
OFFICIAL REPORT

(HANSARD)

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NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Friday 05 December 2008

Written Answers to Questions

OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER

Tackling Sectarianism

Ms Purvis asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister when the Ministers last discussed tackling sectarianism with their Scottish counterparts. (AQW 2017/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister (Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness): In February 2008, the former First Minister Rt Hon Ian Paisley, the deputy First Minister and Junior Ministers met with the Scottish First Minister, Rt Hon Alex Salmond, in Scotland and saw an anti-sectarianism project at Murrayfield Stadium as part of their visit.

Prior to this, during a visit here in June 2007, the Scottish First Minister, the former First Minister and the deputy First Minister signed a joint communiqué recognising historical bonds between the people of Scotland and Northern Ireland agreeing to develop opportunities for further co-operation between the two countries. In addition to promoting common prosperity and development, the communiqué included an undertaking to strengthen co-operation between the devolved administrations. The Scottish First Minister and Executive Ministers have also taken part in trilateral meetings with Welsh Ministers as well as meetings of the Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC) and the British-Irish Council (BIC).

In the context of ongoing work on CSI and other good relations work, advisers and officials routinely examine best practice in other jurisdictions including Scotland. Junior Ministers have recently taken part in a Celtic/Rangers initiative aimed at tackling sectarianism across both jurisdictions.

Fuel Poverty

Mr Molloy asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the steps it is taking to coordinate responses to fuel poverty. (AQO 899/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: We have given consideration to Minister Ritchie's request to implement the proposals set out in the paper Tackling Fuel Poverty and hope shortly to be in a position to announce measures to assist those affected by the present economic difficulties.

Child Poverty Inquiry

Ms Anderson asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the progress towards implementing the recommendations of the Child Poverty Inquiry. (AQW 2381/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Committee's report has been considered in detail and is scheduled for consideration at the next meeting of the Executive.

Sports Strategy

Mr P Ramsey asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the (i) contribution to date; and (ii) planned future contribution, from her Department to the implementation of the Sports Strategy. (AQW 2620/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: There has been no contribution from our Department to the implementation of the Sports Strategy to date. This is within the remit of the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure.

However, our officials will be working closely with their colleagues in DCAL to take account of the Sports Strategy as we develop implementation plans for the Play and Leisure Policy.

Investment Strategy

Mr Shannon asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister what it is being done to speed up the delivery of the Investment Strategy. (AQW 2777/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: We commissioned the Strategic Investment Board to identify and advise us on the scope to expedite projects within the Investment Strategy. SIB has now reported its findings and we are urgently examining the range of options open to us to accelerate projects within the available funding envelope.

The outcome of the December monitoring round undertaken by DFP will inform the Executive of the amount of capital funding available for the remainder of 2008-09. We are also looking at the position for 2009-10 and beyond in the context of the Strategic Stocktake. Both these exercises will enable us to consider the flexibility to accelerate up to £86.5 million funding for investment in the local economy over the next two years as a result of the Chancellor's Pre-Budget Report.

Sustainable Development Strategy

Mr Gallagher asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to the answer to AQW 2558/09, to detail for each Department (i) the specific targets and associated actions that have been included in the Implementation Plan to date; (ii) the targets and actions subject to uncertainty and significant delays; and (iii) the targets and associated actions that are unlikely to be achieved. (AQW 2864/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: The first Sustainable Development Strategy Implementation Plan contained a comprehensive list of targets and actions, with Departments responsible for delivery clearly assigned. This Implementation Plan is available for download from the OFMDFM website www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk and copies are available from the Assembly Library.

On the basis of information supplied by Departments, those targets identified as having actions associated with them that are subject to uncertainty or significant delay are: 2, 8, 9, 14, 20, 21, 22, 32, 35, 43, 50, 53 and 61. The only target considered to be unlikely to be achieved is target 13.

Ebrington Regeneration Site

Mr Durkan asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) the reasons for its proposed surrender in the December 2008 Monitoring Round of £0.998 million in relation to capital requirements at the Ebrington regeneration site; (ii) the nature of, and reasons for the delays; and (iii) the measures being taken to ensure progress is expedited in the future. (AQW 2966/09)

The First Minister and deputy First Minister: The December 2008 Monitoring Round Executive paper has not been cleared by the Executive and we are therefore not in a position to answer this question.

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Animal Welfare Legislation

Mr B Wilson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in her discussions with representatives from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, whether they have stated an intent to regulate or ban circuses with animals in any new animal welfare legislation. (AQW 2546/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (Ms M Gildernew): I have not discussed the regulation of animals in circuses with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

My officials have met their counterparts in Dublin and have been advised that no decisions have been made on the content of their proposed Animal Health and Welfare Bill.

Animal Welfare Legislation

Mr B Wilson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on her Department's review of animal welfare legislation; and if she plans to include a ban on the use of animals in circuses in any new legislation. (AQW 2547/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: My review of animal welfare legislation in the North is progressing. However, as I have stated in the past it is important that animal welfare legislation across the island of Ireland is broadly compatible. For this reason I want to take account of the new animal welfare legislation being brought forward in the South before finalising my review.

