions in the first instance, followed directly by staffing groups.

The University is scheduled to meet with the recognised Trade Unions next week and, following those discussions, it will then engage with staff directly. In order to ensure that due process is followed, the University feels that it would be unfair to make any comment in relation to any particular staff grouping at this point.

Removal of the Externality Rule

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his Department's assessment (i) of the possible replication of qualifications that might occur following the removal of the externality rule; and (ii) of the recognition of organisations offering training as proposed in the Department for Employment and Learning consultation on vocational qualifications; and how his Department would avoid the replication of qualifications following the removal of the externality rule. (AQW 1026/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning: As you state, your questions relate to issues on which my Department is currently consulting, namely the reform

to the regulatory system for vocational qualifications. I am proposing that the externality rule, which currently restricts organisations from both providing education and training and awarding a qualification following assessment, should be removed. This will allow, for example, employers and other training providers, such as Further Education colleges, to award accredited qualifications for the training they provide, and will remove an aspect of the current system which is seen as being unnecessarily bureaucratic. Such awarding organisation status would be subject to the qualifications regulators being satisfied that the organisation has the capacity to act in this way, and that it meets stringent standards of quality and propriety.

As part of the qualifications accreditation process, it is intended that the regulators will ensure that qualifications submitted for accreditation enjoy the support of the relevant Sector Skills Council and do not duplicate qualifications already accredited to the framework. In this way, the system will ensure that all accredited qualifications are appropriate and worthwhile, and that the framework is populated by an appropriate range of useful qualifications.

It is my assessment that this proposed system will ensure that the vocational education and training delivered in Northern Ireland is well-targeted, is clearly understandable to learners, training providers and employers, and will meet the skills needs of the economy as a whole.

Belfast Metropolitan College

Mr McCausland asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to his answer to AQO 150/09, to detail the downturn in performance by the Belfast Metropolitan College in 2007-08; and the reasons for this. (AQW 1058/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning: The 2007-08 audited accounts for Belfast Metropolitan College will not be available until November 2008 and so it is not possible to provide precise details of the college's financial performance until then. As I noted in response to the previous question, my Department, in co-operation with the Belfast Metropolitan College Governing Body, is commissioning an independent review of the college operation, including its financial management. Until this review is further advanced, the Department is unable to comment on the possible reasons for the college's downturn in financial performance.

Belfast Metropolitan College

Mr McCausland asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the centres at which the Belfast

Metropolitan College provides full-time courses in the (i) West Belfast constituency area; and (ii) North Belfast constituency area. (AQW 1091/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning: Belfast Metropolitan College provides full-time courses in the West Belfast constituency area at its Whiterock Building. The college does not provide any full time courses in the North Belfast constituency area.

Carbon Usage

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Employment and Learning if records are kept of carbon usage; and what plans the Department has to purchase carbon offsets each time a long distance journey is undertaken. (AQW 1105/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning: The Department for Employment and Learning does not keep records of carbon usage and has no plans to purchase carbon offsets each time a long distance journey is undertaken.

The Department is however fully committed to reducing environmental damage and monitors the travel undertaken by staff. Emphasis is placed on promoting alternative methods of conducting business, including the use of video/telephone conferencing.

Department Website

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many page views his Department's website received each month, for the last 12 months. (AQW 1114/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning: The number of page views for the Department for Employment and Learning's website from 1 October 2007 to 30 September 2008 is shown in the table below

Month	Page Views
October 2007	196,684
November 2007	166,817
December 2007	117,530
January 2008	274,069
February 2008	202,906
March 2008	179,366
April 2008	193,993
May 2008	181,642
June 2008	213,747

Month	Page Views
July 2008	204,143
August 2008	280,938
September 2008	310,755
Totals	2,522,590

Location of Public Sector Jobs

Mr McCartney asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) what engagements he had with Professor Bain in relation to the review of the location of public sector jobs; and (ii) any offers he made to relocate jobs in his Department.

(AQW 1136/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning: I did not meet directly with Professor Bain to discuss the independent review of policy on location of public sector jobs.

However Dr Aideen McGinley, the Department's Permanent Secretary, did meet with Professor Bain regarding the review, but did not make any specific recommendations regarding relocation of Departmental jobs.

Kilcooley Women's Education Group

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning (i) if his department funds the Kilcooley Women's Education Group; and (ii) if not, to give the reasons.

(AQW 1164/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning: My Department does not fund the Kilcooley Women's Education Group. The Department does not core fund non-statutory organisations to deliver education provision.

I also understand the Group did not make an application under the first Call of the Northern Ireland ESF Programme 2007-13.

Executive Meetings

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what areas of his Department's business are being held up by the Executive's failure to meet.

(AQW 1198/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning: In July 2008, papers on the Regulatory Reform for Qualifications, the Fixed Term Employee (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) (Amendment) Regulations and Maternity and Paternal Leave/Paternity and Adoption

Leave (Amendment) Regulations were progressed through Urgent Procedure as a consequence of Executive meetings not taking place. Further items such as the new Careers Strategy will require Executive approval before launch.

Belfast Metropolitan College

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) the number of students that have enrolled for courses in Belfast Metropolitan College in 2008/9; (ii) how this figure compares with 2007/8; and (iii) the total number of courses/modules that have been withdrawn due to lack of enrolment.

(AQW 1343/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning:

Enrolment for courses at Belfast Metropolitan College for this new academic year is still in process. Therefore, it is not yet possible (i) to provide an assessment of the number of students enrolled in 2008/09; (ii) or, therefore, to provide a comparison with 2007/08 figures; (iii) or to detail the total number of courses/modules that have been withdrawn due to lack of enrolment.

Interim college enrolment statistics for 2008/09 will be available in December 2008, with validated full-year statistics for that year available in December 2009.

ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Regional Tourism Partnerships

Mr W Clarke asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment why the Northern Ireland Tourist Board has reduced funding to the regional tourism partnerships.

(AQW 747/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Mrs A Foster): Tourism Ireland is the international marketing body responsible for marketing Northern Ireland in Great Britain and overseas. NITB no longer has a direct role in marketing Northern Ireland as a standalone destination in these markets and therefore does not provide funding for Regional Tourism Partnership (RTP) activity in international marketing.

NITB has the marketing remit for Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland so it is important to minimise duplication of effort. The role of the RTPs should therefore complement that of NITB and as such, RTP funding allocation is aligned to NITB's corporate objectives.

The RTP role will be to develop and implement innovative ideas which complement the signature projects and the product portfolios in NITB's Draft Corporate Plan for 2008-2011. This will be delivered via Service Level Agreements (SLA) with clear aims, objectives, targets and demonstrable outputs. NITB has discussed core SLAs with the RTPs. These cover services required by NITB in support of key priorities and objectives and funding for 2008 to 2009. Arrangements for subsequent years will be the subject of further discussion.

Financial support has been offered to RTPs through SLA's for 2008/09, worth £70,000 each for delivery of these services. NITB also intends to launch a new programme – the Tourism Innovation Fund for revenue projects, approx £2m per annum over PfG which will be funded through the EU. This scheme is currently being developed with the Department and will focus on the delivery of innovative products or projects to extend visitor spend and stay in line with the PfG targets. RTPs are eligible to apply for these funds via a competitive process.

Northern Ireland Tourist Board

Mr W Clarke asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the impact that the reduction of funding from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board to regional tourism partnerships will have on the targets set out in the Programme for Government, which is to increase the number of visitors to Northern Ireland by 25% and increase visitor spend by 40% by 2011. (AQW 748/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The reduction of funding to the Regional Tourism Partnerships (RTPs) should not have a major impact on the targets set out in the programme for Government.

The Programme for Government (PfG) has established challenging targets. With them come additional resources directed against identified priorities that will have the greatest impact in achieving targets.

NITB is focusing its resources on key priorities that will deliver against the national objectives and PfG targets.

Sub-regional activities have been identified which could be carried out by regional organisations such as RTPs or other local agents. These activities include increasing the breadth and depth of visitor content on the discovernorthernireland.com consumer website, clustering the industry and supplying industry packages and product offers to support NITB campaigns in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and delivering familiarisation trips for both media and travel trade. Financial support has been offered to RTPs through Service Level Agreements in 2008-09 for delivery of these services.

The reduction in funding to RTPs relates primarily to international marketing – this is not within the remit of NITB. Tourism Ireland will continue to promote within Great Britain and overseas to deliver the PfG targets, while NITB will focus on driving development of the product in partnership with key agencies, with resources allocated accordingly.

NITB also intends to launch a new programme – the Tourism Innovation Fund for revenue projects (approx £2m per annum over PfG) which will be funded through the EU. This scheme is currently being developed with the Department and will focus on the delivery of innovative products or projects to extend visitor spend and stay in line with the PfG targets. RTPs will be eligible to apply for these funds via a competitive process.

Development of a Lough Neagh Authority

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the tourist potential that the development of a Lough Neagh Authority might have for the region around the Lough. (AQW 894/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The Lough Neagh region, defined as Antrim, Magherafelt, Craigavon, Lisburn and Dungannon & South Tyrone Council areas has benefited from funding provided by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) through the Regional Tourism Partnerships.

Lough Neagh's main tourism strength lies in the range of water-based sports and activities that it has to offer. NITB is working to develop the Lough as a key element of its Sports Activities and Waterways product.

Lough Neagh features in marketing activity undertaken by NITB and Tourism Ireland through websites, publications and targeted campaigns to promote tourism growth to Northern Ireland.

Partnership is the way forward for successful tourism development and delivery, and within this context the Lough Neagh Partnership has played a leading role in the Lough's development. NITB also engages with the Lough Neagh Partnership to develop the tourist and leisure potential of the Lough.

My department and its agencies will continue to work with relevant partners to ensure continued progress in the development of Lough Neagh as a tourist destination.

Construction Industry

Mr Wells asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for his assessment of the number of individuals employed in all aspects of the construction

industry who have registered as unemployed since 1 July 2007. (AQW 917/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: It is not possible to provide an exact measure of the number of people employed in all aspects of the Construction Industry who have registered as unemployed since 1 July 2007.

However, between the 12th July 2007 and 14th August 2008, there was a net increase of 2,245 persons registered for unemployment benefits who were previously employed in construction related occupations.¹

The information is not available from 1st July 2007 because the count date for the July 2007 claimant count data was 12th July. Similarly the count date for the August 2008 data was 14th August.

- 1 This includes the following Standard Occupational Classification 2000 codes: 1122 (Managers in construction), 2121 (Civil engineers), 3114 (Building and civil engineering technicians), 5216 (Pipe fitters), 5241 (Electricians, electrical fitters), 53 (Skilled construction and building trades), 8141 (Scaffolders, staggers, riggers), 8142 (Road construction operatives), 8149 (Construction operatives n.e.c.), 8221 (Crane drivers), 8229 (Mobile machine drivers and operatives n.e.c.) and 912 (Elementary construction trades).

Utility Regulation Board

Mr Butler asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what plans she has to (i) review the make-up of the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation board; and (ii) appoint local representatives to the board. (AQW 946/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The majority of the current members of the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation (NIAUR) were appointed in October 2006 for a period of three years and these appointments are not due to expire until the end of September 2009. The appointment of the Chairman, who was appointed for a period of four years in 2006 and of one member, who was appointed in 2007, will not expire until 2010. My Department will therefore (i) be consulting with the Chairman of the NIAUR in developing plans to appoint members to the Authority in 2009; and (ii) the issue of local representation will be one of those which will be considered in that context.

Hotels in North Antrim

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to list all grants paid to hotels in North Antrim. (AQW 1006/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Invest NI performance information is captured on the basis of the amount of assistance offered and not on assistance that is paid. The table below details the assistance offered by Invest NI to hotels in North Antrim for the period from 1 April 2006 to 6 October 2008.

Financial Year Ending	Hotel	Invest NI Assistance Offered
31 March 2007	Adair Arms	£6,618
	Galgorm Manor	£1,676,767
	Tullymore House Ltd (Ten Square & Galgorm)	£34,166
31 March 2008	Nil	
Current Financial Year to Date	Bushmills Inn	£488,283

Hotel Development

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, given the volume of tourists that visit North Antrim, what assessment she has made of the need for further overnight accommodation and hotel development in the Ballymoney area. (AQW 1007/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: I fully recognise the growing number of tourists staying overnight in the North Antrim area. Further growth is anticipated once the Giant's Causeway and Antrim and Causeway Coast Signature Project is complete.

My Department has commenced a strategic review of the wider accommodation needs across the whole of Northern Ireland. I am confident that this review, which will be based on recent trends, future growth assessments and potential accommodation developments currently in the planning cycle, will allow us to make an informed regional assessment of likely future needs.

Financial Assistance for Hotels

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) what financial assistance Invest NI has paid to hotels; (ii) to list each hotel that has received financial assistance; and (iii) the amount of money offered to each hotel. (AQW 1008/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The financial assistance offered by Invest NI for the development of hotel projects in the period from 1 April 2002 to 6 October 2008 is detailed below:

Hotel	Invest NI Assistance Offered
Adair Arms	£6,618
Beech Hill Country House Hotel	£21,665
Beechlawn House Hotel	£43,983
Burrendale Hotel	£5,005
Bushmills Inn	£494,350
Carrybridge Hotel	£200,000
Clandeboyne Lodge Hotel	£38,642
Corrs Corner	£3,762
Crawfordsburn Inn	£45,578
Culzean Estates Limited	£4,924
Customs House	£8,000
Days Hotel	£119,635
Donard Hotel	£8,985
Drummond Hotel	£105,850
Dunadry Development Company	£52,411
Dunsilly Arms Hotel (Comfort)	£516,678
Express by Holiday Inn Antrim	£28,364
Fir Trees Hotel	£231,647
Galgorm Hotel	£1,676,767
Hastings Hotel Group	£356,164
Hilton Hotel Belfast	£202,198
Hilton Hotel Templepatrick	£168,324
Holiday Inn Belfast	£46,437
Holiday Inn Express - Craigavon	£475,000
Hotel Carlton	£167,811
Jury's Hotel	£47,329
Killyhevlin Hotel	£835,400
Kilmorey Arms Hotel	£200,000
La Mon House Hotel	£82,784
Londonderry Arms Hotel	£4,538
Lough Erne Golf Resort	£3,500,000
Magherabuoy House Hotel	£453,177
Mahons Hotel	£176,600
Malmaison Belfast	£96,480

Hotel	Invest NI Assistance Offered
Malone Lodge Hotel & Apartments	£55,217
Manor House Country Hotel	£220,162
Park Avenue Hotel	£110,595
Radisson Roe Park Hotel	£22,989
Radisson SAS Belfast	£235,819
Ramada Da Vinci's Hotel	£51,734
Silverbirch Hotel	£14,800
Slieve Donard Hotel	£2,540,000
Strangford Arms Hotel	£22,000
The Merchant Hotel	£141,536
Tower Hotel	£12,780
Tullymore House Ltd (Ten Square & Galgorm)	£34,166
Valley Hotel	£5,710
Westville Hotel	£19,472
White Horse Hotel	£55,318

Invest NI does not currently have a centralised database of grant payments for tourism projects.

It has consistently answered queries on assistance to tourism accommodation in terms of *offers* of assistance. This also provides a more accurate reflection of total investment as Invest NI holds back retention of grant payments until after project completion.

Assistance Offered by Invest NI

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to (i) list how much money Invest NI gave to businesses each year from 2004-2008; and (ii) give a breakdown of those figures by category or type of business. (AQW 1054/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Tables 1 and 2 present the amount of assistance offered by Invest NI in each of the financial years between 2004/05 and 2007/08 broken down by ownership status and sector. The total planned investment, which represents the total costs of supported projects, is also included.

TABLE 1: INVEST NI ASSISTANCE BY OWNERSHIP STATUS (2004/05 - 2007/08)

YEAR	External		Local		Total	
	Total Assistance £m	Total Planned Investment £m	Total Assistance £m	Total Planned Investment £m	Total Assistance £m	Total Planned Investment £m
2004/05	63.8	268.1	69.9	228.9	133.7	497.0

YEAR	External		Local		Total	
	Total Assistance £m	Total Planned Investment £m	Total Assistance £m	Total Planned Investment £m	Total Assistance £m	Total Planned Investment £m
2005/06	84.8	432.5	48.9	183.9	133.7	616.4
2006/07	48.7	233.6	48.2	220.3	96.9	453.9
2007/08	54.6	320.3	60.6	369.1	115.2	689.4
Total	251.9	1,254.5	227.7	1,002.1	479.6	2,256.7

Note: Table totals may not add due to rounding.

TABLE 2: INVEST NI ASSISTANCE BY SECTOR (2004/05 - 2007/08)

Sector	2004/05		2005/06		2006/07		2007/08		TOTAL	
	Total Assistance £m	Total Planned Investment £m	Total Assistance £m	Total Planned Investment £m	Total Assistance £m	Total Planned Investment £m	Total Assistance £m	Total Planned Investment £m	Total Assistance £m	Total Planned Investment £m
Manufacturing										
Chemicals & Pharmaceuticals	5.3	50.3	4.3	16.3	0.8	2.6	7.2	109.5	17.6	178.8
Clothing & Textiles	3.2	10.8	0.9	3.9	2.0	11.3	1.1	5.3	7.2	31.3
Electrical, Electronic & Optical Equipment	4.2	15.6	39.1	153.2	2.1	7.0	3.9	14.7	49.3	190.5
Fabricated Metal Products & Metal Finishing	6.7	26.0	3.9	21.5	2.0	7.6	2.8	12.8	15.3	67.9
Food, Drink & Tobacco	12.5	70.6	10.3	94.2	5.7	52.4	6.2	41.7	34.7	258.9
Glass, Ceramic & Concrete Products	2.0	10.5	0.3	1.3	1.4	7.4	2.3	49.0	6.1	68.1
Non-Electrical Machinery	11.1	46.7	6.8	42.0	2.1	9.1	5.9	47.4	26.0	145.1
Other Manufacturing	2.1	9.8	5.1	20.8	1.4	10.4	1.4	6.9	10.0	47.9
Paper Products, Printing & Publishing	1.5	4.6	4.4	31.9	0.8	3.6	3.5	37.2	10.1	77.2
Rubber & Plastic products	3.7	14.7	8.3	34.8	1.5	6.6	4.2	21.3	17.8	77.4
Transport Equipment	5.7	21.4	1.0	3.8	4.6	26.0	13.2	90.8	24.4	142.0
Wood Products	2.2	15.4	0.3	0.9	0.4	3.7	1.4	7.7	4.4	27.8
Total Manufacturing	60.2	296.4	84.8	424.5	24.7	147.7	53.2	444.4	222.9	1,313.0
Services										
Business & Financial Services	32.9	111.7	18.6	93.5	32.7	135.8	18.3	76.2	102.6	417.2
Construction Services	1.4	6.5	1.0	4.7	1.2	7.8	2.1	12.2	5.7	31.1
Software & Computer Services	14.3	34.9	9.4	51.5	10.9	74.9	16.5	81.5	51.0	242.8
Other Services	9.3	26.8	3.5	19.3	16.5	74.6	10.0	47.4	39.4	168.1
Total Services	57.8	179.9	32.5	169.0	61.4	293.0	46.9	217.3	198.6	859.2
Total Sector Based	118.0	476.3	117.2	593.5	86.1	440.7	100.1	661.7	421.5	2,172.2
Non-Sector Specific	15.7	20.7	16.5	22.9	10.9	13.2	15.1	27.7	58.2	84.5
Grand Total	133.7	497.0	133.7	616.4	96.9	453.9	115.2	689.4	479.6	2,256.7

Notes: 1. Table totals may not add due to rounding.
2. 'Non-Sector Specific' includes TSO's, Universities and Trade Assistance.