As the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in Dublin is still in discussions with stakeholders, no decisions have been made on the content of their proposed Animal Health and Welfare Bill.

The use of animals in circuses is something that I will consider along with a wide range of other issues that have been brought to my attention. I cannot pre-empt any outcome at this stage.

Countryside Management Scheme

Mr Ford asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many applications were received for inclusion in the Countryside Management Scheme this year; and how many are being processed.[R] (AQW 2565/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: 4500 applications were received during the application period (30 June - 29 August 2008) for the new Countryside Management Scheme (NICMS). 1300 applicants will be given the opportunity to enter the Scheme.

Countryside Management Scheme

Mr Ford asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what criteria her Department uses for assessing which Countryside Management Scheme applications are accepted.[R] (AQW 2566/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Applications for the new Countryside Management Scheme have been prioritised according to the criteria agreed with the Environmental Sub Group of the NI Rural Development Plan Monitoring Committee. The following criteria have been applied to each applicant's farm business;

- Presence of a designated site on the land associated with the farm business – Natura 2000/ASSI, RAMSAR, Geopark, Environmentally Sensitive Area.
- Agri-environment agreement status – categorised as those with no agreement, and those with a current agreement in force.
- Agri-environment agreement type – categorised as early agreement holders (2001-2004) and later agreement holders (2005-2006)

Countryside Management Scheme

Mr Ford asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development when the Countryside Management Scheme will be open for new applications; and whether those applications that were rejected this year will be prioritised. [R] (AQW 2567/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: I anticipate that the new Countryside Management Scheme (NICMS) will re-open for applications in early Summer 2009.

Eligible applicants who were unsuccessful this year will have their applications automatically re-submitted. If necessary, applications will be prioritised again according to environmental benefit, and those agreements demonstrating the greatest benefit will be progressed. Any prioritisation of applicants will be reviewed and agreed by the Environmental Sub Group of the NI Rural Development Plan Monitoring Committee.

Sports Strategy

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the (i) contribution to date; and (ii) planned future contribution, from her Department to the implementation of the Sports Strategy. (AQW 2572/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The lead Department with regard to the NI Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation 2007-2017 is the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has no formal role, and there are no plans to extend its remit in that regard.

Several of the quality-of-life measures included in Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (RDP) have the potential to complement sporting and other leisure activities. However, their promotion is not among the RDP's formal aims, and individual spending decisions must be compatible with the priorities laid down in local development strategies.

While the Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation 2007-2017 does not specifically refer to sporting activity in Forest Service woodland, Forest Service continues to provide a venue for a wide range of sporting activities such as orienteering, triathlon, athletics, fell running, long-distance horse-riding, cycling, canoeing, rowing and sailing.

In the near future, Forest Service will consult on a strategy to promote and facilitate the recreational and social use of forests. One of the proposed outcomes is to explore opportunities, with Sport NI, for Forest Service woodland to contribute further to sporting activities.

Rural Development Programme

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the number of farmers in Mid-Ulster who have taken up the Rural Development programme, in the last 3 years. (AQW 2581/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The Rural Development Programme 2000-2006 was a wide ranging package of funding measures which provided support to the broad spectrum of rural communities – farmers, growers, land owners and rural dwellers. The 2000 – 2006 Programme comprised different EU programmes and initiatives, namely Building Sustainable Prosperity (BSP), Natural Rural Resource Tourism Initiative (NRRTI – an element of Peace II), Leader+, and Interreg IIIA.

The total number of beneficiaries in Mid-Ulster of that Programme over the last three financial years is 192. It is not possible to identify within the computerised records system the number of farmers who received funding and to do so manually would incur disproportionate cost. However, part of the EU Peace and Reconciliation Programme (PEACE II), which was an element of the Rural Development Programme, specifically targeted farmers and farm families and was worth £21 million.

The new Rural Development Programme 2007 – 2013 contains successors to those measures listed above, but also brings in Axis 2 measures which specifically target farmers and landowners. Information on these schemes are not held on a parliamentary constituency basis, but are broken down by county.

Measure 2.1 of the RDP 2007 – 2013 is the Less Favoured Areas Compensatory Allowance (LFACA). Beneficiaries of this scheme, and its predecessors, by county over the last three years are as follows:

County	Beneficiaries 05/06	Beneficiaries 06/07	Beneficiaries 07/08
Antrim	2413	2363	2324
Armagh	1691	1589	1547
Down	1822	1757	1718
Fermanagh	2472	2433	2402
Londonderry	1910	1850	1814
Tyrone	3847	3778	3681

*Please note – the LFACA scheme is run on a rolling year by year basis.

Measure 2.2 of the RDP 2007 – 2013 is the Agri Environment Programme. This comprises the Northern Ireland Countryside Management Scheme (CMS), the Environmentally Sensitive Areas Scheme (ESAS) and the Organic Farming Scheme (OFS). Beneficiaries of these schemes, and their predecessors, over the last three years are as follows:

County	CMS/ESAS	OFS
Antrim	2543	35
Armagh	1327	8
Down	1892	13
Fermanagh	1790	6
Londonderry	2047	7
Tyrone	2851	16

Measures 2.3 and 2.4 of the RDP 2007 – 2013 deal with forestry measures and comprise the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme (FWPS) and Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS). Beneficiaries of these schemes, and their predecessors, for the last three years are as follows:

County	FWPS	WGS
Antrim	426	56
Armagh	237	31
Down	439	86
Fermanagh	153	21
Londonderry	296	36
Tyrone	544	61

Fishing Fleet

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the discussion her Department has had with Westminster to ensure that quotas are maintained and enhanced for the fishing fleet. (AQW 2582/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: My Department has participated fully in meetings between the 4 Fisheries Administrations in relation to fishing opportunities for our fleet. Some of those meetings examined such issues as Cod recovery, effort control and the discarding of fish which also affect fishing opportunities. Following the publication of ICES advice in July my officials met with their counterparts to discuss the likely impact this advice would have on the Commission's proposals for 2009 and to identify the key negotiating priorities for the Agriculture and Fisheries Council in December. At this and subsequent meetings my Department has stressed the importance of the Nephrops TAC for our fleet and the need to ensure there is sufficient fishing time to take this quota. The importance of maintaining fishing opportunities for other key stocks such as Haddock, Cod and Herring has also been highlighted. The Minister of Regional Development Conor Murphy has also participated in the 2 Ministerial meetings held to date at which the approach to the autumn fisheries negotiations has been discussed.

Local Produce

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what steps her Department has taken to promote local produce since the change in the European Union regulation reduction for 26 types of fruits and vegetables. (AQW 2584/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The new Commission Regulation on Marketing Standards which reduces the current 26 standards to 1 general and 10 specific marketing standards is not due to come into operation until 1 July 2009. The current standards will remain in force until 30 June 2009.

My Department administers the EU Protected Food Names Scheme, which, for registered products, provides a marketing advantage and greater consumer awareness. We are currently progressing an application for Comber potatoes and another with the Fruit Industry Federation for Armagh Bramley Apples. I would encourage other local producers to consider whether they would benefit from Protected Status.

Fishing Fleet

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the amount of money it would take for her Department to pay for Light Dues fees in relation to the fishing fleet; and (ii) the number of fishing vessels that currently avail of the aids to navigation that are paid through Light Dues. (AQW 2586/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development:

- (i) Light dues will vary according to the size of a fishing vessel but I estimate that the annual bill for light dues for our fishing fleet is approximately £50,000.
- (ii) The existing light dues charging system is not a “pure” user pays system in that it is not possible to define who is a user and how much use is made of navigational aids provided by the General Lighthouse Authorities. Payers of light dues are not charged to use particular navigational aids, but are making a contribution towards the General Lighthouse Authorities’ costs, based in general terms on their perceived revenue-earning capacity.

Farm Modernisation Programme

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the number of farmers in Mid-Ulster who have participated in the Farm Modernisation Programme, in the last three years. (AQW 2597/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: No farmers in Mid-Ulster have taken up the Farm Modernisation Programme as no such Programme has been opened for applications in the last three years.

Organic Sector

Mr B Wilson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what measures have been taken to expand the organic sector. (AQW 2602/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Under the NI Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 I have offered a new Organic Farming Scheme to assist farmers who wish to convert from conventional to organic production.

The new Scheme offers increased levels of support for the organic livestock sector, with additional support for the organic cereal and horticulture sectors. DARD will pay the following amounts to farmers to cover the first five years of conversion to organic production:

Horticulture (including top fruit) -	Arable	Other Improved Land
£670	£570	£470

These payments are on a ‘per hectare’ basis, and will be apportioned over the five years.

Under the Organic Option in the new Countryside Management Scheme, I have also offered an ongoing post-conversion payment of £30 per hectare per year for land which is certified organic.

In addition to this, CAFRE (Greenmount Campus) continues to provide education, advice and ongoing support in relation to organic farming. It also develops and tests new technologies appropriate to the local organic sector.

National Seed List

Mr B Wilson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail any genetically modified seeds on the National Seed List. (AQW 2603/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: There are no GM varieties currently on the UK National List.

Fishing Fleet

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what discussions she has had with fishing fleets and fishing organisations in relation to quotas for fishing leading up to the meeting in Brussels in December 2008. (AQW 2654/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: I met with representatives of the fish catching and processing sectors, along with other stakeholders on 22 September. At that meeting the impact of the scientific advice for the main fish stocks of importance to our fleet was discussed and the negotiating priorities for the December Council were agreed. My colleague Conor Murphy briefed fishing industry representatives at the November fisheries Council and my officials have also had several discussions with industry stakeholders as part of the preparation for the December Council.

Fishing Fleet

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much funding has been allocated this year for decommissioning of the fishing fleet. (AQW 2656/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: There are currently no decommissioning schemes in operation. In the NI Draft EFF Investment Plan, my Department has proposed that €14.1m of the total €36.2m EFF funding package would be spent on Axis 1 but has indicated that allocations to specific measures within that Axis would be informed by the work of the Fisheries Forum.