Financial Assistance for Hotels

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many grants or offers of financial assistance were given by Invest NI to hotels with (i) 0-20 bedrooms; (ii) 20-30 bedrooms; (iii) 30-40 bedrooms; (iv) 40-50 bedrooms; (v) 50-60 bedrooms; and (vi) 60 plus bedrooms, in the last financial year.

(AQW 1055/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and

Investment: In the financial year ended 31 March 2008 Invest Northern Ireland made 7 offers of assistance for the development of hotels.

- (i) One offer to a hotel with 0-20 rooms;
- (ii) One offer to a hotel with 20-30 rooms;
- (iii) No offers to hotels with 30-40 rooms;
- (iv) No offers to hotels with 40-50 rooms;
- (v) One offer to a hotel with 50-60 rooms;
- (vi) Four offers to hotels with 60+ rooms.

Investment from the United States of America

Ms Ni Chuilín asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the steps she is taking to promote investment from the United States of America.

(AQO 640/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and

Investment: Invest NI has a network of offices located in North America, in New York, Boston and San Jose. These offices focus on promoting all areas of Northern Ireland as locations capable of providing solutions to the business needs of new investors wishing to establish here. Sectorally, efforts are concentrated on the innovation-based sectors of international traded services, particularly, software, business services, financial services and ICT.

The US is the largest market and as you will be aware, the USNI conference took place over 7-9th May 2008. Over 150 influential business leaders and potential investors had an opportunity to see at first hand what we have to offer.

Invest Northern Ireland has followed up with all 150 business delegates at the USNI conference. Leslie Morrison, Chief Executive of Invest Northern Ireland has already completed a conference follow up visit to the US and met with Senior Executives in New York. Meetings have also taken place in London and Dublin. To date 40 expressions of interest have been received.

In addition, Invest Northern Ireland is hosting a series of follow up "salon events" with existing investor CEOs, attendees at the conference, advocates of Northern

Ireland, and targeted decision makers in prospect companies. I will be travelling to the West Coast in October 2008 and hosting a Salon in Silicon Valley.

The growing uncertainty and the economic downturn, means US companies are tightening their belts and are increasingly focusing on cost containment, and they are deferring investment decisions. As a result the pipeline of new FDI prospects is not as strong as this period last year.

The project sales cycle for inward investment can take 18-24 months to complete. Invest Northern Ireland will continue to maintain a strong sales presence in the USA and we expect that the results, in terms of investment, especially those flowing from the Conference, may take some time to come to fruition.

Start a Business Programme

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) how many businesses have been created in the Ards Borough Council area via the 'Start a Business' programme since the programme's inception; and (ii) the number of these businesses that are still in existence.

(AQW 1137/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and

Investment: From inception in September 2001, the Start A Business Programme has supported 818 new business starts within the Ards Borough Council area.

An independent evaluation of the Start a Business Programme, carried out in 2006 showed that 78% of businesses surveyed were still trading 3 years after receiving the initial support.

While comprehensive data on the current status of the 818 Ards start-ups is not available, client monitoring indicates that their overall survival rates are on a par with the NI average.

Exploris Aquarium

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the (i) nature; (ii) purpose; and (iii) value, of any financial assistance the Department has given to the Exploris Aquarium and its predecessor the Northern Ireland Aquarium.

(AQW 1140/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and

Investment: The table below gives details of the nature, purpose and value of financial assistance awarded by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) to Exploris and the Northern Ireland Aquarium:

Project:	Description	Scheme	Offer	Date
Exploris Seal Sanctuary	Development of a seal sanctuary at Exploris.	ERDF Tourism Programme 1994-99	£416,813	09/03/2001
Exploris: Improved Interpretation & Access	Provision of a modified audio visual presentation and improvement of wheelchair access.	NITB's Tourism Development Scheme	£14,885	24/02/1999
Exploris	Survey of NI attractions summer 1997 to improve management information and marketing/visitor service.	Marketing Support Scheme (ERDF)	£779	11/03/1998
Exploris	Tourism Development International will survey key attractions in N. Ireland and the Republic on visitor service, pricing, demography.	Marketing Support Scheme (ERDF)	£800	12/03/1996
		Total:	£433,277	

NITB has not received any applications from Exploris since its last successful application under the European Regional Development Fund Tourism Programme 1994-99.

Invest NI

Ms Anderson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail any arrangements made by Invest NI to secure equity in a client company in return for financial assistance, in the last two years; and what measures are in place to protect public funds invested on this basis. (AQW 1141/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: From April 2006 to date, Invest NI has made 17 equity investments totaling £2,420,000. Of these investments, 9 were in the form of preference shares totaling £1,517,000, 6 by way of ordinary shares totaling £342,000, and 2 ordinary share exchanges totaling £561,000, the latter as a result of client companies being acquired by a third party. The details are as outlined in Appendix 01.

Application

Applications by existing or prospective clients for financial assistance are submitted to Invest NI Client Teams and must be supported by a comprehensive business plan.

Appraisal Process

The Corporate Finance Appraisal & Advisory Division (CFAAD) within Invest NI provides an independent commercial appraisal of the company's business/project plans, as presented to Invest NI.

CFAAD undertakes all appraisals where assistance proposed is greater than £250,000. This division can also be engaged where levels of assistance of less than £250,000 are being considered (e.g. a proposed equity participation).

The objectives of the appraisal are:

- (i) To assess the viability and economic efficiency of projects and companies submitting projects for support;
- (ii) to recommend conditions to be attached to any offer of assistance to strengthen the project and/or to protect Invest NI's position; and
- (iii) to advise the Client Executive, if requested, on the structure of the proposed package of financial assistance.

Casework Submission and Approval Process

Following the appraisal process, a Casework Submission is prepared in order to obtain the necessary approvals from the appropriate casework committees for the proposed package of assistance. Any conditions and/or monitoring arrangements recommended by the commercial appraiser in CFAAD are also included within the Casework Submission. Approvals are provided in accordance with Invest NI's internal delegations and the appropriate delegated limits as set down by the Department of Finance and Personnel. Specifically, for equity investments over a certain limit, Department of Finance & Personnel approval is required.

Conditions of Assistance and Monitoring Requirements

Once approval is granted, Invest NI prepares the appropriate Financial Assistance Agreement (FAA) for the type of support being offered. All conditions and monitoring requirements included within the casework are incorporated into this agreement. The FAA forms a legal agreement between the client and Invest NI. It must be signed and accepted by the client and any specific conditions must be satisfied before grant is issued or payment is made.

All investments made by Invest NI are subject to regular monitoring by the appropriate Client Managers and Client Executives in accordance with Invest NI's monitoring procedures.

AQW 1141/08 - APPENDIX 01

1	2006-07	Fighting Bull Technologies	Ordinary shares	50,000
2	2006-07	Irish Polymers	Preference shares	100,000
3	2006-07	Glenaden Shirts Limited	Preference shares	100,000
4	2006-07	Reflex Mouldings Ltd	Preference shares	200,000
5	2006-07	Iceni Software	Preference shares	31,500
6	2006-07	Conexant (Amphion Make Whole Agree)	Ordinary shares - exchange	76,516
7	2007-08	Quantum Hosiery (Previously Adria)	Preference shares	575,264
8	2007-08	AXIS Three Ltd (Lisburn)	Ordinary shares	50,000
9	2007-08	Dark Water Studios	Ordinary shares	100,000
10	2007-08	Fusion Antibodies	Ordinary shares	84,000
11	2007-08	BiancaMed	Preference shares	250,000
12	2007-08	Replify	Preference shares	100,000
13	2007-08	Sensor Technology & Devices Ltd	Preference shares	50,000
14	2007-08	Autonomy (bought over Meridio)	Ordinary shares - exchange	484,000
15	2008-09	Level Seven Creative Ltd	Preference shares	110,000
16	2008-09	AXIS Three Ltd	Ordinary shares	28,294
17	2008-09	SISAF	Ordinary shares	30,000
Total				2,419,574

Exchange ordinary	2	560,516
New pref	9	1,516,764
New ordinary	6	342,294
Total		2,419,574

Invest NI

Ms Anderson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the success rate of any companies which have received assistance from Invest NI in return for an equity stake; and to outline what measures are in place to protect jobs within those companies. (AQW 1142/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Invest NI's ability to take an equity stake in a company is only one of several types of financial intervention at the agency's disposal and is in line with its policy of seeking to reduce the reliance of companies on grant support. Equity investments are most commonly made in those companies which carry a higher risk profile than more established businesses.

Between 2002 and 2008, Invest NI has made equity investments in 77 companies totalling £27.3m. To date, of these investments, 14 have been repaid (£4.9m) and 10 (£2.8m) have failed. Of the remaining companies, 44 continue to trade at present. On this basis, the success rate is approximately 75%.

Invest NI adopts the same intervention principles and appraisal process for all projects whether equity or grant based. This involves an assessment of the economic benefits of the project, a key element of which is consideration of the project's ability to create and/or safeguard employment. At the post approval stage, Invest NI continues to monitor each project's progress against a range of predefined milestones, which may include employment levels. As part of this process, the agency can continue to provide its clients with access to a broad range of support to help them increase their productivity and become more internationally competitive.

Northern Ireland Business Tourism Expo

Mr Cree asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to provide an update of the numbers of key buyers who attended the Northern Ireland Business Tourism Expo in Belfast on 2nd and 3rd October 2008, from (i) Great Britain; (ii) Republic of Ireland; (iii) United States of America; (iv) Canada; (v) France; and (vi) Germany. (AQW 1262/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Forty seven buyers from the above six markets attended the Northern Ireland Business Tourism Expo 2008. The attendance was as follows:

Market	Number of Buyers
Great Britain	21
Republic of Ireland	11

Market	Number of Buyers
United States of America	4
Canada	3
France	4
Germany	4

NIE Farm Popular Tariff

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to explain why the NIE Farm Popular Tariff has moved from the least expensive tariff in pence per kilowatt hour, to become the most expensive tariff, over the last 5 years. (AQW 1308/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: NIE Energy has advised that in April 2003, using a common annual consumption of 22,000 units, the overall Farm Popular (FP) price per unit of 9.24p was just below the standard small business price (by 0.12p or 1.3%), and likewise below the standard domestic price (by 0.14p). Over the following 4 years to April 2007 the FP price remained between the domestic and small business prices.

Restructuring of the tariffs following the establishment of the Single Electricity Market (SEM) in November 2007 resulted in changes to the allocation of energy costs in the various tariff categories. In particular, the old "Bulk Supply Tariff" that previously split electricity prices into time-banded rates for days and weekends and took account of summer and winter usage, was changed. This impacted both positively and negatively on different categories of energy consumers, with customers who use energy overnight, such as businesses with 24 hour operations, and some farmers, having to pay more for their electricity.

As a result of the tariff increases in July and October 2008, the FP price rose to 17.7p, which is approximately 0.9p above both small business and standard domestic prices. This represents an increase of 48% since 2003. However all tariffs have seen an increase of over 40% since then, driven primarily by the increasing cost of global fossil fuels used for electricity generation.

I understand that NIE Energy is contacting individual customers on the FP tariff to see if an alternative tariff might offer them a more economical option.

NIE Farm Popular Tariff

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment why the NIE Farm Popular Tariff has almost doubled in the period from April 2003 to October 2008. (AQW 1309/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: NIE Energy has advised that in April 2003, using a common annual consumption of 22,000 units, the overall Farm Popular (FP) price per unit of 9.24p was just below the standard small business price (by 0.12p or 1.3%), and likewise below the standard domestic price (by 0.14p). Over the following 4 years to April 2007 the FP price remained between the domestic and small business prices.

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As a result of the tariff increases in July and October 2008, the FP price rose to 17.7p, which is approximately 0.9p above both small business and standard domestic prices. This represents an increase of 48% since 2003. However all tariffs have seen an increase of over 40% since then, driven primarily by the increasing cost of global fossil fuels used for electricity generation.

I understand that NIE Energy is contacting individual customers on the FP tariff to see if an alternative tariff might offer them a more economical option.

Department Website

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the annual cost to maintain her Departmental website. (AQW 1328/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The annual cost to maintain the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment website is £11,400.

Tourism Related Projects

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many tourism related projects applied for grant aid from (i) (a) Larne; (b) Carrickfergus; and (c) Newtownabbey Borough Councils; and (ii) the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, in each of the last 5 years. (AQW 1379/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Part (i) of this question can only be answered by the Borough Councils themselves.

The table below gives the total number of applications for financial assistance received by The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) from projects in the Larne, Carrickfergus and Newtownabbey Borough Council areas in each of the last 5 years:

Borough Council:	2003/04:	2004/05:	2005/06:	2006/07:	2007/08:	Total:
Larne	Nil	Nil	Nil	11	1	12
Carrickfergus	Nil	1	Nil	2	2	5
Newtownabbey	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	3	3
Total	Nil	1	Nil	13	6	20

In addition to the above an application was received from Causeway Coast & Glens Tourism Partnership during 2003/04 under the Peace II programme in respect of a project covering 8 different Council areas including the 3 specified above.

Borough Council:	2003/04:	2004/05:	2005/06:	2006/07:	2007/08:	Total:
Larne	Nil	8,352.52	16,204.39	52,575.82	16,173.86	£93,306.59
Carrickfergus	600.00	8,352.52	16,204.39	46,333.38	29,361.45	£100,851.74
Newtownabbey	Nil	8,352.52	16,204.39	46,333.38	16,173.86	£87,064.15
Total	£600.00	£25,057.56	£48,613.17	£145,242.58	£61,709.17	£281,222.48

Included in these totals are payments to The Causeway Coast & Glens Tourism Partnership, a Regional Tourism Partnership covering 8 different Council areas including the 3 specified, and payments in respect of the Causeway Coastal Route, a project covering 10 different Council areas including the 3 specified. These payments have been weighted, 1/8th and 1/10th respectively, to reflect the benefits to each of the Council areas specified.

Part (ii) of this question can only be answered by the Borough Councils themselves.

ENVIRONMENT

Belfast Metropolitan Area

Mr Wells asked the Minister of the Environment for an update of the Belfast Metropolitan area urban and rural windfall figures, in relation to the statistics provided to the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan inquiry in January 2007, which only covered the period 1 April 2003 to 31 April 2006. (AQW 688/09)

An application was also received from the Causeway Coast and Glens Limited during 2005/06 in respect of the Causeway Coastal Route a project covering 10 different Council areas including the 3 specified above.

Tourism Related Projects

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) how much has been spent by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board in (a) Larne; (b) Carrickfergus; and (c) Newtownabbey Borough Councils, on tourism related projects in each of the last 5 years; and (ii) how much has been spent by (a) Larne; (b) Carrickfergus; and (c) Newtownabbey Borough Councils, on tourism related projects in each of the last 5 years. (AQW 1380/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The table below details the total payments of financial assistance made to projects in the Larne, Carrickfergus and Newtownabbey Borough Council areas in each of the last 5 years by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board:

The Minister of the Environment (Mr S Wilson): Potential housing yield in the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) includes an estimate of the number of houses that will be built on sites zoned for housing, and an allowance for windfall development. Windfall development consists of an allowance for new housing within the urban footprint, that cannot be precisely predicted locationally, and which is not therefore zoned, but which it is anticipated will take place.

The Department published a paper in January 2007, addressing the latest uplift in the Regional Development Strategy Housing Growth Indicators that had produced a housing yield deficit in BMAP. This paper included information on windfall figures in order to inform the Public Inquiry process. These figures are not produced by the Department on a regular basis. However, the Department monitors housing development in urban areas, and this includes planning applications for unzoned land. These statistics are published in the Northern Ireland Housing Land Availability Summary Report which is available on the Planning Service website. The Department does not monitor rural windfall figures.

Neighbourhood Renewal

Ms Ní Chuilín asked the Minister of the Environment what Neighbourhood Renewal posts and services his Department will fund from March 2009. (AQW 711/09)

The Minister of the Environment: My Department will fund no Neighbourhood Renewal posts or services from March 2009.

Planning Service

Mr Wells asked the Minister of the Environment why Planning Service does not routinely check buildings to ensure that the completed structure complies with all the conditions outlined in the planning approval. (AQW 789/09)

The Minister of the Environment: My Department does not routinely check all buildings to ensure that the completed structure complies with the approved plans and all the conditions outlined in the planning approval as this is very resource intensive at a time when overall planning application numbers are high. In this respect there is clearly an onus on applicants to ensure that completed structures comply with all the conditions attached to the grant of planning permission.

However, following the grant of any planning permission, the case officers may identify a particular development which requires proactive monitoring by the enforcement team to ensure the development is carried out as approved and conditions complied with. In addition development control staff, when out on site in the course of their normal duties, may also identify breaches of planning control that require action.

My Department will investigate all alleged breaches of planning control brought to its attention through monitoring by enforcement staff where appropriate and those identified by other Planning Service staff, other Government Departments and public agencies, elected representatives and members of the public and take whatever action is considered necessary on a case by case basis.

Planning Enforcement Notices

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) how many planning enforcement notices have been served for the breach of planning regulations in the Carrickfergus area; and (ii) how many have been enforced, from January 2007 to August 2008. (AQW 872/09)

The Minister of the Environment:

- (i) Four planning enforcement notices have been served in the Carrickfergus area since 1998.

- (ii) From January 2007 to August 2008 two Enforcement Notices have been taken to appeal. One was dismissed and the notice has been complied with, the other appeal is still to be heard.

Custodial Sentences

Mr Wells asked the Minister of the Environment if he has any plans to introduce custodial sentences as part of the review of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order of 1985. (AQW 922/09)

The Minister of the Environment: I am determined that penalties for wildlife crime in Northern Ireland should offer an effective deterrent and the right level of punishment. I plan to bring forward proposals for custodial sentences as part of the review of the Wildlife Order and have already approached the Secretary of State on this issue. I want to give the Courts discretion to deal properly with persistent and serious offenders.

Infestations

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of the Environment how many (i) rat; (ii) mice; and (iii) insect infestations have affected businesses selling food to the public in each of the last 3 years, broken down by (a) council area; and (b) parliamentary constituency. (AQW 931/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The Department of the Environment has no policy responsibility or legislative role in relation to rat, mice or insect infestations and therefore my Department does not hold this data.

Heavy Goods Vehicles

Mr Bresland asked the Minister of the Environment if he will investigate the number of heavy goods vehicles registered in the Republic of Ireland and operating from Northern Ireland based companies. (AQW 944/09)

The Minister of the Environment: There are 56 vehicles registered within the Republic of Ireland which are attached to Northern Irish licensed operators. There is no legal impediment to prevent these vehicles being used by an operator who holds an International Operators Licence, provided they are used solely for international journeys outside the UK and within the EU.

There are no records available on the number of Republic of Ireland registered vehicles operating for non-licensed goods vehicle operators.

Advisory Councils

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of his recent statements on the appointment of people residing in the Republic of Ireland to serve on advisory councils, what advice he sought from, and was given by, his Department prior to making such public statements. (AQW 981/09)

The Minister of the Environment: In the context of the reconstitution of the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside and of the Historic Monuments Council, my officials informed me that there were Republic of Ireland representatives on the Councils, who were nominated by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, and that this arrangement had been introduced by a direct rule Minister to facilitate cross-border communication. They suggested that I might wish to consider whether this arrangement should continue.

Historic Church Buildings

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of the Environment to detail any funding available from his Department for the repair and restoration of historic church buildings. (AQW 996/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Listed buildings grant-aid, administered by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), is available for Grade A and B+ listed church buildings. The level of grant-aid for maintenance and repair is currently 35% of the eligible costs of such work. This reflects an increase of 12/3% over the old rate of 331/3%. Its introduction followed the issue of a new 'standardised' grant percentage for such work which was rolled out on 20 May this year. NIEA also offers grant-aid at 75% of reasonable professional fees.

Although Grade B1 and B2 listed churches are not eligible for such grant-aid, a review of grant-aid to all listed churches is currently underway. This review will involve an assessment of grant-aid provision by other statutory agencies in the UK and Ireland, plus a public consultation exercise. It will also include meetings with key church groups in Northern Ireland.

Glenfarm Holdings' Incinerator Plant

Mr Butler asked the Minister of the Environment to provide the number of complaints his Department has received about Glenfarm Holdings' incinerator plant at Glenavy in the last 6 months. (AQW 998/09)

The Minister of the Environment: My Department is not aware of an incinerator plant at Glenavy operated by Glenfarm Holdings. This being

the case no complaints have been received within the last six months.

However, Rose Energy are seeking permission to construct a biomass fuelled power plant at Glenavy which does involve incineration. To date there have been nearly 5000 letters of objection to the proposal since the planning application was received in June 2008.

Infestations

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment what steps he will take to deal with the infestation of rats at Woburn Bay, Millisle. (AQW 999/09)

The Minister of the Environment: I would refer the Member to my response to AQW 931/09. The Department of the Environment has no policy responsibility or legislative role in relation to rat infestations and cannot advise on this matter.

Motorbikes and Quad Bikes

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment to outline what by-laws exist to stop motorbikes and quad bikes being used on public beaches. (AQW 1000/09)

The Minister of the Environment: My Department is the confirming authority for bye-laws made by individual district councils for the seashore, but does not have any power to make bye-laws on its own behalf regarding vehicles on public beaches.

Ownership of bye-laws rests with the district councils that made them and bear responsibility for updating and enforcing them. My Department does not keep a register of the bye-laws currently in operation, and therefore does not have the information you have requested.

Bumble Bees

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment (i) what steps are being taken to address the decline in the number of bumble bees; and (ii) what assessment he has made of the impact of disease on the numbers of bumble bees. (AQW 1020/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) is well aware of the current plight of the wild bumble bee populations around the UK and Ireland, that they have experienced significant declines and recognises their important function as pollinators of flowers and crops.

Two bumble bees, *Bombus (Psithyrus) rupestris* the cuckoo bumblebee and *Bombus distinguendus* the

great yellow bumblebee and three other bees are on the list of Northern Ireland Priority Species published by NIEA in March 2004.

NIEA also co-funded work on the conservation of bees in both Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland that led to the Publication of the Regional Red List of Irish Bees in 2006.

The Agency has not carried out any research specifically on the impact of disease on the number of bumblebees in Northern Ireland.

Climate Scientists

Mr B Wilson asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the source of his claim in the supplementary answer to AQO 325/09, that ‘44% of climate scientists disagree with the statement that climate change is mostly the result of man made causes’.

(AQW 1030/09)

The Minister of the Environment: My source was the book by Dennis Avery and S. Fred Singer “*Unstoppable Global Warming: Every 1,500 Years*”.

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of the Environment if the Northern Ireland Environment Agency is aware that a proposal from Northern Ireland Water to pump waste/water from Whitehead and Ballystrudder to Ballycarry will include secondary treatment of this waste.

(AQW 1050/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) is currently examining Northern Ireland Water’s proposal to pump wastewater from Whitehead and Ballystrudder for treatment at Ballycarry. NIEA has only recently received details of the marine modelling for the proposed discharge. NIEA has not yet determined the appropriate level of treatment required to provide the right level of compliance and protection for the receiving waters.

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of the Environment (i) if the sewage and waste/water treatment at Mullaghboy, Islandmagee, complies with Northern Ireland Environment Agency consent standards for discharges into the North Channel; and (ii) what is the level of treatment currently provided.

(AQW 1051/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Northern Ireland Water (NIW) is failing to meet the conditions of the Mullaghboy consent to discharge which was issued by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency

(NIEA) on 30 March 2007 and which incorporates the requirements of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007. As a result NIEA issued an enforcement notice on this treatment works in June 2008 requiring secondary treatment to be provided by 31 December 2011. This work is now included on the NIW capital works programme.

The current level of treatment provided by Mullaghboy is fine screening.

Bathing Waters

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of the Environment what decisions have been made in response to the ‘Review of Identification of Northern Ireland Bathing Waters’ report published in April 2006.(AQW 1052/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Bathing waters were identified at Magilligan (Downhill), Whiterocks (Portrush), Waterfoot, Carnlough, Ballygally, Ballywalter and Murlough Bay (County Down); Cranfield (Nicholson’s Strand) was not de-identified; monitoring at four candidate sites (Ballyhalbert, Cushendall, Cushendun and Warrenpoint) was discontinued; and revised criteria for the identification of bathing waters in Northern Ireland was introduced.

Ministers Membership of Belfast City Council

Mr Armstrong asked the Minister of the Environment (i) what assessment he has given to any potential conflict of interest that may arise from his membership of Belfast City Council and his role as Minister in charge of local government; and (ii) what action he will take to address potential conflicts of interest.

(AQW 1053/09)

The Minister of the Environment: I have already declared publicly my intention to resign as a councillor and that I will determine the timing of my resignation in consultation with party colleagues.

In the meantime, I have confirmed publicly that I will not accept any severance payment which may be put in place for retiring councillors as a result of the Review of Public Administration. There will therefore be no question of any personal conflict of interest in me dealing with any proposals on severance arrangements.

Legislation to List Streets

Mr W Clarke asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to his answer to AQW 749/09, what legislation exists to list streets in their totality.

(AQW 1057/09)

The Minister of the Environment: My previous answer has explained the power to list individual built structures. Collectively these may make up a street and under Article 42(2) of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 ('the Order') 'any respect in which its exterior contributes to the architectural or historic interest of any group of buildings of which it forms part' may be taken into account in this decision.

However, the protection of an area or street following a consideration of its overall interest may be more appropriately carried out under Article 50(1) of the Order. In this the Department of the Environment is given the power to 'designate areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.' Under Article 50(6) of the Order, an area so designated is to be known as a 'Conservation Area'. Powers to control such an area are outlined in Articles 50 to 53 of the Order.

Noise Nuisance

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of the Environment how many prosecutions there have been for noise nuisance in the Larne Borough Council area over the last 5 years. (AQW 1065/09)

The Minister of the Environment: There have been no prosecutions for noise nuisance in Larne Borough Council over the last five years.

Planning Enforcement Notices

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) how many planning enforcement notices have been served for the breach of planning regulations in the Larne area; and (ii) how many have been enforced, from January 2007 to August 2008. (AQW 1067/09)

The Minister of the Environment:

- (i) Eleven Enforcement Notices have been served in the Larne area since 1998.
- (ii) None have been served in the 2007 to 2008 period. One case was due in court on 4 July 2008 however, the Enforcement Notice which had been served on 31 January 2006 was complied with and the Court Summons was withdrawn.

Money Returned to the Department of Finance and Personnel

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment how much money his Department returned to the Department of Finance and Personnel on 31 March 2008. (AQW 1080/09)

The Minister of the Environment: My Department returned £14,947,000 to the Department of Finance and Personnel during the 2007-08 financial year.

Quad Bikes

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what opportunities are available to Councils to institute bye-laws prohibiting the use of quad bikes on Council property, such as beaches. (AQW 1085/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Power to make bye-laws regarding Council property depends on whether the legislation under which the Council holds an interest in or acquires the property includes a power enabling the Council to make bye-laws to regulate the use of that property.

The enabling power for the seashore – which includes beaches – is in section 82 of the Public Health Acts (Amendment) Act 1907. Although most of this Act (including section 82) does not extend to Northern Ireland, a Council may apply to my Department for an Order extending parts or sections of the Act to its district.

It is a matter for each Council to decide whether to apply for such an Order and whether to make provision in bye-laws under section 82 to restrict the use of vehicles on public beaches.

As the foreshore is a reserved matter, additional consent from the Department for Transport is required for bye-laws made under section 82 of the 1907 Act.

Sewerage Infrastructure in Ballynahinch

Mr W Clarke asked the Minister of the Environment what measures have been taken to reduce the risk to the public from poor sewerage infrastructure in Ballynahinch. (AQW 1097/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) regulates discharges from Northern Ireland Water (NIW) Waste Water Treatment Works and sewer systems against standards set by NIEA which incorporate standards set under the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (UWWTD).

NIEA has issued consents under the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 to NIW for the Ballynahinch collection system which consists of 7 sewage pumping stations and 3 combined sewer overflows and the Ballynahinch Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW).

Following a medium severity pollution incident caused by a storm overflow, NIEA issued a formal warning letter to NIW in May 2007. The discharges from the WWTW are however currently compliant.

Sewerage Infrastructure in Ballynahinch

Mr W Clarke asked the Minister of the Environment what recommendations the Northern Ireland Environment Agency have made in relation to poor sewerage infrastructure in Ballynahinch. (AQW 1098/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The Ballynahinch sewer system is listed on the Northern Ireland Drainage Area Plan and will have a Drainage Area Study carried out by Northern Ireland Water. Northern Ireland Environment Agency will be assessing the impact of overflows from the sewerage system to waterways in the Ballynahinch area in 2009 in order to inform the prioritisation of the Drainage Area Study.

Presbyterian Church on the Cliftonville Road

Ms Ní Chuilín asked the Minister of the Environment why the Presbyterian Church on the Cliftonville Road, North Belfast, was not spot-listed or protected. (AQW 1100/09)

The Minister of the Environment: To justify the issue of a Building Preservation Notice (BPN) - i.e. to 'spot list' - a historic building, in advance of detailed research and consultation, must 'appear' to my Department that, as well as being under threat, the building is of 'special architectural or historic interest'. This test is laid out in Article 42A of the Planning (Amendment) Order 2003.

This church was subject to a comprehensive survey and consideration for listing in 1986. At that time it was thought not to meet the legislative test required for protection by listing.

As the 1986 survey was so comprehensive, and as the legislative test has not changed in the interim, there was no justification for the serving of a BPN when demolition commenced last week.

Although I appreciate that the loss of this building, which is a local landmark, will be a disappointment to some in the local community, the legislation is clear in the tasks that it sets. Only buildings of 'special architectural or historic interest' can be protected by listing. If they do not make the special test then they cannot be listed.

Planning Permission

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of the Environment how many times retrospective planning permission was (i) approved; and (ii) refused, during

the period from (a) February 2004 to May 2006; and (b) June 2006 to September 2008. (AQW 1101/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Article 28A of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991, as amended, allows for retrospective planning applications to be made i.e. where development has already been carried out.

The current system of electronic data retrieval – 20/20 – does not record applications in sufficient detail to provide the information requested. To provide accurate figures for the periods in question can only be done by a manual search of all our existing files. This information would not be available in the time specified and would incur disproportionate costs.

Department Website

Mr Ross asked the Minister of the Environment how many page views his Department's website received each month, for the last 12 months. (AQW 1111/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The number of page views per month for the last 12 months is given in the following table. The figures provided include page view details for the DOE website as well as those for the sites of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, the Driver and Vehicle Agency, the Planning Service and Road Safety Northern Ireland

Page Views Trend	
Month	Page Views
October 2007	1,146,056
November 2007	1,086,035
December 2007	1,059,419
January 2008	1,270,768
February 2008	1,079,974
March 2008	795,027
April 2008	936,180
May 2008	1,106,368
June 2008	1,237,178
July 2008	1,034,490
August 2008	1,071,426
September 2008	1,152,960

Irish Hare

Mr Ford asked the Minister of the Environment what plans he has to grant permanent protection

for the Irish hare under the review of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985. (AQW 1129/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Full statutory protection for the Irish Hare will exist from 1 November 2008 to 31 March 2009 through a temporary Special Protection Order which I have recently approved. In addition, the hare receives full protection during the closed season for game species which runs from 1 April to 11 August each year.

I have not yet made a decision on the need for permanent protection for the Irish Hare.

Irish Hare

Mr Ford asked the Minister of the Environment how much has been spent on renewing the temporary protection order for the Irish hare in each of the last 6 years. (AQW 1132/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The estimated costs incurred by my Department on making the Special Protection Orders in each of the last 6 years are set out in the table below. The costs for staff time are general estimates as specific records are not kept.

Year	Cost of surveys	Staff time	Advertising & printing costs
2003	No survey	£1,400	£775*
2004	£30,000	£1,450	£800*
2005	£30,000	£1,500	£825*
2006	£30,000	£1,550	£850
2007	£30,000	£1,600	£885
2008	£30,000	£1,650	£930

* costs for advertising/printing is not readily available for 2003-2005; amounts are based on estimates.

Location of Public Sector Jobs

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) what engagements he had with Professor Bain in relation to the review of the location of public sector jobs; and (ii) any offers he made to relocate jobs in his Department. (AQW 1134/09)

The Minister of the Environment: I did not meet with Professor Bain about his review into relocation of Public Sector jobs. Professor Bain did however meet DOE Departmental officials to discuss the principles underpinning his review. The discussion did not cover the relocation of any specific jobs within the Department.

Marine Bill

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the progress made by the Interdepartmental Steering Group on developing the policy and legislative framework for the Marine Bill. (AQW 1149/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The Interdepartmental Steering Group comprising officials from DOE, DARD, DETI, and DCAL met on 9 April 2008 and agreed its Terms of Reference.

Since then the Group has facilitated the agreement of a composite Northern Ireland response to the draft UK Marine Bill and the publication in Northern Ireland in June 2008 of the Defra-led consultation on High Level Marine Objectives.

The Group will continue to play a key role in the development of policies leading to the introduction of new marine legislation in Northern Ireland.

Marine Bill

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of the Environment what consultation has been carried out with fishing stakeholders on the Marine Bill. (AQW 1150/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Arlene Foster discussed the environmental aspects of the Marine Bill with representatives from the main fishing industry organisations in March 2008. This was followed by a briefing from officials in June 2008. Fishing interests along with other stakeholders also had the opportunity to comment on the UK Government's draft Marine Bill which extends in part to Northern Ireland. There will also be an opportunity for fishing stakeholders to contribute to the development of policies leading to the introduction of new marine legislation in Northern Ireland.

New Local Council Areas

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of the Environment (i) what provision is being made for the renaming of the proposed new local council areas; and (ii) under what circumstances this will be considered. (AQW 1156/09)

The Minister of the Environment: On 17 September 2008, the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner announced his Provisional Recommendations for the boundaries and names of the eleven new local government districts in Northern Ireland and their constituent wards.

There is now an opportunity for interested parties to make representations on the proposed boundaries and names either at public hearings or in writing.

Written representations should be made by 12 November 2008.

By the end of November 2008, a series of public hearings will be held in each of the new local government districts, providing an opportunity for oral representations before Assistant Local Government Boundaries Commissioners.

It is not a requirement for an oral representation to have been preceded by a written representation.

If, upon considering all representations made to him, the Commissioner decides to modify his recommendations regarding the provisional name or boundaries of a district or ward, he must publish details of the revised proposals in at least 2 newspapers circulating in the district, and invite written representations on those proposals by a given date.

The Local Government Boundaries Commissioner will consider all representations before submitting a report on his Final Recommendations to my Department. The Commissioner's report is to be submitted by 30 June 2009.

Following submission of the Commissioner's report, my Department will lay the report before the Assembly with a draft order giving effect, with or without modifications, to the recommendations contained in the report. Where modifications are proposed, my Department will provide a statement of the reasons for the modifications. Approval of the draft order by a resolution of the Assembly is required for the new boundaries and district and ward names to come into effect.

Section 51 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 permits a council to apply to the Department for its names to be changed by order, if they so wish. It will be a matter for the new councils to decide whether they wish to avail of this provision in future years.

Proposed Incineration Facility

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the planning process for the proposed incineration facility at Ballyvannon Rd, Glenavy. (AQW 1157/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The planning application for a proposed biomass fuelled power plant at Ballyvannon Road, Glenavy was received by Planning Service on 4 June 2008. Article 31 of The Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 was applied to the application, on 23 September 2008, designating the proposal a major application.

The application has been advertised and representations continue to be received. The application is still

under consideration with the consultation process underway.

Areas of Special Scientific Interest

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of the Environment (i) if he has approved any new Areas of Special Scientific Interest in the Upper Bann constituency in the last financial year; and (ii) if any are being considered for adoption in the next 2 years. (AQW 1158/09)

The Minister of the Environment: No Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs) were declared in the Upper Bann constituency in the last financial year.