I have asked the Fisheries Forum to develop a strategic plan for achieving a profitable and sustainable future for the fishing fleet. As part of that work, my Department has commissioned a review of the Fleet Futures Analysis to take account of changes to fishing opportunities and operating costs. The Department is also about to commence a Vessel Modernisation Needs Survey. This information will help inform decisions about the need, extent and finance required for any future decommissioning schemes.

Fishing Fleet

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what percentage of the fishing fleet will be decommissioned this year. (AQW 2657/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: There are currently no decommissioning schemes in operation. In the NI Draft EFF Investment Plan, my Department has proposed that €14.1m of the total €36.2m EFF funding package would be spent on Axis 1 but has indicated that allocations to specific measures within that Axis would be informed by the work of the Fisheries Forum.

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Department's Staff Annual Report

Mr Simpson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many staff in her Department did not achieve an acceptable mark in their annual report, in the last reporting year. (AQW 2679/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: In the last reporting year (1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008) I can advise that 4 staff within my Department did not achieve an acceptable mark in their annual report.

Fishing Fleet

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what are the criteria for the clearing of boats for use in the fishing fleet. (AQW 2692/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Fishing vessels must be registered with the Ship Register, which is part of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency is an agency of the Department of Transport. If fishing for profit the vessels must also be licensed by the Fisheries Administrations.

If applying to register a fishing vessel with the Ship Register, specific registration requirements should be discussed with the MCA. However the following is normally required:

- a completed application form and appropriate fee;
- a Declaration of Eligibility;
- three years title proof of ownership by means of original official Bills of Sale and/or builder's certificate (full registration) or original receipted invoice (simple registration);
- a Certificate of Incorporation if the owner is a company;
- a Certificate of Measurement;
- a Safety Certificate (for 12 metre and over vessels only);
- an International Tonnage Convention certificate 1969 (ITC 69) (for 15 metre and over vessels); and,
- for vessels built after 2001 – a SEAFISH Construction Certificate.

A registered fishing vessel must also have a licence issued by the Fisheries Administrations. This provides the vessel with the authority to carry out certain fishing activities depending on the category of licence issued. Since no new fishing vessel licences are issued, a vessel being licenced for the first time will have to arrange for the transfer of a licence 'entitlement' from an existing licence holder. The Fisheries Administrations must be notified to ensure that the licence entitlement details are changed and that the licence entitlement has sufficient capacity in terms of tonnage and engine power for the new vessel.

A registered vessel must also have access to quota to fish for species for which quotas have been set under the Common Fisheries Policy.

Countryside Management Scheme

Mr Bresland asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many farm businesses had been accepted into the Countryside Management scheme at 1 November 2008. (AQW 2718/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: At the 1 November 2008, there were 8700 farm businesses in the existing Countryside Management Scheme. No farm businesses have yet been accepted into the new Countryside Management Scheme (NICMS).

EU CAP Health Check

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if she will make a statement to the Assembly with her assessment of how the Agricultural Industry has fared as result of the recent EU CAP Health Check. (AQW 2721/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: I am of the view that, overall, the local agricultural industry has achieved a positive result from the recent CAP Health Check agreement. The CAP Health Check

was never intended to be a fundamental reform and given our desire for policy stability, I welcome the fact that the impact of the agreement on the agricultural industry will be minimal.

On modulation, we have secured an outcome which will mean that the overall modulation deductions from farmers here will not increase from previously planned levels, which was one of our key goals.

As EU compulsory modulation rates increase, there will be offsetting reductions in our voluntary modulation rates, thus avoiding any increase in our headline rates while bringing total modulation rates applied elsewhere in the EU closer to ours. The industry had expressed a clear view that it wished to see a one for one substitution of voluntary modulation with EU compulsory modulation and I am pleased to have delivered this outcome.

We have also been successful in persuading the Commission that we can count existing measures under our Rural Development Programme as addressing the New Challenges of climate change, bio-energy, water management and bio-diversity. Consequently, there will be no need to remodel our existing Programme, which would have been very disruptive.

Changes to cross compliance will also be minimal and in particular, I managed to achieve agreement that the new requirement for buffer strips alongside water courses can be met by what we are already implementing under our Nitrates Action plan.

There has been welcome progress in other areas, such as further decoupling of subsidy schemes from production in the rest of the EU, which will bring other Member States closer to our position of full decoupling and, thus, reduce distortions to competition. Set-aside will be abolished from 1 January 2009 and the Single Farm Payment (SFP) Scheme will be simplified as the number of different types of entitlements will be reduced to a single standard type.

Turning to the dairy sector, the deal reached increases annual milk quota levels by 1% for each of the next five years for most Member States and, hence, starts a process of gradual adjustment towards the end of quotas in 2015. While I am extremely concerned about the current market conditions in the dairy sector and am lobbying vigorously for the reintroduction of export refunds, we must also look to the longer term. Economic analysis shows that gradual increases in quota levels will achieve a smooth phase out and avoid a sudden and rapid increase in milk production in 2015 which would destabilise the market and damage our interests.

There are a number of areas where there are regional choices to be made, such as the option to move towards a flat rate SFP and the use of National Envelopes. The latter opens up interesting possibilities and I will want to explore these fully. Naturally, I will be consulting fully with our stakeholders on these issues in due course.

Livestock and Meats Commission

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many school cookery demonstrations have the Livestock and Meats Commission carried out, in the last 12 months. (AQW 2757/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The Livestock and Meat Commission have carried out 183 school cookery demonstrations in the last 12 months.

Cereal Producers

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what plans she has to assist the Northern Ireland Cereal Producers. (AQW 2758/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: My Department supports our cereal producers in a range of ways.

The College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) provides a comprehensive range of education and training programmes for cereal producers and processors.

CAFRE also deliver a range of knowledge and technology transfer projects to demonstrate the potential of new and innovative technology and encourage its adoption on cereal farms in the North.

The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) conducts research and development work, which provides an important science and expertise base for the cereal sector's development. Information is provided on all varieties of cereal crops for growers and end –users. Specific work on the management of oats crops to achieve acceptable milling quality and optimising nitrogen use efficiency in wheat crops in relation to environmental and economic concerns is also carried out.

Investigations into reduced nutrient and pesticide inputs to meet both the economic and environmental objectives of sustainable arable farming systems are ongoing. Advice is also provided to the industry on pest and disease management, weed control and related pesticide usage in cereal crops

Single Farm Payments

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many single farm payments have been made up to 1 November 2008, in the East Londonderry constituency. (AQW 2759/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: European Commission legislation permits the payment of 2008 Single Farm Payments to start on 1st December 2008. Payments cannot be made before the specified date.

Clostridium Botulinum Bacteria

Mr Savage asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if recent Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute findings have concluded that combustion (or incineration) of poultry litter is the most effective and safest method of ensuring elimination of clostridium botulinum bacteria. (AQW 2996/09)

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Potent toxins produced by the organism *Clostridium botulinum* are responsible for cases of fatal botulism in cattle. In addition to the potential presence of the toxin in litter, the organism itself may also be present in one of two states. In the first of these (the vegetative state) the organism is growing. In the second state, the organism is present as non-growing spores. This dormant form is much more resistant to inactivation than the vegetative form.

Composting is a recognised method of treating poultry litter, with goals that include the inactivation of any bacterial or viral pathogens, seeds and insect larvae that may be present, as well as yielding a useful end product. Successful composting is based on achieving a temperature typically in the range 56°C to 66°C (130-150°F) over a period of days, with a recommendation that the litter should be turned at least once. Turning is necessary to ensure that all of the stack (particularly the surface, sides and bottom) are exposed to a sufficiently high temperature.

The temperature achieved is influenced by a range of factors including the degree of moisture present, oxygen levels and the ratio of carbon to nitrogen present. Thus careful management is essential to successful composting.

Botulinum toxins are destroyed by heat after a relatively short time (hours) at 65°C, and the vegetative form of the actual organism is killed by a few minutes at 60°C. The spore form of the organism is much more resistant to inactivation by heat. Exposure to 121°C for 3 minutes is used in the food processing industry to achieve this. In light of this spores may survive the composting process.

When composting is not carried out correctly, the likelihood of survival of toxin or the vegetative form, in addition to spores, is higher.

Anaerobic digestion is another alternative on-farm method of treatment of poultry waste. These plants are typically run at either 35°C (mesophilic digestion) or 55°C (thermophilic digestion) with approximate retention times of 10 to 30 days depending on feedstock and temperature. It is anticipated that the majority of on-farm digesters will run at 35°C, well below target composting temperatures, and therefore unlikely to offer any significant benefits relative to composting for elimination of *Clostridium botulinum* bacteria and associated toxins.

In contrast the combustion should consistently reach the temperatures necessary to inactivate toxin, vegetative forms of the organism and spores. On this basis, it is the conclusion of AFBI scientists that combustion is the most effective and safest, but not the only, method of ensuring elimination of *Clostridium botulinum* bacteria and associated toxins.

CULTURE, ARTS AND LEISURE

Arts Council

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to list the areas that have received money, through the Arts Council, for Re-Imaging Communities. (AQW 2591/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (Mr G Campbell): Listed below are the amounts of Re-Imaging Communities grants awarded each year by District Council areas.