Consideration is being given to declaring two ASSIs in the constituency during the next two years.

Clea Lakes

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment what action his Department is taking to retain (i) birdlife; (ii) fish stock; and (iii) flora and fauna, at the Clea lakes, Shrigley, given the falling water levels. (AQW 1175/09)

The Minister of the Environment: My Department has no legal obligations to maintain water levels at Clea Lakes, Shrigley, and has not taken any direct action to retain the birdlife, fish stocks and flora and fauna. However, the site remains a proposed Site of Local Nature Conservation Interest in the draft Ards and Down Area Plan.

Carbon Usage

Mr McKay asked the Minister of the Environment if records are kept of carbon usage; and what plans the Department has to purchase carbon offsets each time a long distance journey is undertaken. (AQW 1192/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Records are kept of carbon usage in the Department, for example, CO₂ emissions from air and car travel are regularly monitored by the Departmental Board.

The Department is involved in a wide range of projects relating to carbon offsetting. These include:

- The introduction of a Sustainable Travel Plan from April 2008, developed in partnership with DRD Roads Service.
- The restoration of hydroelectric power at Roe Valley Country Park to supply all electricity needs at the Visitor Centre.
- The implementation of energy conservation measures at five Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) sites.

- The procurement of 100% green electricity for eleven NIEA sites, with additional sites under consideration.
- The roll out of an Environmental Management System to increase energy management and sustainable development awareness in the Department.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Treatment Centre

Mr Burns asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the planning application to build a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Treatment Centre on the Ballyclare Road, Templepatrick. (AQW 1208/09)

The Minister of the Environment: On 14 December 2006 Capio UK Health Care (now Cygnet Health Care) submitted an application for full planning permission for the demolition of an existing dwelling and erection of a Use Class C3 Residential Institution for child and adolescent care at 182 Templepatrick Road, Ballyclare, BT39 0RA.

Planning Service officials have met the applicant and his agents on four occasions the most recent being on 22 September 2008. Following that meeting, the applicant submitted a further supporting planning statement on 2 October 2008. This is now being considered by Planning Service.

Planning Service requested additional information from the applicant’s agent in relation to issues raised by Roads Service which has not been submitted to date.

Water Pollution

Mr Burns asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to his answer to AQW 669/09, to detail the total amount of money offenders have been fined for polluting rivers and other waterways in (i) Northern Ireland; and (ii) the South Antrim constituency, in each of the last 5 years. (AQW 1210/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Table 1 below sets out the total fines awarded by the Courts for successful water pollution cases throughout Northern Ireland over the past five years.

TABLE 1

Year	Amount
2003	£90,061.71
2004	£84,956.63
2005	£42,862.68
2006*	£53,600

Year	Amount
2007#	£18,700

*2006 – 6 Cases still pending

#2007 – 35 Cases still pending

Table 2 below sets out the total fines awarded by the Courts for successful water pollution cases for catchments in the South Antrim area over the past five years.

TABLE 2

Year	Amount
2003	£3,000
2004	£2,500
2005	£400
2006*	£1,350
2007#	0

* 1 Case still pending

1 Case still pending

Marine Protected Areas

Mr Boylan asked the Minister of the Environment how his Department will ensure that important habitats and biodiversity are not compromised before the designation of Marine Protected Areas, between the introduction of the UK Marine Act 2009 and the implementation of revised legislation in 2011/12. (AQW 1238/09)

The Minister of the Environment: A number of marine protected areas have already been established in our territorial waters to safeguard important habitats and species of European importance, under the Habitats and Birds Directives. These areas include Strangford Lough, Murlough Bay, Carlingford Lough, Belfast Lough, Larne Lough and the waters around Rathlin Island.

Research is currently being carried out to identify additional sites for possible designation in the next few years to complete our EU obligations; which is the priority for my Department within the marine environment.

Climate Change

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of the Environment what action his Department has taken to implement the motion agreed by the Assembly on 10 December 2007, to extend the provisions of the Climate Change Bill to Northern Ireland. (AQW 1304/09)

The Minister of the Environment: My Department has and continues to progress actions in relation to the UK Climate Change Bill and the provisions which will apply to Northern Ireland.

Climate Change

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of the Environment what his Department's budgetary commitment is to the work of the Climate Change Committee in 2008/09. (AQW 1305/09)

The Minister of the Environment: My Department's budgetary commitment for the work of the Committee on Climate Change for 2008/09 is £105, 683.

Climate Change

Mr Beggs asked the Minister of the Environment what discussions he has held with (i) Departmental officials; and (ii) colleagues in the Executive, on the issue of climate change. (AQW 1332/09)

The Minister of the Environment: I regularly communicate with my officials and Executive colleagues on the issue of climate change.

Home Start

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of the Environment what funding is available from his Department to assist Home Start in providing support to parents with young children. (AQW 1346/09)

The Minister of the Environment: There is no funding available from my Department to assist Home Start in providing support to parents with young children.

Icelandic Banks

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment whether any local government councils hold deposits with Icelandic banks. (AQW 1408/09)

The Minister of the Environment: I can confirm that none of the 26 district councils in Northern Ireland holds deposits with Icelandic banks.

Brent Geese

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment if he has any figures for Brent Geese numbers in Strangford Lough in September 2008. (AQW 1430/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Counts co-ordinated by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust recorded the following numbers of Light-bellied Brent Geese on Strangford Lough through September 2008:-

- 5 September 2008 – 2,000 birds;
- 19 September 2008 – 7,800 birds; and
- 26 September 2008 – 11,690 birds.

As peak numbers of Light-bellied Brent Geese do not arrive at Strangford Lough until October, more recent information for this month is also provided:-

- 3 October 2008 – 26,700 birds; and
- 10 October 2008 – 25,000 birds.

Allotments

Mr Burns asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to his answer to AQW 575/09, if he will make this data on allotments available to all Assembly Members. (AQW 1449/09)

The Minister of the Environment: On receipt of the data about allotments from councils, I will arrange for a copy of the information to be made available in the Assembly Library.

FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

Carbon Usage

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if records are kept of carbon usage; and what plans the Department has to purchase carbon offsets each time a long distance journey is undertaken. (AQW 1103/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel (Mr N Dodds): The Department maintains records of carbon emissions from energy use in buildings within the Government estate in Northern Ireland. The Department also records carbon emissions generated by air travel on official DFP business.

There are currently no plans to purchase carbon offsets each time a long distance journey is undertaken.

OFMdfM has responsibility for leading on sustainable development strategy across the NI Departments and as such favours further evaluation and consideration before any such scheme would be adopted. Off-setting should only be considered after all effective measures to reduce emissions have been exhausted.

Steps to Work Programme

Ms Anderson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the Foyle and North West contracts for the Steps to Work programme; and when a final decision will be made on these contracts. (AQO 788/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The procurement process has not been concluded in these remaining two areas. New bids have been received for the Foyle Area and the evaluation panel will be assessing these shortly. In the North West confirmation has been received in respect of subcontracting arrangements from the new Preferred Bidder.

The indicative date by which it is hoped to reach a conclusion on these two remaining areas is mid November.

HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Central Services Agency

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are currently employed in the Central Services Agency. (AQW 635/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Mr M McGimpsey): The Central Services Agency have advised that, as at September 2008, they directly employed 642 staff.

Ambulances

Mr Craig asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the average (i) age; and (ii) mileage, of ambulances. (AQW 731/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is shown in the table below.

Vehicle type	Average age	Average mileage
A&E ambulances	5.6	133,592
Patient Care Services Vehicles	4.8	101,160

Ambulances

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the year of

manufacture of each ambulance in the Western Health and Social Services Board area. (AQW 745/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is shown in the table below.

Vehicle Type	Date of Registration	Number
A&E ambulance	1998	3
	1999	1
	2000	3
	2001	4
	2002	1
	2003	5
	2004	4
	2006	5
Patient Care Services Vehicle	2000	5
	2001	9
	2003	4
	2006	3
	2008	3
Rapid Response Vehicle	2002	1
	2005	1
	2006	1
	2007	1

Ambulance Service Staff

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many Ambulance Service staff reside in (i) Cookstown; and (ii) Magherafelt District Council areas. (AQW 763/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The table below details the number of Northern Ireland Ambulance Service staff who reside in Cookstown and Magherafelt. The information has been sourced on the basis of postcodes with BT80 representing Cookstown and BT44, BT45 and BT46 together representing Magherafelt. Area of residence does not necessarily correlate with where a person is stationed.

Council Area	Number of NIAS Staff Resident
Cookstown	12
Magherafelt	18

Health Centres

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline his Department's policy on health centres that do not comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and continue to wait for capital investment through Developing Better Services, in order to meet legislative requirements.

(AQW 794/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: All Health and Social Care Trusts are required to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. This applies to all buildings including health centres. Whilst an annual capital allocation is made to each Health and Social Care Trust to address estate related requirements many of the facilities within this sector could benefit from additional infrastructure investment.

As I have indicated in my answer to AQW 795/09 which relates specifically to Ballycastle Health Centre, the Trust is currently assessing what can be done within the current budget to address these issues.

Ballycastle Health Centre

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why the development of a replacement building for Ballycastle Health Centre has been delayed; and whether the centre's inability to offer adequate disability access to patients makes it suitable for development under the Developing Better Services capital investment programme. (AQW 795/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: This project is included in the Primary & Community Care Infrastructure Programme (PCCI), having been identified by the Northern Health and Social Services Board and the Northern HSC Trust as one of a number of such schemes to be implemented as part of the PCCI Programme in the Northern Trust area.

I share the concerns about the lack of provision of facilities for people with disabilities at Ballycastle Health Centre, which is below that which I, and indeed the NHSSB Board, would like to see. I understand that the Northern HSC Trust has undertaken work to improve the facilities at Ballycastle Health Centre and that the Trust has met with both GP practices in the Centre and is reviewing what work could be done to improve the existing facilities.

As I outlined in the Adjournment Debate on 30 September if my Department is unable to proceed with the investment of a new Health and Care Centre in Ballycastle, due to the constraints on capital funding, within a reasonable period, I will examine carefully the existing premises and see what work can be

carried out in order to alleviate pressures on doctors and patients.

Education Welfare Officers

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the differences in salaries between education welfare officers and qualified social workers. (AQW 919/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: There are two very separate pay systems in operation in the HSC and the education sector and clearly both will provide for different rates of pay and terms and conditions of employment. Qualified social workers in the HSC are paid under the Agenda for Change arrangements in line with other health care workers. Pay for education welfare officers employed in the education sector is a matter for the Education Minister.

Dangers of Eating Junk Food

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans he has to increase public awareness of the dangers of eating junk food on a regular basis. (AQW 921/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Tackling obesity in Northern Ireland is a high priority for my Department, and we now have in place a cross Departmental and cross sector Obesity Prevention Steering Group. One of the functions of this group is to drive forward the Fit Futures strategy aimed at tackling childhood obesity, but we are also determined to address obesity across the whole life course. The steering group and its supporting advisory groups will be able to make recommendations concerning public information and education campaigns, and although at this stage no particular issues or target groups have been identified, a 'healthy eating' message is clearly one we will be keen to promote.

Whole-Time Firefighters

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what percentage of the recent intake of whole-time firefighters are from; (i) Catholic community; (ii) Protestant community; (iii) other religions. (AQW 924/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is in the table below:

Intake	Catholic	Protestant	Other
8 September 2008	48%	39%	13%

Whole-Time Firefighters

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline what percentage of interviewees from each of the 3 interview panels, were successful in the recent intake of whole-time firefighters. (AQW 925/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information is given in the table below:

Intake	Panel I	Panel II	Panel III
8 September 2008	13%	33%	54%

Whole-Time Firefighters

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what is the maximum time that successful candidates for positions of whole-time

firefighters can be held on a waiting list, before the list becomes invalid. (AQW 926/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service list of successful candidates would normally expire at the end of 12 months from date of last interview. However, all of the successful candidates in the recent whole-time recruitment exercise will be offered appointments to vacancies as they arise and subject to available funding, even if this takes longer than 12 months.

Attacks on Fire and Rescue Service Crews

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of (i) attacks on Fire and Rescue Service crews; and (ii) officers injured in these attacks, in each of the last 12 months, broken down by parliamentary constituency. (AQW 928/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The attached tables detail the information requested for the period 1 September 2007 to 31 August 2008.

TABLE 1 - ALL ATTACKS ON FIREFIGHTERS FOR THE PERIOD 1 SEPTEMBER 2007 TO 31 AUGUST 2008

Parliamentary Constituency	Sep07	Oct 07	Nov 07	Dec 07	Jan 08	Feb 08	Mar 08	Apr 08	May 08	Jun 08	Jul 08	Aug 08	Total
Belfast East	1	3	1		4	4	4	1	8	4	3		33
Belfast North	1	2	4	2	1		2	2	5	4	5	2	30
Belfast South	6	4	2	4	1	7	5	6	5	4	5	1	50
Belfast West	3	4	2	4	1	1	2		2			3	22
East Antrim		1								1			2
East Londonderry	1	1									5	1	8
Ferm / South Tyrone			2				1				1	1	5
Foyle		4	1		1	4	2	4	1	6	9	6	38
Lagan Valley		1											1
Mid Ulster		1									1		2
Newry and Armagh		6		1	1		1		1	1		1	12
North Antrim								4		1			5
North Down		2							3	1	1		7
South Antrim	3	3					1		2		3		12
South Down	1	9				2		1			1		14

Parliamentary Constituency	Sep 07	Oct 07	Nov 07	Dec 07	Jan 08	Feb 08	Mar 08	Apr 08	May 08	Jun 08	Jul 08	Aug 08	Total
Strangford	1				2								3
Upper Bann	2	3				1					1	1	8
West Tyrone													
Total	19	44	12	11	11	19	18	18	27	22	35	16	252

TABLE 2 - NUMBER OF FIREFIGHTERS INJURED FROM TABLE 1 INCIDENTS.

Parliamentary Const	Feb 08	Aug 08
Belfast East		1
Belfast South		2
Newry and Armagh		1
Total	1	3

Calls Received by the Fire and Rescue Service

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of (i) emergency calls; and (ii) hoax calls, received by the Fire and Rescue Service in the last year, broken down by parliamentary constituency. (AQW 929/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The attached table details the information requested for the period 1 September 2007 to 31 August 2008. The emergency calls figure is inclusive of hoax calls.

Parliamentary Constituency	Emergency Calls	Hoax Calls
Belfast East	2501	114
Belfast North	3263	144
Belfast South	5611	219
Belfast West	3217	149
East Antrim	1962	32
East Londonderry	2432	90
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	2484	77
Foyle	3724	160
Lagan Valley	1806	29
Mid Ulster	1123	43
Newry & Armagh	2868	148
North Antrim	2272	81

Parliamentary Constituency	Emergency Calls	Hoax Calls
North Down	1960	79
South Antrim	4003	120
South Down	4250	125
Strangford	1873	43
Upper Bann	2663	84
West Tyrone	1772	85
Unknown	3409	2400

Muckamore Hospital

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patients are currently living at Muckamore Hospital. (AQW 932/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The total number of patients currently living at Muckamore Hospital at 30 September 2008 is 270.

Accident and Emergency Departments

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patients were seen at the Accident and Emergency departments in (i) Altnagelvin Hospital; (ii) Enniskillen Hospital; and (iii) the Urgent Care and Treatment Centre at Tyrone County Hospital, in each of the first nine months of 2008. (AQW 987/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information on the number of attendances at the Accident and Emergency departments in (i) Altnagelvin Hospital; (ii) Enniskillen Hospital; and (iii) the Urgent Care and Treatment Centre at Tyrone County Hospital, in the first six months of 2008 (the quarter ending June 2008 is the latest quarter for which information is available), is outlined below.

Hospital	Attendances at A&E from January 2008 to June 2008
Altnagelvin	26,008

Hospital	Attendances at A&E from January 2008 to June 2008
Erne	11,656
Tyrone County	11,761

Source: Departmental Return KH09 (Part 2)

Cardiologists and Gastroenterologists Consultants

Mr Gallagher asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to provide the number of (i) consultant cardiologists; and (ii) gastroenterologists, based at (a) Altnagelvin Hospital; (b) Enniskillen Hospital; and (c) Omagh Hospital, for each of the years 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/8. (AQW 989/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is given in the tables below.

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF CONSULTANT CARDIOLOGISTS EMPLOYED IN (A) ALTNAGELVIN HOSPITAL; (B) ERNE HOSPITAL, ENNISKILLEN; AND (C) TYRONE COUNTY HOSPITAL, OMAGH IN 2005/06, 2006/07 AND 2007/08.

Year	Altnagelvin Hospital		Erne Hospital		Tyrone County Hospital	
	Headcount	WTE	Headcount	WTE	Headcount	WTE
2005/06	3	3.0	1	1.0	*	*
2006/07	4	3.5	1	1.0	*	*
2007/08	4	4.0	1	1.0	*	*

Source: Western Health and Social Care Trust

Notes:

1. Tyrone County Hospital have 2 physicians who hold a Cardiology Clinic each week
2. WTE = Whole-Time Equivalent.

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF GASTROENTEROLOGISTS EMPLOYED IN (A) ALTNAGELVIN HOSPITAL; (B) ERNE HOSPITAL, ENNISKILLEN; AND (C) TYRONE COUNTY HOSPITAL, OMAGH IN 2005/06, 2006/07 AND 2007/08.

Year	Altnagelvin Hospital		Erne Hospital		Tyrone County Hospital	
	Headcount	WTE	Headcount	WTE	Headcount	WTE
2005/06	3	3.0	1	1.0	0	0.0
2006/07	3	3.0	1	1.0	0	0.0
2007/08	3	3.0	1	1.0	0	0.0

Source: Western Health and Social Care Trust

Note: WTE = Whole-Time Equivalent.

Fire Engine Fleet

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to provide the size of the fire engine fleet for the last 5 years. (AQW 1001/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The table below details the information requested.

Fire Engine Fleet	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Front line pumps	111	111	111	112	112
Specials	36	41	36	37	39
Other pumps	23	25	25	25	25

Fire Engine Fleet	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Totals	170	177	172	174	176

Ambulance Fleet

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to provide the size of the ambulance fleet for the last 5 years. (AQW 1002/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is shown in the table.

Year	A&E ambulances
2004	137
2005	140
2006	140
2007	132
2008	132

Foyleville Nursing Home

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in respect of the Foyleville nursing home, (i) the total number of permanent and respite beds; (ii) the occupancy levels of permanent and respite beds; and (iii) if there is a waiting list for older people to obtain a permanent or respite bed.