Council Area	Year	Grant Awarded £
Antrim	2008/09	39,308
	2006/07	130,182
		Total: £169,490
Ards	2007/08	53,922
	2006/07	11,840
		Total: £65,762
Armagh	2007/08	68,550
	2006/07	24,800
		Total: £93,350
Ballymena	2007/08	15,000
	2006/07	5,500
		Total: £20,500
Banbridge	2008/09	Total: £8,900
Belfast City Council	2008/09	427,045
	2007/08	461,286
	2006/07	177,853
		Total: 1,066,184
Carrickfergus	2008/09	Total: £5,690
Cookstown	2008/09	Total: £6,373
Craigavon	2008/09	177,250
	2006/07	44,000
		Total: £221,250
Derry City Council	2008/09	77,800
	2007/08	285,108
	2006/07	38,850
		Total: £401,758
Down	2006/07	Total: £15,000
Dungannon	2007/08	81,314
	2006/07	10,990
		Total: £92,304
Larne	2007/08	Total: £11,700

Council Area	Year	Grant Awarded £
Limavady	2007/08	Total: £15,157
Lisburn	2008/09	47,133
	2007/08	27,394
	2006/07	14,580
		Total: £89,107
Magherafelt	2007/08	Total: £26,656
Moyle	2006/07	Total: £9,180
Newry and Mourne	2006/07	Total: £49,820
Newtownabbey	2008/09	39,049
	2007/08	46,250
	2006/07	6,610
		Total: £91,909
North Down	2008/09	48,290
	2007/08	10,639
		Total: £58,929
		Grand Total: £2,519,019

Strategy for Minority Languages

Mr Simpson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline his approach to producing a strategy for minority languages in relation to (i) the historical funding position of privilege enjoyed by Irish over other languages; (ii) the diverse nature of the Irish language, resulting from historical abuse of it on the part of some who campaigned on its behalf; and (iii) the extent to which Irish and minority languages will be in public evidence in daily life as a result of such a strategy. (AQW 2630/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The Strategy for Indigenous or Regional Minority Languages which is currently being developed will address the needs of minority languages and will not single out specific languages for political ends.

Sporting Organisations

Mr Simpson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the amount allocated to sporting organisations, in each constituency, in each of the last three years. (AQW 2636/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The table below details the total amount of exchequer and lottery funding granted to sports organisations by Sport Northern Ireland in each of the last three financial years, broken down by parliamentary constituency.

EXCHEQUER AND LOTTERY FUNDING TO SPORTS CLUBS BY CONSTITUENCY

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Belfast East	-	-	-
Belfast North	-	-	800,000
Belfast South	161,770	-	-
Belfast West	-	-	-

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
East Antrim	-	-	520,000
East Londonderry	-	-	85,000
Fermanagh & S Tyrone	-	-	220,000
Foyle	225,000	-	531,342
Lagan Valley	-	139,531	-
Mid Ulster	-	-	345,000
Newry & Armagh	-	-	308,305
North Antrim	-	161,636	-
North Down	-	-	540,258
South Antrim	-	-	240,000
Strangford	-	-	-
Upper Bann	-	-	840,000
West Tyrone	-	-	1,692,451
South Down	108,183	-	-

European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the implementation of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. (AQW 2653/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The UK Government signed up to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in March 2000 and ratified it in March 2001.

Since then the UK has submitted two periodical reports to the Council of Europe, in 2002 and 2005, detailing the progress made in implementing the Charter. On both occasions the UK, and Northern Ireland, were deemed to be in partial or full compliance on each article of the Charter.

The 3rd UK report, which is compiled by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, was due on 1 July 2008. I have approved an Executive Paper setting out the Northern Ireland input to the UK report to explain progress made in implementing the Charter in Northern Ireland between 2005 and 2008.

I will present this to the Executive at the earliest opportunity.

Department's Staff Annual Report

Mr Simpson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many staff in his Department did not achieve an acceptable mark in their annual report, in the last reporting year. (AQW 2677/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Within my Department, there are no staff who received an unacceptable mark in their annual report, during the last reporting year.

New Public Record Office Site

Mr McCausland asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what extra precautions will be taken at the new Public Record Office site at the Titanic Quarter, following the assessment of flood risks; and what the cost will be of the extra precautions. (AQW 2686/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The flood risk assessment recommended that the finished floor level of the Public Record Office be raised to at least 4.2m OD (Ordnance Datum) ¹. This level will provide a 600mm free board on top of the predicted 1 in 200 year flood level, even when allowing for future sea level rise. (The highest recorded tide in Belfast is 2.9m OD). To take account of surrounding ground levels, the finished

floor level will be set at 4.55m OD, thus providing an even greater free board margin. The cost, associated with increased substructure works, estimated to be £60,000, was included in the original tender price. Titanic Quarter Ltd will also be undertaking site wide mitigation measures relating to road levels and drainage at no extra cost to PRONI.

¹ Ordnance Datum (OD) is the base Mean Sea Level at Belfast which is used for all maps produced for the Ordnance Survey NI.

New Public Record Office Site

Mr McCausland asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (i) when a full flood risk assessment was undertaken and completed for the new Public Record Office at the Titanic Quarter; (ii) who carried out the assessment; and (iii) to detail the cost of the assessment. (AQW 2687/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: (i) A preliminary flood risk assessment was provided as part of the tender submission in June 2007. This was based on a flood risk assessment carried out by RPS Consulting Engineers for Phase 2 of the overall Titanic Quarter development. A site specific flood risk assessment was completed in December 2007 and submitted as part of the Planning Application for the Public Record Office.

(ii) The assessment was carried out by RPS Consulting Engineers.

(iii) The cost of preparing the assessment was included in the overall tender price submitted by Titanic Quarter Ltd and was not identified as a specific cost.