(AQW 1012/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Western Health and Social Care Trust has advised that Foyleville Residential Home has 22 permanent and 3 respite beds. There are currently 10 permanent and 2 respite beds occupied. There is no waiting list for obtaining beds, however, there may be occasions when the home cannot operate at full capacity dependent on staffing levels.

People with Epilepsy

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) for a breakdown of (a) adults; and (b) children, with epilepsy in each parliamentary constituency; and (ii) what services are available to these individuals in each Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 1014/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Statistical information on the number of adults and children with epilepsy in each constituency is not available.

People suffering from epilepsy have access to care and treatment from an appropriate part of the Health and Social Care sector depending on their individual needs, ranging from local primary and community care and neurology services to specialist regional neurology services delivered by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

In January 2008, my Department issued a circular to the HSC endorsing a National Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) clinical guideline on the diagnosis, investigation and management of epilepsy in children and adults. NICE clinical guidelines are endorsed as developmental standards and the Department expects

HSC organisations to review local practice against the guideline and take its recommendations into account in their future planning and delivery of services to patients presenting with a suspected seizure and those diagnosed with epilepsy.

CT Scanner at Tyrone County Hospital

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of people per year, who have been examined using the CT scanner at the Tyrone County Hospital, since its installation.

(AQW 1031/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information on the number of patients who have been examined using the CT scanner at Tyrone County Hospital each year, since its installation in July 2004, is provided in the table below.

Year	Number of patients scanned
20041	1,272
2005	2,108
2006	2,295
2007	2,826
20082	2,446
Total	10,947

1 Figures for 2004 include all patients scanned from July 2004 when the scanner was installed.

2 Figures for 2008 include all patients up to and including 30 September 2008.

CT Scanner at Tyrone County Hospital

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the actions taken by the Western Health and Social Care Trust to (i) raise the profile of the CT scanner; and (ii) maximise the use of the CT scanner, at the Tyrone County Hospital, Omagh.

(AQW 1032/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The safe and efficient use of complex clinical equipment such as a CT scanner is a matter for the Trust involved taking into account the needs of patients, clinical judgement and the target I have set for diagnostic tests, which is that from April 2008 no patient should wait longer than 13 weeks for a diagnostic test, reducing to 9 weeks by March 2009.

I have been advised by the Western Health and Social Care Trust that utilisation of the service and capacity available on all scanning facilities in the Trust area is kept under constant review to ensure

equitable access to scanning, whilst balancing the service needs and needs of the local communities served.

Consultant Numbers

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many consultants have

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF CONSULTANTS EMPLOYED IN NORTHERN IRELAND HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE BY TRUST AREA AS AT 31 MARCH 2004 - 2008.

Trust	March 2004		March 2005		March 2006		March 2007		March 2008	
	HC	WTE	HC	WTE	HC	WTE	HC	WTE	HC	WTE
Belfast	458	424.2	481	446.2	507	481.7	544	514.6	552	521.4
Northern	126	123.7	140	125.6	158	151.5	175	168.9	181	165.7
South Eastern	150	144.8	154	148.5	168	162.9	170	163.5	167	160.6
Southern	127	123.2	134	129.2	140	136.8	151	146.7	164	157.8
Western	154	150.0	150	144.4	161	157.1	171	166.6	187	183.2
Board HQs & Other Organisations	47	31.0	52	34.9	52	38.3	55	38.9	55	39.1
Total	1,062	996.9	1,111	1,028.8	1,186	1,128.3	1,266	1,199.2	1,306	1,227.9

Source: Human Resources Management System

Notes:

1. HC = Headcount.
2. WTE = Whole-Time Equivalent.
3. Trusts were formally merged into the current 5 HSC Trust structure on 1st April 2007 - data prior to this are presented based on the new organisational structures for consistency purposes.

People With Hearing Difficulties

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he is taking to reduce waiting lists for (i) appointments with specialists; (ii) hearing aid fittings; and (iii) operations, in relation to people with hearing difficulties. (AQW 1042/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My Department is taking forward a comprehensive programme of reform and investment to transform waiting times for all patients, including those with hearing difficulties. In April 2006, nearly 15,000 patients were waiting more than 13 weeks to see an Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) specialist; today no ENT patient is waiting longer than 13 weeks and I have set a target to reduce the maximum outpatient waiting time for all patients to nine weeks by March 2009. Waiting times for ENT operations have also been transformed: the number of patients waiting more than 21 weeks for ENT surgery has fallen from 1,100 in April 2006 to zero today, and I have set a target to reduce the maximum waiting for surgery for all patients to 13 weeks by March 2009. My Department has established a Service Delivery Unit to work with

been employed in each of the Health and Social Care Trust areas, in each of the last 5 years. (AQW 1036/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information on the number of Consultants employed in Northern Ireland Health and Social Care by Trust area in each of the last five years is given in the table below.

Trusts and Commissioners to ensure that appropriate progress continues to be made towards the new targets.

Steps have also been taken to ensure more timely access to hearing aids through the provision of additional hearing aid fitting, rehabilitation and repair clinics.

Hospital Car Parking

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) those hospitals whose car parking service is provided by outside operators; (ii) the names of the operators; and (iii) the conditions attached to each car parking operation. (AQW 1046/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:

- (i) The Royal Group of Hospitals is the only HSC Hospital where a car parking service is provided by an outside operator
- (ii) The operator is *Car Park Services*
- (iii) It is operated under conditions in PFI contract which runs to 2017

Hospital Car Parking

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the money generated by car parking fees at each hospital, over the past 3 years. (AQW 1047/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Royal Group of Hospitals Car Park is a PFI scheme and therefore no income is generated by the Trust through the operation of the car park by the PFI provider. Altnagelvin Hospital, Ulster Hospital, Belfast City Hospital and the Mater Hospital are the only other hospitals which have charged for car parking over the past three years and the income generated over this period is as follows:

Hospital	2005/2006 £	2006/2007 £	2007/2008 £
Altnagelvin Hospital	Nil	84,000	146,000
Ulster Hospital	497,000	538,000	840,000
Belfast City Hospital	627,000	726,000	891,000
Mater Hospital	116,000	108,000	86,000

People Diagnosed with Lymphoedema

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are diagnosed with lymphoedema. (AQW 1062/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: This information is not available.

Defibrillators

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what measures he is taking to ensure that defibrillators are placed in all public buildings. (AQW 1063/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has no statutory responsibility to ensure that defibrillators are placed in all public buildings.

The responsibility for deciding whether to provide a defibrillator and train staff in its use lies with an individual organisation. A decision should be made after conducting a well-documented risk assessment at the site in question. A number of factors need to be taken into account including the number of people using a facility and the risk of cardiac arrest occurring at the site. If a decision is made to provide defibrillators for use by trained lay staff, responsibility again lies with

the individual organisation to ensure adequate initial training and on-going refresher training on their use.

Capitation Formula

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what impact the change in the capitation formula will have on the community. (AQW 1064/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Regional Capitation Formula assesses the health and social care needs of the NI population.

An analysis of the impact of the proposed new formula shows that more resources will be targeted at deprived areas than previously due to the update of the additional needs weightings. It will also skew more money, than the current formula, towards areas with high elderly populations, irrespective of their deprivation level, due to the update of the age/gender weights. Overall, it is felt that the revised formula will provide for a fairer distribution of resources than the current version in line with the principle of equal resource for equal need.

Department Website

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many page views his Department's website received each month, for the last 12 months. (AQW 1077/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The table below shows the number of page views on the DHSSPS website (www.dhsspsni.gov.uk) in each of the last 12 months.

Month	Total Number of Page Views
September 2008	222,003
August 2008	164,380
July 2008	166,924
June 2008	189,581
May 2008	149,397
April 2008	162,611
March 2008	164,156
February 2008	179,541
January 2008	219,528
December 2007	119,681
November 2007	183,595
October 2007	200,153

Ambulances

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the (i) number; and (ii) type, of ambulances in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 1126/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) has 69 ambulances based in its Northern Division which has the same boundaries as the Northern Health and Social Care Trust. The details requested are shown in the table below.

Vehicle type	No.
A & E Ambulance	36
Rapid Response Vehicle	5
Patient Care Services Vehicle	28

Ambulances

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much money his Department has invested in ambulance provision in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust area, in each of the last 5 years. (AQW 1127/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service provides a regional service which is funded on a capitation basis by the four Health and Social Services Boards. The funding provided by the Northern Health and Social Services Board is shown in the table below.

Year	Funding (£million)
2004/05	7.42
2005/06	8.085
2006/07	10.76
2007/08	10.994
2008/09*	12.026

* projected

Location of Public Sector Jobs

Ms Anderson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) what engagements he had with Professor Bain in relation to the review of the location of public sector jobs; and (ii) any offers he made to relocate jobs in his Department. (AQW 1145/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:

- (i) None
- (ii) None

Carbon Usage

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if records are kept of carbon usage; and what plans the Department has to purchase carbon offsets each time a long distance journey is undertaken. (AQW 1153/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety does not keep records of carbon usage. The Department does not have plans to purchase carbon offsets each time a long distance journey is undertaken.

The matter of carbon usage is considered within the Northern Ireland Civil Service Sustainable Development Programme, which is led by the Department of Finance and Personnel. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety will follow any plans and guidance that may be issued by the Department of Finance and Personnel in the future.

Executive Meetings

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what health issues are being delayed as a result of the failure to hold Executive meetings. (AQW 1161/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Three papers from my Department are awaiting Executive consideration:

- (i) Sexual Health Promotion Strategy and Action Plan;
- (ii) "Families Matter" – Supporting Families in Northern Ireland; and
- (iii) The Executive response to the Report of Assembly Health, Social Services and Public Safety Committee's Inquiry on Suicide and Self Harm.

Prescription Charges

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why his statement on prescription charges was not made in the Assembly Chamber. (AQW 1166/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: It would have been my wish to bring this decision first to the Executive and then to the Assembly, and it is a matter of great regret to me that so far I have not been able to do this. In the absence of a meeting of the Executive, and given that every other part of the United Kingdom had committed to abolishing charges at least for cancer patients, I felt that the Regional Cancer Unit at Belfast City Hospital was the most appropriate venue for making the historic announcement on the phased abolition of prescription charges in Northern Ireland, to emphasise that my decision will make access to medication easier for all, including patients with cancer. Since I have become Health Minister I have been lobbied consistently by cancer patients and their representative organisations to abolish prescription charges. I am glad that my decision has been so warmly welcomed by these and other groups representative of people living with a very wide range of chronic conditions.

I should repeat, however, that my decision remains subject to discussion at the Executive, where I fully expect strong support from Ministerial colleagues.

Antrim Hospital

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patients

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:

(1) ADDRESSES OF SURGERIES LOCATED IN THE EAST LONDONDERRY CONSTITUENCY IN WHICH THE 42 HEALTH SERVICE DENTISTS CURRENTLY PRACTISE.

Address 1	Address 2	Postcode	Constituency
11 Irish Green Street	Garvagh, Limavady	BT49 9AA	East Londonderry
110 Main Street	Coleraine	BT51 5AD	East Londonderry
14 Railway Road	Coleraine	BT52 1PD	East Londonderry
19 Central Avenue	Portstewart	BT55 7BP	East Londonderry
3 Lodge Road	Coleraine	BT52 1LU	East Londonderry
38 Catherine Street	Limavady	BT49 9DB	East Londonderry
39 New Row	Coleraine	BT52 1AE	East Londonderry
58 Railway Road	Coleraine	BT52 1PF	East Londonderry
6 Lodge Road	Coleraine	BT52 1NB	East Londonderry
62 Catherine Street	Limavady	BT49 9DB	East Londonderry
6a Lever Road	Portstewart	BT55 7EF	East Londonderry
7 Waterside	Coleraine	BT51 3DP	East Londonderry
78 Main Street	Dungiven	BT47 4LG	East Londonderry
95 Eglinton Street	Portrush	BT56 8DZ	East Londonderry
Bovally Dental Practice	Bovally, Limavady	BT49 0TA	East Londonderry

admitted to Antrim Hospital in each of the last 3 years have a home address in Larne. (AQW 1170/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The number of *admissions to Antrim Hospital who gave a home address in Larne in each of the last three years for which information is available are as follows.

Year	Number of admissions	% of total admissions to Antrim Hospital
2004/2005	3,542	7.5%
2005/2006	3,350	6.8%
2006/2007	3,467	6.8%

* Admissions are approximated using total deaths and discharges. These figures do not equate to individuals, as a person may be admitted to hospital more than once in a year or across a number of years.

Health Service Dentists

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to the answer to AQW 390/09, to provide the addresses of the 42 Health Service dentists in East Derry/Londonderry and 46 Health Service dentists in Foyle constituency. (AQW 1174/09)

Address 1	Address 2	Postcode	Constituency
Causeway Ortho / Centre	12 Sandel Village, Coleraine	BT52 1WW	East Londonderry
Kilrea Dental Surgery	33 Maghera Street, Kilrea	BT51 5QL	East Londonderry

Source: Central Services Agency

(II) ADDRESSES OF SURGERIES LOCATED IN THE FOYLE CONSTITUENCY IN WHICH THE 46 HEALTH SERVICE DENTISTS CURRENTLY PRACTISE.

Address1	Address2	Postcode	Constituency
1 Queen Street	Londonderry	BT48 7EF	Foyle
1 St Patrick's Terrace	Buncrana Road, Londonderry	BT48 7QR	Foyle
1 Sydney Terrace	Gt James Street, Londonderry	BT48 7DQ	Foyle
13 Clarendon Street	Derry	BT48 7EP	Foyle
17 Glendermott Road	Londonderry	BT47 1BB	Foyle
23 Cherry Drive	Eglinton	BT47 3US	Foyle
25 Clarendon Street	Derry	BT48 7EP	Foyle
30 Clooney Terrace	Londonderry	BT47 6AR	Foyle
46 Clarendon Street	Londonderry	BT48 7ET	Foyle
47 Clarendon Street	Londonderry	BT48 7ER	Foyle
4a Woodburn Park	Londonderry	BT47 1PS	Foyle
59 Abercorn Road	Londonderry	BT48 6TQ	Foyle
7 Ebrington Terrace	Londonderry	BT47 6JS	Foyle
8 Clarendon Street	Londonderry	BT48 7ET	Foyle
86 Spencer Road	Londonderry	BT47 1AG	Foyle
87 Strand Road	Londonderry	BT48 7NN	Foyle
Bishop St Dental Care	Bishop Street, Londonderry	BT48 6PR	Foyle
Unit 8 Spencer House	Spencer Road, Londonderry	BT47 1AA	Foyle

Source: Central Services Agency

Note: Individual dentists may work in more than one surgery within a constituency, and may also work in surgeries located in other constituencies.

Minor Ailments Service

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans he has to review the changes that have resulted in local pharmacies cutting back on the Minor Ailments Service.

(AQW 1185/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: A key component of the enhanced Minor Ailments Service rolled out on 1 August 2008 was that a review of the service, including the remuneration model, was to be carried out following a 6 month period of operation,.

I met recently with representatives of the Pharmaceutical Contractors Committee and gave them my personal assurance this would be carried out. This is a sensible approach and allows for any evaluation to

be made on the basis of information gathered over the 6 month period.

I would encourage contractors to provide this worthwhile service and bring any concerns they have following operation of the service to the review process.

Minor Ailments Service

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many Minor Ailment Service consultations have been carried out by pharmacies in each year since 2005. (AQW 1186/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Across Northern Ireland 24,000 consultations were delivered in the last five months of 05/06, 116,000 in the year 06/07 and 182,000 in 07/08.

Paediatric Tonsillectomies

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if provision is made for paediatric tonsillectomies in the proposed new enhanced hospital in Omagh. (AQW 1234/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The proposed Omagh Local Enhanced hospital will not support inpatient surgical services, for children. Paediatric ENT inpatient services will be provided at Altnagelvin hospital. The proposed Omagh Local Enhanced hospital will however provide ENT outpatient services and day procedures for children.

The new Proposed Omagh Local Enhanced hospital will provide 70 to 80% of the hospital services required by the local population and will play a key role in supporting the acute hospitals in the Western Trust.

Thrombolysis Drug

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety on how many occasions the thrombolysis drug has been used to treat coronary patients before their transfer to an acute hospital, in the last 12 months, by (i) month; and (ii) Health and Social Care Trust area. (AQW 1239/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The number of occasions on which the thrombolysis drug has been used to treat coronary patients before their transfer to an acute hospital, is not available.

Removal of Paediatric ENT from Tyrone County Hospital

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what level of consultation took place with medical staff, patients, and elected representatives, prior to the removal of paediatric ENT, from the Tyrone County Hospital, Omagh. (AQW 1249/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The decision to cease paediatric tonsillectomies at the Tyrone County Hospital was made in the interests of patient safety and emanated from recommendations arising from the Risk and Governance service reviews carried out in the former Sperrin Lakeland Trust.

I understand that the outcome of the Risk and Governance service reviews was shared with the staff and the public.

Waiting Time for Cataract Removal

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the waiting time for cataract removal from initial referral to surgery. (AQW 1294/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information on the waiting time for cataract removal from initial referral for a first outpatient assessment to surgery is not collected centrally by the Department.

The Department does collect information on the waiting time for cataract surgery at Health and Social Care hospitals in Northern Ireland, from the date on which a decision to admit a patient for cataract surgery is taken, to the date on which the patient is admitted to hospital for that procedure.

The inpatient waiting time position, for cataract surgery, at 30th June 2008, is outlined in the table below.

	Time Waiting in Weeks			
	0 - 6	> 6 - 13	> 13 - 21	> 21
No. of people waiting for admission to hospital in NI for cataract surgery	1075	1194	416	0

Source: DHSSPS Inpatient Waiting Times Dataset.

Organ Donation

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail his plans in relation to an opt-out system for organ donation. (AQW 1297/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Organ Donation Taskforce is looking at the issue of presumed consent for organ donation on a UK wide basis and Northern Ireland is represented. The Taskforce is considering what measures might be required to introduce a system of presumed consent and whether this would result in an increase in the number of organ donors. As part of this process, the Taskforce is also considering public attitudes to presumed consent and in July 2008, held a public event in Belfast at which this issue was addressed.

The Taskforce report is expected to be published shortly.

Firework Related Injuries

Mr Burns asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many firework related

injuries there were over the Halloween period in each of the last 5 years; and to outline his strategy for alerting the public to the dangers of fireworks.

(AQW 1450/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information on the number of patients reporting to A&E Departments and Minor Injuries Units with injuries from fireworks, since 2003, over a selected 4-5 week period covering the end of October and start of November (Halloween period) is detailed in the table below.

Year	Number of Firework Injuries
2003	45
2004	55
2005	86
2006	69
2007	97

My Department sponsors the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, which works in partnership with a range of agencies to promote and deliver Community Safety messages in relation to fireworks. New educational material has been produced, supported by C2K, Police Service NI (PSNI), Education Boards, Local Council Environmental Health Officers, the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service, my Department and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), which has a dedicated website covering fireworks safety and the related legislation.

Jointly an annual television and radio campaign is funded along with outdoor material. This year's Firework Safety Campaign was launched on 7 October at Whitla St fire station in Belfast with children from two local schools in attendance. The campaign is a combined effort involving the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service and a number of other agencies, including RoSPA and also the PSNI who are responsible for enforcing the legislation that requires licences for the sale and use of fireworks.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Cookstown Bypass

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on plans for the Cookstown bypass. (AQW 1009/09)

The Minister for Regional Development (Mr C Murphy): My Department's Roads Service has advised that the Consultants engaged to take forward

the Cookstown Bypass are currently working on the identification of a Preferred Route Corridor.

This work is at an advanced stage, and it is anticipated that the Preferred Route Corridor will be on display at a Public Consultation Day later this financial year. This will provide an opportunity for the public to provide comment and express their views to Roads Service and its consultants.

A detailed assessment of a Preferred Route Alignment within the Preferred Route Corridor will then commence. The announcement of the Preferred Route is currently scheduled for later in 2009.

Road Safety

Mr Shannon asked the Minister for Regional Development to give the number of applications for safety measures for primary schools to provide flashing warning lights, in each of the last 3 years.

(AQW 1021/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that there is no specific application process for safety measures at primary schools to provide 4. However, the table below shows the expressions of interest for flashing warning lights at primary schools, in each of the last 3 years:

Year	Expressions of Interest
2005/06	56
2006/07	48
2007/08	37

Road Safety

Mr Shannon asked the Minister for Regional Development how much funding was available for safety measures for primary schools to provide flashing warning lights in each of the last 3 years.

(AQW 1022/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: Roads Service erect flashing lights as part of its School Travel and Safety Project, and budgets for these projects are set and monitored under the general Traffic Calming programme.

Expenditure for flashing lights is not recorded separately from other traffic calming measures. The table below shows the expenditure on Traffic Calming, in each of the last 3 years:

Year	Funding £m
2005/06	£3.12
2006/07	£2.55
2007/08	£3.06

Road Safety

Mr Shannon asked the Minister for Regional Development how long Greyabbey Primary School has been on the waiting list for flashing warning lights to improve road safety. (AQW 1023/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: As you are probably aware, schools are assessed by Roads Service using specified criteria and are awarded a points score, which allows a priority listing to be drawn up for each Council area.

Greyabbey Primary School was assessed in May 2007. Pending the availability of resources, and subject to no other priorities being identified, it will be included on the 2009/10 Newtownards programme for safety measures at schools.

Safety Schemes

Mr Shannon asked the Minister for Regional Development how many (i) safety schemes have been completed for primary schools in each of the last 3 years; and (ii) have flashing warning lights included in the schemes. (AQW 1078/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: Details of the number of safety schemes for primary schools and those which include flashing warning lights, completed by my Department's Roads Service in each of the last three financial years is provided in the table below.

Year	Total Number of Safety Schemes at Primary Schools	Number of Safety Schemes incorporating Flashing lights
2005/06	35	34
2006/07	34	34
2007/08	40	39

Roads Service Division	Northern	Southern	Eastern	Western	Total
Number of Street Lights	60,655	63,438	95,769	39,208	259,070
Street Lighting Maintenance Budget for 2008/2009	£1,318,000	£1,346,000	£2,083,000	£814,000	£5,561,000

Road Safety

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the schools in the Lagan Valley Constituency that have taken part in the Roads Service Safer Roads school initiatives, in the last academic year. (AQW 1131/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: In the 2007/08 academic year, one school in the Lagan Valley Constituency, Assumption Grammar School, has taken part in the Travelwise Safer Routes to School Programme.

This current academic year, 2008/09, three schools in the Lagan Valley Constituency, Maghaberry Primary School, St Patrick's High School (Lisburn), and St Aloysius Primary School (Lisburn), are taking part.

Carbon Usage

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development if records are kept of carbon usage; and what plans the Department has to purchase carbon offsets each time a long distance journey is undertaken. (AQW 1151/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department does not keep records of carbon usage and has no plans to purchase carbon offsets each time a long distance journey is undertaken.

However, Translink maintains records of carbon usage for public transport services and Northern Ireland Water estimates the carbon equivalent emissions from the power used to provide drinkable water, to treat wastewater and from its offices and sites.

Street Lights

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) how many street lights there are; and (ii) how much is spent annually on maintenance, broken down by parliamentary constituency. (AQW 1167/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service does not hold the information you requested by Parliamentary Constituency. The table below details the number of street lights, at September 2008, within each Roads Service Division and the budget allocated towards their maintenance in 2008/2009.

Parking Fines

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development how many parking fines were issued in each of the last 12 months, broken down by council area.
(AQW 1168/09)

The Minister for Regional Development:Details of the number of Penalty Charge Notices issued in each of the last twelve months, by District Council area, are set out in the tables below.

Financial Year 2007/08						
	Oct 2007	Nov 2007	Dec 2007	Jan 2008	Feb 2008	Mar 2008
Antrim	140	147	127	135	122	109
Ards	423	451	336	341	313	304
Armagh	484	532	403	347	321	204
Ballymena	447	423	540	356	327	316
Ballymoney	184	143	115	97	133	158
Banbridge	123	158	116	87	134	128
Belfast (inc Castlereagh)	4464	4274	3329	3404	4702	4500
Carrickfergus	247	222	213	195	170	140
Coleraine	576	431	456	368	470	556
Cookstown	219	252	212	218	187	178
Craigavon	627	370	424	352	334	344
Derry	2250	1747	1609	1207	1145	1018
Down	592	527	491	366	298	327
Dungannon	312	366	299	237	237	130
Fermanagh	1075	936	892	724	476	586
Larne	75	68	64	41	59	59
Limavady	237	163	115	140	126	107
Lisburn	486	470	665	429	463	553
Magherafelt	356	325	223	341	308	337
Moyle	26	26	9	15	12	12
Newry&Mourne	469	482	295	327	411	363
Newtownabbey	152	184	92	101	124	103
North Down	383	401	334	320	391	376
Omagh	459	576	444	433	408	422
Strabane	337	251	218	249	250	205
Total	15143	13925	12021	10830	11921	11535

Financial Year 2008/09						
	Apr 08	May 08	Jun 08	Jul 08	Aug 08	Sep 08
Antrim	87	129	127	106	91	106
Ards	250	366	245	251	263	237
Armagh	270	230	246	260	227	254
Ballymena	345	365	386	378	392	293
Ballymoney	118	120	162	107	98	122

Financial Year 2008/09						
	Apr 08	May 08	Jun 08	Jul 08	Aug 08	Sep 08
Banbridge	129	123	149	166	120	126
Belfast (inc Castlereagh)	4463	4283	3556	3356	3310	3896
Carrickfergus	109	111	164	99	228	188
Coleraine	480	464	498	717	638	536
Cookstown	237	244	183	141	175	188
Craigavon	471	475	365	381	395	324
Derry	1070	1079	1023	852	765	1007
Down	478	498	323	312	381	361
Dungannon	270	305	239	325	360	314
Fermanagh	658	774	744	623	692	663
Larne	101	56	59	64	39	22
Limavady	123	115	146	122	120	94
Lisburn	552	540	506	596	809	783
Magherafelt	378	317	249	277	287	234
Moyle	12	12	32	38	132	17
Newry&Mourne	387	380	391	321	375	650
Newtownabbey	128	119	117	75	96	115
North Down	317	416	466	404	465	541
Omagh	380	503	503	364	367	441
Strabane	217	269	204	169	200	172
Total	12030	12293	11083	10504	11025	11684

Dungiven By-Pass

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on plans for the Dungiven by-pass. (AQW 1217/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: The Member may recall from the Regional Development Committee meeting on 17 September 2008 that the Dungiven Bypass, subject to the availability of funds and satisfactory progression through the statutory processes, will be completed as part of the A6 Derry to Dungiven scheme, planned to commence in the 2012/13 financial year.

The Bypass will be prioritised for commencement at the start of this scheme. However, at this time it is not possible to be more prescriptive on the timescale for the construction, as the preferred route for the scheme has not been selected. I can also advise that it is anticipated that the Bypass section of the scheme will take about eighteen months to complete.

Private Office Staff

Mr Burns asked the Minister for Regional Development how many staff are employed in his Departmental private office; and the annual cost of employing these staff. (AQW 1339/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: A total of 8 staff are currently employed within my Private Office.

The costs of employing staff within this Office are as follows:

Period	Cost (£)
2007/08	162,542
1 April - 30 September 2008	89,948

Eastward Extension of Prince Andrew Way, Carrickfergus

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the reasons for the delay

in the adoption of the eastward extension of Prince Andrew Way, Carrickfergus, beyond Broadlands; and for a timescale for the opening of this section of road.
(AQW 1359/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service will issue a Preliminary Certificate of Completion to the developer upon request, when development roads are properly completed and are operating satisfactorily. At the end of a subsequent one year maintenance period, the developer can request adoption and, subject to a satisfactory performance during the maintenance period, Roads Service will formally complete the road adoption. From that point, responsibility for maintenance operations transfers to Roads Service.

The Spine Road, the eastward extension of Prince Andrew Way, has been constructed by the developer, but traffic is prevented from using it by barriers erected by the same developer, Antrim Construction. I understand that Antrim Construction has made an application to Roads Service for a Preliminary Certificate. Unfortunately, it is not possible to issue this certificate and begin the one year maintenance period until the road is operational and its performance, under normal traffic conditions, can be assessed. In addition, the road is not yet completed satisfactorily, as the necessary road markings have not been provided.

Roads Service has recently written to Antrim Construction to encourage early completion of the Spine Road, in the hope that the matter can be satisfactorily resolved and the road opened to traffic, without the need for enforcement action by Roads Service. If there has been no positive response received by the end of October 2008, Roads Service intends to begin enforcement proceedings to complete the works and adopt the road.

Glenhordial Storage Tanks

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister for Regional Development what proposals he has to upgrade access to the Glenhordial storage tanks in Omagh.
(AQW 1381/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that it does not own the access road to the storage tanks at Glenhordial, but has a right of way to the service reservoir for inspection and maintenance purposes.

Northern Ireland Water has therefore no proposals to upgrade the access road, but would be willing to consider an arrangement whereby the cost of upgrading work and maintenance is shared by all users of the road.

Waste Water Network

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister for Regional Development what steps are being taken to address the deficiencies in Omagh town's waste water network.
(AQW 1382/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that a Drainage Area Study is currently underway which will assess the adequacy of the sewerage system in Omagh and identify parts of the system that need to be upgraded. The Study is scheduled for completion in mid 2009. Any sewer improvement recommendations resulting from the Study will be prioritised by Northern Ireland Water and included in its capital works programme. However, due to competing priorities, it is unlikely that any improvements could commence before 2011.

In addition, Northern Ireland Water is proposing to undertake a £2.4 million project to reduce the risk of flooding in the Brookmount Road area of Omagh. The project, which will increase the capacity of the sewerage system in the area, is scheduled to commence during Spring 2009.

Running Water Supply

Mr Buchanan asked the Minister for Regional Development what are the total number of homes in the West Tyrone constituency, that do not have a running water supply; and what steps he proposes to take to address this problem.
(AQW 1389/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that it estimates around 300 homes in the West Tyrone constituency are not connected to the public water supply.

Northern Ireland Water is required under Article 76 of the Water and Sewerage Services (NI) Order 2006 to provide a requisitioned water main for domestic purposes subject to certain conditions. One of the conditions, set out in Article 77, requires the persons making the requisition to pay the reasonable costs of providing the water main as determined in accordance with Northern Ireland Water's charges scheme.

I recognise the needs of those households that are not currently served by the mains water network. Investigation of options aimed at increasing the affordability of the provision of mains water to existing households will be carried out as part of the response to the review of water and sewerage services. Currently, an allowance of £6,500 per existing property is provided. This is in excess of any additional support available in Britain.

Downgrading of the Old A1 Road

Mr Boylan asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline a timescale for the downgrading of the old A1 road. (AQW 1390/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: For the purpose of this response I have assumed that you are referring to the Dublin Road, which heads in a southerly direction from Newry. I can advise that the A1 designation for this route transferred to the new dual carriageway, when it was opened to traffic in August 2007. The section of the Dublin Road, heading south from Ellisholding Road, is now identified as the B113. The section of the Dublin Road, heading north, from Ellisholding Road to Brogies Road, is unclassified.

In due course, my Department's Roads Service will process Classification Orders to formalise these changes. However, in view of a range of similar changes associated with the construction of the A1 Beech Hill to Cloghogue dual carriageway, this process will not commence until the completion of this major improvement scheme, which I expect will be achieved towards the end of 2010.

Railway Access

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline how his Department will improve railway access to Belfast International Airport and George Best Belfast City Airport. (AQW 1395/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: There are currently no plans at present to extend rail links to Belfast International Airport. The likely costs of providing a rail service to the airport were considered in 2006 when it was concluded that it would not be economically viable. It is estimated that passenger numbers at the airport would have to double from their current level for this position to change. The next Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland provides an opportunity to revisit these issues and to consider the viability of potential developments.

There are no immediate plans to commit resources to provide a rail halt at the George Best Belfast City Airport. However, the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) includes a longer-term proposal for a new railway station at Tillysburn. If this went ahead it could serve both the Holywood Exchange and George Best Belfast City Airport.

Additional Lanes on M1

Mr Poots asked the Minister for Regional Development when the additional lanes on the M1 at

Stockman's Lane intersection through to Broadway will be operational. (AQW 1457/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that due to ongoing works, to the motorway communications system and to link the slip roads to the mainline carriageway, the third lane of the M1 motorway and Westlink is expected to be open to traffic by the end of November 2008. However, after this date some lane closures will be required at off peak times to allow further outstanding road works to be completed.

Direct Rail Service

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister for Regional Development when a direct rail service will operate between Derry/Londonderry and Dublin. (AQO 633/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: There are no plans at present to establish a direct service between Derry and Dublin. The priorities for investment in the railways network at this time include increasing frequency and capacity on the Belfast to Derry line and improving frequency on the Enterprise services.

Footpaths in Rural Areas

Mr Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans he has to extend the provision of footpaths in rural areas; and what criteria is used in this process. (AQO 586/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has plans for the provision of 19 new footway schemes in rural areas throughout the North in 2008/09.

The assessment procedure, used by Roads Service for prioritising footway schemes, takes into account various criteria, such as personal injury collision statistics, consideration of traffic volume and speeds, the volume of pedestrians and type of pedestrian use, that is, walking to/from work, school, shop etc, or for leisure/recreational walking. Other factors that are considered include the effect on the environment, value for money and also whether the scheme provides improved accessibility and integration through, provision of a footway missing link, extension of an existing footway, provisions for cyclists and improved access to public transport.

Rise in Fuel Prices

Mr Molloy asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the impact the rise in fuel prices will have on public transport. (AQO 653/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: Fuel prices have risen sharply over the last year and may increase further. The success in growing bus and rail passenger numbers in recent years means that an element of increased fuel costs can be absorbed by Translink internally. However, inevitably Translink have had to pass some of the fuel price increases on to the customer, and fares have gone up as a result. A 5% fare increase was introduced in August 2008 to cover increased fuel costs to the end of March 2009. It is estimated that fuel costs will have increased by 24% over that period.

The increase in fuel costs experienced by the private motorist may also have an impact on public transport by increasing its attractiveness as an alternative mode of travel.

Northern Ireland Water

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development what the projected saving will be as a result of the 200 job cuts in Northern Ireland Water. (AQO 584/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that in order to achieve the efficiency targets agreed with my Department and published in its Strategic Business Plan, it will reduce staff numbers during the 2008/09 financial year by 304. However, as a result of normal staff turnover it is likely that the actual number of staff affected will be around 200. Every effort will be made to achieve the reductions by voluntary means.

The projected savings resulting from the 304 reduction in funded budgetary posts is in the region of £12.16 million per annum, based on average total salary costs which include pension and employers national insurance.

Hybrid Buses

Mr Attwood asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on his discussions, plans and timescale for the introduction of hybrid buses in Belfast and other centres of high population. (AQO 630/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: The Department is currently considering proposals submitted by Translink to purchase seven Hybrid or Environmentally Enhanced Vehicles (EEVs) on a trial basis. If the proposals are approved, it is envisaged that two would be used on the Giant's Causeway to Coleraine service with the remaining five deployed in Belfast on the Royal Victoria Hospital link service and at Park & Ride facilities in the North and East of

the city. Depending on their success, funding for more such vehicles may be considered as part of Translink's bus replacement programme.

Translink

Mr Butler asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans Translink has to extend late night weekend bus services from Belfast to regional towns. (AQO 650/09)

The Minister for Regional Development:

I have been advised by Translink that they have no plans to extend late night weekend bus services from Belfast to regional towns. They continue however to keep all operations under review.

Rail/Bus Station and Park and Ride Facility

Mr Ford asked the Minister for Regional Development when the first phase of the proposed rail/bus station and park and ride facility at Ballymartin, Templepatrick, is due to open. (AQO 609/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: The first phase of the proposed Ballymartin Bus and Rail Park and Ride facility, which is bus based, has an indicative opening date of 2012. This phase will provide between 150 and 200 spaces.

Clearing Bonfire Sites

Mr Boylan asked the Minister for Regional Development how much has been spent by his Department in clearing bonfire sites and repairing road surfaces over the last 3 years in the Armagh City and District Council area. (AQO 649/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has incurred no costs in clearing bonfire sites or repairing road surfaces damaged by bonfires, in the Armagh City and District Council area, during the last 3 years.

By-Pass at Moira Village

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Regional Development if his Department is examining the viability of a by-pass at Moira village; and for an update on progress made. (AQO 627/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that, as part of the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2015, the road network around Moira was included in an assessment for major improvements to the strategic road network

of the Greater Belfast area. This assessment did not identify a need for a bypass at Moira village.

Roads Service is currently conducting a Traffic Management Study of the main junctions in Moira and a Route Management Study for the A26 route from the M1 Moira Roundabout to the Nutts Corner Roundabout. Any proposed road improvement in Moira, or to the A26, will have to compete for priority with other schemes and will be subject to satisfactory completion of the statutory procedures and the level of funding available at the time.