New Public Record Office Site

Mr McCausland asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure when his Department took the decision to locate the new building for the Public Record Office at the Titanic Quarter. (AQW 2688/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:

Titanic Quarter Ltd was appointed as the preferred bidder in August 2007, with the notice to proceed with construction being subject to obtaining Planning Permission, agreement of construction costs and finalisation of all legal matters associated with the land transfer and Development Agreement.

Sport NI

Lord Browne asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the money that has been allocated to date by Sport NI to (i) gaelic; (ii) soccer; and (iii) rugby clubs, for ground safety improvements. (AQW 2689/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) is responsible for the distribution of funding for ground safety improvements. The total funding that has been allocated to date to Gaelic, Soccer and Rugby clubs for this purpose is as follows:

Gaelic	Soccer	Rugby
£5,522,659	£5,404,828	£ 345,991

A breakdown of these figures is provided in the attached table.

INTERIM SAFE SPORTS GROUNDS & STADIA SAFETY FUNDING BY GAA CLUB/COUNTY GROUND

ANTRIM GAA COUNTY BOARD

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	June 2003	65,650

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	January 2002	25,000
	February 2002	15,000
	September 2002	24,650
	September 2002	15,000
Stadia Safety Programme	N/A	557,773
	Total	£703,073

ARMAGH GAA COUNTY BOARD

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	August 2001	40,000
	January 2001	60,000
	June 2003	100,000
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	February 2002	25,000
	February 2002	15,000
	August 2002	15,000
	September 2002	25,000
Stadia Safety Programme	N/A	830,693
	Total	£1,110,693

DERRY GAA COUNTY BOARD

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	November 2001	210,000
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	February 2002	25,000
	September 2002	15,000
Stadia Safety Programme	N/A	800,000
	Total	£1,050,000

DOWN GAA COUNTY BOARD

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	November 2001	235,000
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	December 2001	25,000
	January 2002	15,000
	September 2002	15,000
Stadia Safety Programme	Expected 2007	800,000
	Total	£1,090,000

FERMANAGH GAA COUNTY BOARD/ENNISKILLEN GAELS GAA

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	November 2001	210,000
	August 2003	65,000
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	July 2001	25,000
Stadia Safety Programme	Expected 2008	405,123

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
	Total	£705,123

LISNASKEA EMMETTS GAC

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	N/A	Nil
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	February 2002	15,000
Stadia Safety Programme	N/A	Nil
	Total	£15,000

ST COLMS GAC

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	N/A	Nil
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	February 2002	15,000
Stadia Safety Programme	N/A	Nil
	Total	£15,000

TYRONE GAA COUNTY BOARD

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	August 2003	100,000
	August 2003	40,000
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	February 2002	15,000
	February 2002	25,000
	August 2002	15,000
	September 2002	25,000
Stadia Safety Programme	Expected 2007	613,770
	Total	£833,770

Total Awards For Gaa: £5,522,659

SUMMARY: INTERIM SAFE SPORTS GROUNDS & STADIA SAFETY FUNDING BY SOCCER CLUB**ARDS FOOTBALL CLUB**

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	N/A	Nil
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	August 2003	40,000
Stadia Safety Programme	N/A	Nil
	Total	£40,000

ARMAGH CITY FOOTBALL CLUB

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	September 2002	15,000
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	November 2001	15,000

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Stadia Safety Programme	N/A	Nil
	Total	£30,000

BALLYCLARE COMRADES FOOTBALL CLUB

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	N/A	Nil
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	January 2002	463
Stadia Safety Programme	N/A	Nil
	Total	£463

BALLYMENA UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	November 2001 August 2003	200,000 20,000
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	December 2001	25,000
Stadia Safety Programme	2007	161,636
	Total	£406,636

BANGOR FOOTBALL CLUB

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	N/A	Nil
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	July 2002 April 2004	14,807 14,663
Stadia Safety Programme	N/A	Nil
	Total	£29,470

CARRICK RANGERS FOOTBALL CLUB

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	N/A	Nil
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	December 2002	15,000
Stadia Safety Programme	N/A	Nil
	Total	£15,000

CLIFTONVILLE FOOTBALL CLUB

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	November 2001	250,000
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	November 2001	25,000
Stadia Safety Programme	2008	800,000
	Total	£1,075,000

COLERAINE FOOTBALL CLUB

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	May 2002	130,000
	June 2004	70,000
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	January 2002	25,000
Stadia Safety Programme	N/A	Nil
	Total	£225,000

CRUSADERS FOOTBALL CLUB

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	September 2001	5,000
	June 2002	77,450
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	January 2002	23,156
Stadia Safety Programme	N/A	Nil
	Total	£105,606

DERRY CITY FOOTBALL CLUB

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	December 2002	9,724
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	February 2002	25,000
Stadia Safety Programme	N/A	Nil
	Total	£34,724

DONEGAL CELTIC FOOTBALL CLUB

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	N/A	Nil
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	N/A	Nil
Stadia Safety Programme	2008	800,000
	Total	£800,000