Waterside Railway Station

Mrs M Bradley asked the Minister for Regional Development how much money was spent on the refurbishment of the Waterside Railway Station in the last 3 years; and the amount of spending planned for the next 3 years. (AQO 645/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: There has been no refurbishment work carried out at Waterside Station during the last three years. However maintenance work at the station is ongoing at an average cost of £8,000 per annum. As part of a project to upgrade stations and halts to comply with Disability Discrimination legislation and Translink's New Rail Vision, work costing £290,000 will be completed later this year to provide the station with tactile paving, improved lighting and signage, improved toilets and general painting.

In the longer term options for the future of the station at Derry will be considered as part of the planning process for the relay of the railway line between Derry and Coleraine.

Current Economic Slowdown

Mr McLaughlin asked the Minister for Regional Development what action his Department is taking to support the economy in light of the current economic slowdown. (AQO 679/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department will continue to play an instrumental role in supporting the economy through these difficult times by investment in our roads and water infrastructure and in public transport services, ports and airports.

The Executive's Investment Strategy sets out the framework that will create a sustainable 21st century infrastructure in the North, and has indicated an investment of £3.1 billion in roads infrastructure. Of this, I have allocated around £2.5 billion to the Strategic Road Network, which has a direct impact on the competitiveness of business and ultimately therefore

on the competitiveness of the North. Businesses depend on the accessibility of labour and on being able to get their goods to wherever they are needed - reliably and on time. Investment is therefore essential in improving productivity and underpinning a successful economy.

We are also investing £1.0m a day to improve our water and sewerage infrastructure.

Roads Service and Northern Ireland Water are progressing major PPP programmes and are major employers in their own right.

The impact of this extensive investment not only supports local contractors directly carrying out the work, but also the wider construction industry and suppliers of goods and services. This investment in the North's infrastructure will pay dividends for the economy, both sides of the border, as it acts as a catalyst for regional development.

The Department plans to provide subsidies, amounting to £95.0m in the next three years, to Northern Ireland Railways (NIR) and bus operators to help to ensure affordable public transport services at a time of escalating costs for private transport. In the same period, around £88.0m will be provided for the Concessionary Fares Scheme, which includes the new free travel scheme for 60 to 64 year olds, and in the region of £7.5m per year will be spent on Door-to-Door Transport and the Rural Transport Fund.

On the capital side, investment of over £180.0m is planned, in the same period, to enable further procurement of new trains, continuation of the bus replacement programme and upgrades to improve the Belfast to Derry line and the Belfast to Dublin line.

The planned expenditure will ensure an effective and affordable public transport network, which is key to a healthy economy. It will also maintain jobs within the transport, community, construction and other sectors.

The City of Derry Airport is an important asset for economic development and tourism in the North West of Ireland. My Department, jointly with the Irish Government, is grant aiding safety improvements there. Longer term plans are in place to improve road access to the key regional gateway at Belfast International Airport and to support better public transport access to Belfast City Airport.

We are providing grant aid of approximately £15.0m for provision of enhanced deep water and roll-on / roll-off facilities at Warrenpoint Port. When completed, mid-2009, these new facilities will help to secure the long-term future of Warrenpoint Port as a major transportation gateway and economic generator for the regional economy.

As an outcome of the Ports Policy Review, I have signalled my intention to provide the trust ports with

greater commercial powers. These powers will enable the ports to compete more effectively and flexibly for trade. They will also enable the ports to supplement their revenue streams through more innovative income-generating activities. This will benefit all the Ports and the economy as a whole.

Overall, the substantial investment planned by my Department, across a wide range of programmes, will help to support the economy in light of the current economic slowdown.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Money Returned to the Department of Finance and Personnel

Mr Shannon asked the Minister for Social Development what money her Department returned to the Department of Finance and Personnel in March 2008. (AQW 890/09)

The Minister for Social Development (Ms M Ritchie): Following a number of adjustments during the normal in-year monitoring rounds (the last in February 2008), the Department's overall final budget allocation for 2007-08 was £690 million and £692 million was spent. The nett overspend arose in the capital element of the budget where, due to difficulties with various multi-million pound purchases and disposals, £213 million was spent against an allocation of £202 million. On the resource side, the Department registered a £9m underspend, ie. -1.8% against the 2% variance target set. Overall, this meant that no money was returned to the Department of Finance and Personnel in March 2008, with the £2m overspend representing +0.3% on the Department's final allocation.

Department Projects

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the successful projects her Department has completed in the last 12 months in the Lagan Valley constituency. (AQW 963/09)

The Minister for Social Development: In relation to housing, my Department has completed 8 social housing schemes and 10 improvement schemes. Under town centre regeneration, projects completed since 1 October 2007 by the Department include a public realm scheme in Dromore town centre and the Dromore Town Centre Marketing Plan. Under neighbourhood renewal, 3 projects with a value of £75,000 have been completed in the Lagmore estate,

which is part of the Colin Neighbourhood Renewal Area. As part of its support for the voluntary and community sectors, the Department has provided a substantial grant to Lisburn City Council under the Community Support Programme and supported 13 projects in the constituency, including the Atlas Women's Centre, the Local Community Fund projects in Hilhall and Old Warren and 10 small projects under the Community Volunteering Scheme.

Town Centre Regeneration in Lagan Valley

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Social Development what money her Department has spent on town centre regeneration in Lagan Valley in each of the last 10 years. (AQW 964/09)

The Minister for Social Development: As the Department for Social Development came into existence in December 1999, figures are only available for the 1999/2000 financial year onwards. The amount of money spent by my Department on town centre regeneration in the Lagan Valley constituency in each year since 1999/2000 is as follows.

1999/2000	0
2000/2001	0
2001/2002	0
2002/2003	0
2003/2004	0
2004/2005	£34,869.50
2005/2006	£8,390.00
2006/2007	£205,097.75
2007/2008	£174,365.00

Department Website

Mr Ross asked the Minister for Social Development how many page views her Department's website received each month, for the last 12 months. (AQW 1075/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The following table details the number of page views that the Departmental site www.dsdni.gov.uk received each month for the last 12 months.

Month	Page views
October 2007	244,971
November 2007	209,635
December 2007	145,122

Month	Page views
January 2008	227,538
February 2008	202,462
March 2008	210,309
April 2008	228,933
May 2008	211,759
June 2008	234,911
July 2008	193,152
August 2008	210,935
September 2008	249,076

Supporting People Revenue Fund

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development why the supporting people revenue fund is static for the next 3 years, in light of the fact that residents discharged from Muckamore Abbey are waiting to be re-housed. (AQW 1081/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Supporting People budget has been baselined for the three year period commencing 1 April 2008 at £61 million. This was determined during the Comprehensive Spending Review when spending needs had to be prioritised to meet demand. I decided however not to apply the recommended 3% efficiency saving to this fund. Since Supporting People was introduced on 1 April 2003, the target to assist 12,000 people to live as independently as possible has been exceeded. My aim is to deliver 5,250 new social homes over this three year period and I have plans in place to ensure this will happen.

Midnight Soccer Initiatives

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development what support is available from her Department for midnight soccer initiatives. (AQW 1095/09)

The Minister for Social Development: Midnight soccer programmes can be supported by the Neighbourhood Renewal programme if these are proposed in an action plan through a Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership as a programme to encourage community renewal and tackle anti-social behavior. In addition the Local Community Fund, which operates in the 11%-20% most deprived communities as defined by the Noble Index of Deprivation 2005 of Northern Ireland, can support such initiatives subject to their application being approved by the Intermediary Funding Body and the Department.

Benefit Uptake Programme

Mr Boylan asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the success of the Benefit Uptake Programme launched in May 2008, particularly in relation to Pension Credit. (AQW 1102/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Benefit Uptake Programme will run until February 2009 and final results from the 6 exercises will not be known until the Programme is evaluated in June 2009. At the end of September, over 90,000 clients had been contacted. Results at this early stage for the client focused mailshot on State Pension Credit show 689 claims have been successful. The average award is £46.39 per week, which is equivalent to £1.66 million per year in extra benefit.

Shelters for Homeless People

Mr Boylan asked the Minister for Social Development what action she is taking to provide shelter to homeless people particularly as winter approaches. (AQW 1104/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Housing Executive has a wide range of temporary and emergency accommodation at its disposal across Northern Ireland. In addition to 22 directly managed hostels and 69 managed by voluntary sector organisations, the Housing Executive also has access to 593 units of accommodation in the private rented sector.

With regard to other emergency services, the Housing Executive funds an all day Street Outreach service in Belfast which offers assistance to 'rough sleepers'

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr Boylan asked the Minister for Social Development for her assessment of the funding allocated to the Warm Homes Scheme for the 2008-09 financial year, given the rise in the cost of living; and what action she is taking to protect the vulnerable in society. (AQW 1109/09)

The Minister for Social Development: I have increased my Department's Warm Homes Scheme budget to £20 million this year and I have, and will continue to, bid for additional resources through the in-year monitoring process. Fuel poverty is a cross departmental issue. I had anticipated the current Fuel Poverty crisis and in May 2008 I established the Fuel Poverty Task Force, which brought together representatives from Government and the wider energy sector. The Task Force was asked to identify measures to tackle fuel poverty and in particular, to

identify short term recommendations which could be developed to assist those in need this winter. I have brought a paper on Tackling Fuel Poverty to the Executive seeking their endorsement of a number of recommendations emanating from the Task Force. In light of the Executive not meeting, I was forced to bring forward my Fuel Poverty Recommendations under Urgent Procedure.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr Boylan asked the Minister for Social Development how many people are currently claiming (i) higher rate; (ii) middle rate; and (iii) lower rate, Disability Living Allowance; and how much has been paid out in each of the last 3 years. (AQW 1112/09)

The Minister for Social Development: There were 174,367 people receiving Disability Living Allowance in Northern Ireland at the date of extract, 9 August 2008. The tables below set out the breakdown of recipients as requested and the expenditure in each of the last three financial years.

TABLE (I) HIGHER RATE

DLA Recipients by component	Numbers
Higher rate care only	2,258
Higher rate care and higher rate mobility	31,118
Higher rate care and lower rate mobility	14,566
Higher rate mobility only	9,364
Higher rate mobility and middle rate care	36,912
Higher rate mobility and lower rate care	15,478
Total	109,696

TABLE (II) MIDDLE RATE

DLA Recipients by component	Numbers
Middle rate care only	10,249
Middle rate care and lower rate mobility	36,119
Total	46,368

TABLE (III) LOWER RATE

DLA Recipients by component	Numbers
Lower rate care only	11,352
Lower rate mobility only	3,076
Lower rate care and lower rate mobility	3,875
Total	18,303

TABLE (IV) DISABILITY LIVING ALLOWANCE PAID IN EACH OF THE LAST THREE FINANCIAL YEARS

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Total amount of financial expenditure (in millions)	£582.6m	£610.7m	£646.1m

Housing Executive

Mr Brady asked the Minister for Social Development how the Private Sector Improvement Service will impact on the provision of Housing Executive grants. (AQW 1117/09)

The Minister for Social Development: As these two questions are linked I will answer them together.

The Housing Executive's planned review of the Private Sector Improvement Service was postponed because the Service had been earmarked for transfer to local District Councils under the Review of Public Administration proposals. However, following consultation, it was decided that responsibility for the grants element of the Private Sector Improvement Service will remain with the Housing Executive, but that the registration of Houses in Multiple Occupation element should be transferred. Now that this has been clarified, the Housing Executive will review the grants service with the aim of identifying potential efficiencies. With the exception of a planned merger of the two Belfast grants offices later this year, no actions are intended until late 2009. It is too early to estimate the number of posts that could potentially be affected by this review.

Housing Executive

Mr Brady asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Executive posts will be effected by the efficiency savings under the Private Sector Improvement Service. (AQW 1118/09)

The Minister for Social Development: As these two questions are linked I will answer them together.

The Housing Executive's planned review of the Private Sector Improvement Service was postponed because the Service had been earmarked for transfer to local District Councils under the Review of Public Administration proposals. However, following consultation, it was decided that responsibility for the grants element of the Private Sector Improvement Service will remain with the Housing Executive, but that the registration of Houses in Multiple Occupation element should be transferred. Now that this has been clarified, the Housing Executive will review the grants service with the aim of identifying potential efficiencies. With the exception of a planned merger

of the two Belfast grants offices later this year, no actions are intended until late 2009. It is too early to estimate the number of posts that could potentially be affected by this review.

Pension Credit

Mr Brady asked the Minister for Social Development how many people (i) claim; and (ii) are entitled to claim, pension credit; how much money (a) has been claimed; and (b) remained unclaimed, in each of the last 3 years; and what happens to the money that remains unclaimed. (AQW 1119/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The information requested is provided in the tables below. Those detailing the number and value of potential non recipients are based on estimates from the Northern Ireland Income-Related report where results have been aggregated over a two year period 2004-2006. The most up to date information shows that since 2003, the number of households that receive pension credit has increased by more than 17,000.

In relation to unclaimed money the Department only draws down sufficient cash resources from Treasury Central Funds to cover its actual benefit expenditure each financial year.

NUMBER OF STATE PENSION CREDIT CLAIMANTS, PARTNERS AND BENEFICIARIES

(I)

Number of Claimants	Number of Partners	Number of Beneficiaries
95,800	21,560	117,360

(II)

Estimated Potential Entitled Non recipients 2004-06
* 17,000 - 86,000

* Due to sampling constraints, results are presented as a range of values.

(III) ANNUAL STATE PENSION CREDIT EXPENDITURE

2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
£284m	£300m	£315m

(IV)

Estimated of Unclaimed State Pension Credit 2004-06
* 26m - 168m

Jobs and Benefits Offices

Mr Brady asked the Minister for Social Development how many people are currently employed as front line staff in Jobs and Benefits Offices in (i) Newry; and (ii) Northern Ireland; and what proportion of these staff have been employed for over 10 years. (AQW 1120/09)

The Minister for Social Development: A total of 73 Social Security Agency staff are employed in Newry Jobs & Benefits Office. These staff are involved in processing claims to Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance and Social Fund; a number of staff are also employed in the customer enquiry team. Personnel information relating to all staff across the Northern Ireland Civil Service Departments is recorded on the Human Resource Management System (HRMS). The HRMS enquiry facility is only able to identify staff in their most recent work location and the earliest date from which information is readily available is 1 July 1999. From this, I can advise that 39 staff, approximately 53%, have been working in Newry Jobs & Benefits Office in excess of 9 years.

The Agency has provided details for staff employed in both Jobs & Benefit Offices and the remaining 10 Social Security Offices. At 6 October 2008, a total of 1924 staff were employed across the Agency's network of 35 Jobs & Benefits/Social Security Offices and of these, 689 approximately 36% have been working in the same location in excess of 9 years.

Town Centre Regeneration

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Social Development how much her Department has spent on town centre regeneration in the Mid-Ulster constituency in each of the last 10 years.

(AQW 1124/09)

The Minister for Social Development: My Department has spent £62,930.37 on Cookstown Town Centre Promotion and Marketing. The money was allocated to Cookstown District Council and they spent £24,829 in year 05/06, £16,845.63 in year 06/07 and £21,255.74 in year 07/08. In addition my Department has allocated finance towards a Public Realm scheme in Burn Road Cookstown which will also be carried out through Cookstown District Council. To date £12,500 of the allocated budget has been spent.

Department Projects

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the successful projects her

Department has completed in the last 12 months in the Mid-Ulster constituency. (AQW 1125/09)

The Minister for Social Development: My Department has completed a range of successful projects over the last 12 months in both housing and the voluntary and community sector. The Voluntary and Community Unit funded 19 Local Community Fund projects, 12 Community Volunteering Scheme projects and one Children and Young People Fund package throughout Mid-Ulster at a total cost of £229,776. Three Social Housing Schemes were completed, one each in Magherafelt, Maghera and Cookstown. In addition 16 Housing Improvement Schemes were completed across the Magherafelt, Cookstown and Dungannon areas.

Location of Public Sector Jobs

Ms Anderson asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) what engagements she had with Professor Bain in relation to the review of the location of public sector jobs; and (ii) any offers she made to relocate jobs in her Department. (AQW 1144/09)

The Minister for Social Development: Two meetings were held with Professor Bain in relation to the review of the location of public sector jobs.

No specific offers to relocate jobs were made but a number of initiatives are under consideration

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development for the number of successful applications for the Warm Homes Scheme, broken down by parliamentary constituency, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 1178/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The information below sets out the number of completed heating installations and number of households receiving insulation measures during 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08. Please note that these statistics reflect the number of heating and insulation installations completed. Some households received both measures so the total figure does not represent actual number of households.

	2005/06		2006/07		2007/08	
	Heating	Insulation	Heating	Insulation	Heating	Insulation
Belfast East	95	361	70	321	147	306
Belfast North	168	524	146	567	241	477
Belfast South	64	270	36	194	97	256
Belfast West	203	624	158	485	245	445
East Antrim	114	259	80	401	111	295
East Londonderry	123	303	140	418	134	431
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	256	434	333	476	306	573
Foyle	157	598	312	467	147	449
Lagan Valley	103	297	131	413	145	413
Mid Ulster	274	623	411	557	294	572
Newry & Armagh	252	750	431	876	305	600
North Antrim	162	377	166	339	126	498
North Down	126	406	52	315	166	330
South Antrim	160	380	181	611	179	467
South Down	223	576	275	699	325	651
Strangford	85	270	97	374	170	421
Upper Bann	184	422	388	663	342	773
West Tyrone	164	450	269	634	429	675

Department Projects

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the successful projects her Department has completed in the last 12 months, in the North Down constituency. (AQW 1184/09)

The Minister for Social Development: My Department is engaged in a wide range of projects in North Down some of which have completed in the last 12 months. Of those that completed there were 9 new social housing schemes and a further 9 improvement schemes in Bangor and Holywood. In relation to urban regeneration a programme of environmental improvement schemes and the refurbishment of a community facility were completed in the Kilcooley Estate, Bangor. Community grants were also awarded to 10 groups operating in the North Down area through the Community Volunteering Scheme, and the Local Community Fund targeted projects in the Rathgill and Harbour areas.

Neighbourhood Renewal

Ms J McCann asked the Minister for Social Development for a breakdown of all groups that were categorised as groups 1 and 2 in (i) Belfast; and (ii) the rest of Northern Ireland, in relation to the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme. (AQW 1187/09)

The Minister for Social Development: As the questions are interlinked I will answer the three together. Copies of the tables have been placed in the Assembly library. Table 1 refers to AQW 1187/09 and Table 2 refers to AQW 1188/09.

In response to AQW 1189/09, my Department will issue letters of offer, where appropriate, as soon as possible following completion of the appraisal process.

Neighbourhood Renewal

Ms J McCann asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the letters of offer that were issued to organisations categorised as groups 1 and 2 in the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme, broken down by neighbourhood renewal area. (AQW 1188/09)

The Minister for Social Development: As the questions are interlinked I will answer the three together. Copies of the tables have been placed in the Assembly library. Table 1 refers to AQW 1187/09 and Table 2 refers to AQW 1188/09.

In response to AQW 1189/09, my Department will issue letters of offer, where appropriate, as soon as possible following completion of the appraisal process.

Neighbourhood Renewal

Ms J McCann asked the Minister for Social Development for the timescale in which all organisations categorised as groups 1 and 2 in the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme will be given letters offering funding. (AQW 1189/09)

The Minister for Social Development: As the questions are interlinked I will answer the three together. Copies of the tables have been placed in the Assembly library. Table 1 refers to AQW 1187/09 and Table 2 refers to AQW 1188/09.

In response to AQW 1189/09, my Department will issue letters of offer, where appropriate, as soon as possible following completion of the appraisal process.

Executive Meetings

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what areas of her Department's business are being held up by the Executive's failure to meet. (AQW 1199/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Executive's failure to meet is impacting my Department's business in relation to housing issues and gambling legislation. If the Executive does not meet in the near future my Department's business in respect of social security related matters and liquor licensing may also be impacted.

Multi Element Improvement Scheme

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the external cyclical maintenance and multi element improvement scheme for the Victoria Gardens Housing Estate in Donaghadee, over the next 3 years. (AQW 1200/09)

The Minister for Social Development: Details of the schemes included within the Housing Executive's planned improvement programme over the next three years for Victoria Gardens are as follows:-

- External Cyclical Maintenance to 50 dwellings in Victoria Court, Victoria Crescent and Victoria Gardens at a cost of £74k, programmed for 2011/12.
- Multi-element improvement works to 10 dwellings in Victoria Court, Victoria Crescent and Victoria Gardens at a cost of £536k, programmed for 2010/11.

Multi Element Improvement Scheme

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the external cyclical maintenance and

multi element improvement scheme for the Ashfield Housing Estate in Donaghadee, over the next 3 years.
(AQW 1201/09)

The Minister for Social Development: Details of the schemes included within the Housing Executive's planned improvement programme over the next three years for Ashfield are as follows:-

- External Cyclical Maintenance works to 77 dwellings in Ashfield Court and Ashfield Drive at a cost of £109k, programmed for 2009/10.

Traveller Site at Legahory, Craigavon

Mr Simpson asked the Minister for Social Development for her assessment of the proposal to extend the approval of the traveller site at Legahory, Craigavon.
(AQW 1216/09)

The Minister for Social Development: An emergency halting site for Travellers is currently situated at Legahory Green, Craigavon. Planning permission for development of the site was originally granted for a period of two years expiring in February 2009.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive, which has strategic responsibility for Traveller accommodation, has submitted a further planning application to extend the use of this emergency halting site for a further three years until February 2012. This application includes provision of electricity, shower and toilet facilities to improve living conditions on the site and to comply with licensing conditions imposed by Craigavon Borough Council. This will allow time to identify and develop other necessary sites in the Craigavon area.

Increase in Energy Prices

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development, given the increase in energy prices, what action she is taking to help senior citizens and the infirm to protect themselves against hypothermia.
(AQW 1220/09)

The Minister for Social Development: I had anticipated the current fuel poverty crisis and in May 2008 I established the Fuel Poverty Task Force. The Task Force has completed its findings and I have circulated a paper to Ministerial colleagues seeking their endorsement of a comprehensive set of proposals. As the Executive has failed to meet recently I have now sought permission to take the recommendations forward under urgent procedure.

In May 2008 I launched the Social Security Agency's Benefit Uptake campaign to increase awareness of social security benefits. In this year's programme

115,000 people across Northern Ireland will be contacted to make sure they are not missing out on benefits, around 108,000 will be older people. The Agency has also commenced an advertising campaign to increase awareness of the Winter Fuel Payment scheme for newly eligible customers.

In addition, applicants over 60 years of age and in receipt of a qualifying benefit may be eligible for assistance under the Warm Homes Scheme, which provides financial support to improve the energy efficiency of homes through a range of insulation and heating measures.

Housing Benefits

Ms Ní Chuilín asked the Minister for Social Development to provide a breakdown of the amount of housing benefits paid to private landlords in the (i) BT11; (ii) BT12; and (iii) BT13, post code areas of West Belfast.
(AQW 1240/09)

The Minister for Social Development: As these questions are linked I will answer them together. The Housing Executive does not collate Housing Benefit information by post code area. The Table below details the Housing Benefit expenditure within the Housing Executive administrative areas for the financial year 2007/08.

These figures include payments to private landlords, Housing Associations and rates only claimants. The figures cannot be broken down for private landlords only.

NIHE administrative area	Housing Benefit expenditure
Belfast West	£16,968,750
Belfast South	£18,772,816
Belfast North	£12,861,439

Housing Benefits

Ms Ní Chuilín asked the Minister for Social Development to provide a breakdown of the amount of housing benefits paid to private landlords in the BT7 post code area of South Belfast.
(AQW 1241/09)

The Minister for Social Development: As these questions are linked I will answer them together. The Housing Executive does not collate Housing Benefit information by post code area. The Table below details the Housing Benefit expenditure within the Housing Executive administrative areas for the financial year 2007/08.

These figures include payments to private landlords, Housing Associations and rates only claimants. The figures cannot be broken down for private landlords only.

NIHE administrative area	Housing Benefit expenditure
Belfast West	£16,968,750
Belfast South	£18,772,816
Belfast North	£12,861,439

Housing Benefits

Ms Ní Chuilín asked the Minister for Social Development to provide a breakdown of the amount of housing benefits paid to private landlords in the BT14; and BT15, post code areas of North Belfast.

(AQW 1242/09)

The Minister for Social Development: As these questions are linked I will answer them together. The Housing Executive does not collate Housing Benefit information by post code area. The Table below details the Housing Benefit expenditure within the Housing Executive administrative areas for the financial year 2007/08.

These figures include payments to private landlords, Housing Associations and rates only claimants. The figures cannot be broken down for private landlords only.

NIHE administrative area	Housing Benefit expenditure
Belfast West	£16,968,750
Belfast South	£18,772,816
Belfast North	£12,861,439

Neighbourhood Renewal

Ms Ní Chuilín asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the number of neighbourhood renewal projects that have had their funding withheld; (ii) where these projects are situated; and (iii) the potential number of job losses as a result of funding being withheld.

(AQW 1243/09)

The Minister for Social Development: Neighbourhood Renewal funding is not being withheld but all Neighbourhood Renewal projects are subject to an appraisal process. Given the pressure on funds across the Department, I want to be sure that best use is being made of available resources. I have therefore asked for the funding requirements of current Neighbourhood Renewal projects to be examined in the context of budgetary resources.

Watchman Devices

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Social Development if she will consider the installation of watchman devices in Housing Executive properties. (AQW 1265/09)

The Minister for Social Development: This is an operational matter for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. Watchman devices are now fitted in all new oil heating installations within Housing Executive dwellings. The Housing Executive however does not consider that it would be practical, or cost effective, to install these devices where oil heating is already in place.

Clearance of Bonfires

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister for Social Development how much the Housing Executive has spent on the clearance of bonfires on its sites, in each of the last 5 years.

(AQW 1266/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The costs incurred by the Housing Executive through the removal and reinstatement works associated with bonfires for the period 2005/2008 are:-

2005	£157,000
2006	£147,000
2007	£167,000
2008	£125,000

The figures prior to 2005 are not available as these costs were previously included within the Housing Executive's response maintenance budget.

Criteria for High Rate Mobility

Mr Shannon asked the Minister for Social Development if she will consider making representations to change the criteria for high rate mobility to include those with (i) blindness; (ii) Downs Syndrome; and (iii) Prader-Willie Syndrome.

(AQW 1281/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance is for people who are physically unable, or virtually unable, to walk. It is also available to people who are both deaf and blind and require the assistance of another person to walk to any intended or required destination when out of doors because this combination of circumstances means that they are virtually unable to walk. People with blindness, Down's Syndrome or Prader-Willi Syndrome who are not physically unable, or virtually unable, to walk can qualify for the lower rate of the mobility component

if they require guidance or supervision from another person when walking out of doors on unfamiliar routes.

Whilst automatic entitlement to disability living allowance for certain conditions may appear attractive, the concern is that it is not a precise enough way to determine someone's actual needs, how those needs may vary over time, or the variable responses of an individual to the condition. I do, however, propose to explore this issue with Ministers in the Department for Work and Pensions.

Central Procurement Directorate/ Equality Commission

Ms Anderson asked the Minister for Social Development to outline how she intends to implement the Central Procurement Directorate/Equality Commission guidelines as part of her Department's Procurement Strategy for the Social Housing Development Programme. (AQW 1286/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The recently launched Procurement Strategy for the Social Housing Development Programme will mainstream equality considerations and good practice into the procurement of all social housing. The delivery of this strategy will require full compliance with wider Government procurement objectives including the recently launched "Guidance on equality of opportunity and sustainable development in public sector procurement"

Social Security Regulations

Ms Anderson asked the Minister for Social Development to comment on the potential impact of

TABLE 1

	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05	2003-04	2002-03	2001-02	2000-1
Belfast 1	13	24	17	22	14	4	4	2
Belfast 2	21	28	14	25	18	12	7	3
Belfast 3	13	17	15	10	7	4	2	0
Belfast 7	38	54	51	30	19	15	8	8
Belfast 4	5	13	11	18	1	5	1	0
Belfast 5	7	9	6	4	2	4	0	1
Belfast 6	13	17	28	31	18	7	2	1
Bangor	20	36	39	12	12	10	6	2
Newtownards	23	29	18	22	15	6	3	0
Castlereagh	14	18	18	12	5	4	1	2
Lisburn	24	35	33	35	20	9	5	0

the proposed Social Security Regulations amendments on vulnerable sections of society; and what action she is taking to challenge these proposals. (AQW 1287/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The regulations reduce the period for backdating Pension Credit and Housing Benefit for pensioners from 12 months to 3 months.

Evidence indicates that those claiming the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit- the poorest pensioners – are more likely to claim within 3 months of becoming entitled. In 2006/2007 an estimated 97% of all successful Guarantee Credit backdated claims were backdated for 3 months or less.

The proposed regulations were approved by the Executive on 2 October 2008. The Social Security (Miscellaneous Amendments No.3) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008 were made on 3 October 2008 and came into operation on 6 October 2008.

Complex Needs Status

Mr W Clarke asked the Minister for Social Development how many people have been awarded complex needs status each year since 2001, broken down by District Housing Office. (AQW 1301/09)

The Minister for Social Development: Table 1 below details the number of applicants who were awarded Complex Needs points and are considered for general needs housing each year since 2001 by NIHE District.

Table 2 contains details of complex needs applicants who require supported housing, and so are considered without reference to points, and separate from the general needs waiting list. Details for this group are only available from 2002/03.

	2007-08	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05	2003-04	2002-03	2001-02	2000-1
Poleglass	5	7	12	10	3	2	0	0
Downpatrick	19	25	14	25	8	0	3	2
Banbridge	23	27	45	17	7	2	1	3
Newry	33	31	33	21	12	12	2	3
Armagh	20	21	39	14	3	2	2	1
Lurgan	23	33	32	17	10	10	2	2
Portadown	19	13	24	22	2	2	1	0
Dungannon	13	23	17	13	7	2	2	1
Fermanagh	57	61	66	50	23	9	4	4
Ballymena	26	25	24	15	14	3	4	1
Antrim	15	18	17	5	4	0	0	1
N'Abbey 1	13	11	12	13	7	3	4	1
N'Abbey 2	10	18	12	11	3	7	0	2
Carrickfergus	3	6	7	5	3	1	1	0
Larne	6	8	4	1	2	0	0	0
Ballycastle	7	6	2	2	0	1	0	0
Ballymoney	2	7	10	8	4	0	1	0
Coleraine	26	51	32	36	11	9	3	6
Derry 1	11	31	18	11	13	1	3	0
Derry 2	13	11	13	7	5	2		0
Derry 3	10	16	19	8	4	1	1	0
Limavady	1	11	1	1	1	2	0	2
Magherafelt	13	10	4	5	5	0	0	0
Strabane	9	14	5	5	8	5	1	4
Omagh	22	10	7	7	5	0	0	0
Cookstown	13	6	8	4	1	0	0	0
Total	603	780	727	554	296	156	74	52

TABLE 2

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Belfast 1	14	12	3	2	0	0
Belfast 2	17	15	10	15	9	8
Belfast 3	6	2	3	0	3	0
Belfast 4	0	1	2	2	2	2
Belfast 5	2	0	1	0	0	2
Belfast 6	8	5	4	0	1	0
Belfast 7	4	24	10	3	17	13
Antrim	22	13	19	11	11	9
Ballycastle	1	3	1	1	3	4
Ballymena	1	5	8	4	8	13

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Ballymoney	1	6	2	9	8	6
Carrickfergus	3	2	5	1	9	6
Coleraine	16	18	49	23	41	48
Larne	3	0	1	0	1	0
Newtownabbey 1	2	3	1	0	1	4
Newtownabbey 2	0	3	0	0	1	5
Armagh	4	22	6	19	14	2
Banbridge	4	4	8	2	19	12
Dungannon	0	0	0	2	2	0
Fermanagh	0	0	18	0	4	4
Lurgan	18	11	1	3	5	9
Newry	0	1	6	3	0	15
Portadown	0	0	1	0	3	3
Bangor	20	27	3	14	3	12
Castlereagh	19	4	0	10	7	8
Downpatrick	5	6	3	2	4	2
Lisburn	5	6	7	4	12	13
Dairy Farm	1	0	0	0	0	0
Newtownards	4	12	3	1	1	0
Cookstown	3	4	1	0	0	4
Limavady	10	1	3	9	2	5
Waterloo Place	9	12	5	5	7	3
Waterside	36	25	15	18	10	7
Collon Tce	8	10	6	3	9	6
Magherafelt	2	3	1	0	1	3
Omagh	14	15	16	28	31	21
Strabane	11	8	6	6	9	9
Total	273	283	228	200	258	258

Energy Performance Certificates

Mr Weir asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the number; and (ii) percentage of Housing Executive stock in the North Down constituency, that hold energy performance certificates. (AQW 1317/09)

The Minister for Social Development: Energy Performance Certificates became necessary for all houses for sale from 1 July 2008. Since that date the Housing Executive has not sold any properties within the North Down Constituency area.

Housing Benefits

Ms J McCann asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Executive properties are currently occupied by people who are not in receipt of Housing Benefit. (AQW 1337/09)

The Minister for Social Development: At 1st August 2008 there were 19,005 Housing Executive tenants not in receipt of Housing Benefit.

Housing Executive Grants

Mr Shannon asked the Minister for Social Development if she is planning to increase the amount of money available for Housing Executive grants in the (i) Ards Borough Council area; and (ii) Strangford constituency. (AQW 1372/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Private Sector grant budget for the 2008/09 financial year is £40m. I will continue to make bids for additional funding in future monitoring rounds.

Responsibility for the allocation of the Private Sector grant rests with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Improvement Schemes

Mr Boylan asked the Minister for Social Development if she can confirm that the scheme to be implemented at Ard Carn in Newry, will be on schedule. (AQW 1391/09)

The Minister for Social Development: As these questions are linked I will answer them together.

There are currently two improvement schemes approved for Ardcarne Park, Newry. The kitchen replacement scheme and the environmental improvement scheme are planned for 2009. These schemes may be delayed as a result of financial pressures on the Housing Executive's capital budget.

Similarly, there are five additional improvement and maintenance schemes planned for the Newry and Mourne District Council area, but these are also subject to the Housing Executive's budget prioritisation.

Improvement Schemes

Mr Boylan asked the Minister for Social Development if she can (i) confirm that the Housing Executive has adequate funding to implement the environmental improvement scheme at Ard Carn in Newry; and (ii) ensure that adequate funding will be provided for other similar schemes, in the Newry and Mourne District Council area. (AQW 1392/09)

The Minister for Social Development: As these questions are linked I will answer them together.

There are currently two improvement schemes approved for Ardcarne Park, Newry. The kitchen replacement scheme and the environmental improvement scheme are planned for 2009. These schemes may be delayed as a result of financial pressures on the Housing Executive's capital budget.

Similarly, there are five additional improvement and maintenance schemes planned for the Newry and

Mourne District Council area, but these are also subject to the Housing Executive's budget prioritisation.

Community Centre in Dunclug

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Social Development if her Department will provide funding to refurbish the Community Centre in Dunclug, Ballymena. (AQW 1476/09)

The Minister for Social Development: My staff in Regional Development Office have received an application for funding from Ballymena Borough Council to enable the refurbishment of Dunclug Community Centre. This application is currently being appraised.

ASSEMBLY COMMISSION

Assembly Postal Service

Mr W Clarke asked the Assembly Commission why the pre-paid Assembly postal service is limited to the United Kingdom only; and how this compares with procedures in (i) the Houses of the Oireachtas; (ii) the Scottish Parliament; (iii) the Welsh Assembly; and (iv) Westminster. (AQW 1302/09)

The Representative of the Assembly Commission (Rev Dr R Coulter): The Northern Ireland Assembly use the Royal Mail as its postal service provider. The Royal Mail provides the Assembly with pre-paid envelopes for use within the United Kingdom only. They do not issue pre-paid envelopes for use outside of the United Kingdom.

The Royal Mail also provides the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh Assembly and Westminster with pre-paid envelopes for use within the United Kingdom only.

The House of the Oireachtas provide each member with 2,000 pre-paid envelopes per month. The pre-paid envelopes can be used within the Republic of Ireland and/or further a field.

The Assembly Stationery Office will arrange for all post from MLAs destined for the Republic of Ireland and further a field to be franked at the appropriate rate at no cost to MLAs.

CORRIGENDUM

Written Answer Booklet of 10 October 2008

(Volume 33, No WA6)

In page WA259, col 1, replace the answer to question (AQW 784/09) with;

The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) has a statutory responsibility to conserve and protect wild salmon stocks and research has shown that Atlantic salmon populations are under threat. DCAL also has to comply with EU legislation under the Habitats Directive and other European legislation to conserve and protect this endangered species. The Department has offered the remaining commercial salmon net licence holders on the North Coast compensation for a voluntary cessation of fishing. This has not been accepted and the Department is now consulting with the netmen on a way forward.

I am aware of the cultural and social factors associated with the commercial salmon industry. I will consider all relevant information before making a final decision regarding the fixed bag nets on the North Coast.

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