DUNGANNON SWIFTS FOOTBALL CLUB

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	N/A	Nil
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	August 2002	13,233
	January 2003	12,133
Stadia Safety Programme	N/A	Nil
	Total	£25,366

GLENAVON FOOTBALL CLUB

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	November 2001	235,000
	August 2003	70,000
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	December 2001	25,000
Stadia Safety Programme	N/A	Nil
	Total	£330,000

GLENTORAN FOOTBALL CLUB

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	November 2001	217,000
	December 2002	25,597
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	December 2002	25,000
Stadia Safety Programme	N/A	Nil
	Total	£267,597

INSTITUTE FOOTBALL CLUB

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	N/A	Nil
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	September 2002	18,000
	September 2002	12,000
	August 2003	11,900
Stadia Safety Programme	N/A	Nil
	Total	£41,900

LARNE FOOTBALL CLUB

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	N/A	Nil
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	January 2001	15,000
Stadia Safety Programme	N/A	Nil
	Total	£15,000

LIMAVADY UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	N/A	Nil
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	May 2002	15,000
	September 2002	15,000
Stadia Safety Programme	N/A	Nil
	Total	£30,000

LINFIELD FOOTBALL CLUB

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	November 2001	150,000
	August 2003	85,000
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	December 2001	23,941
Stadia Safety Programme	N/A	Nil
	Total	£258,941

LISBURN DISTILLERY FOOTBALL CLUB

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	N/A	Nil
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	February 2002	12,384
Stadia Safety Programme	N/A	Nil
	Total	£12,384

NEWRY CITY FOOTBALL CLUB

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	September 2002	250,000
	November 2002	27,000
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	November 2001	25,000
Stadia Safety Programme	N/A	Nil
	Total	£302,000

OMAGH TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	October 2002	199,201
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	December 2001	23,290
Stadia Safety Programme	N/A	Nil
	Total	£222,491

PORTADOWN FOOTBALL CLUB

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	November 2001	5,000
	August 2008	245,256
	June 2003	65,000
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	December 2001	21,994
Stadia Safety Programme	2008	800,000
	Total	£1,137,250

Total Awards For Soccer £5,404,828

SUMMARY: INTERIM SAFE SPORTS GROUNDS & STADIA SAFETY FUNDING BY RUGBY CLUB**UB IRISH RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION**

Programme	Completion Date	Grant Awards (£)
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (MW)	November 2002	220,991
	December 2002	10,000
	June 2003	90,000
Interim Safe Sports Grounds (UW)	November 2001	25,000
Stadia Safety Programme	N/A	Nil
	Total	£345,991

Total Awards For Rugby: £345,991

Ulster-Scots and Irish language

Mr F McCann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many documents have been drafted by his Department in relation to (i) Ulster-Scots; and (ii) the Irish language, in each of the last 5 years. (AQW 2748/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: In the past five years my Department has drafted nine official publications in relation to Ulster-Scots and the Irish language.

There have been three official publications in relation to Ulster-Scots and six in relation to the Irish language.

Language Correspondence

Mr F McCann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail, including dates, the correspondence between his Department and (i) the Northern Ireland Office; and (ii) the Secretary of State, in relation to (a) the Irish language; and (b) Ulster-Scots, in each of the last 5 years. (AQW 2749/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: There was no official correspondence in this period with the Northern Ireland Office with regard to the Irish language or Ulster-Scots.

In August 2004, Angela Smith MP, the then Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, wrote to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland regarding the Ulster-Scots Academy.

Marching Bands

Mr McKay asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to list all the marching bands that have received funding from the Arts Council; and how much each band received, in the last three years. (AQW 2858/09)

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The attached table lists all the marching bands that have received funding from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. This is broken down by financial year and includes details of the relevant funding programme. You may wish to note that Musical Instruments for Bands is an exchequer funded programme and Awards for All is a lottery funded programme.

EDUCATION**Priory Integrated College**

Dr Farry asked the Minister of Education, in light of the current oversubscription of the existing Priory Integrated College, the over-subscription of all nearby post-primary integrated schools and the closure of Donaghadee

High School, to detail the reasons for the reduction of the authorised enrolment at the new build Priory Integrated College, Holywood, from 450 to 400. (AQW 2514/09)

The Minister of Education (Ms C Ruane): Tógfar an foirgneamh athsholáthar do Priory Integrated College fá choinne rollú factéarmach réamh-mheasta de 400 dalta a chumseoidh blianta 8 – 12 amháin.

The replacement building for Priory Integrated College is to be built for a projected long-term enrolment of 400 covering Years 8-12 only. The projection takes account of admission trends over the most recent 5 years from the main contributory primary schools, and the current numbers in those schools. It is not based therefore on the current enrolment at the College.

Attacks on Teaching Staff

Mr Simpson asked the Minister of Education to detail which ten schools recorded the greatest number of attacks on teachers and staff, in each of the last three years. (AQW 2516/09)

The Minister of Education:

Ní chruinníonn an Roinn Oideachais an t-eolas mar a iarradh é.

The Department of Education does not collect the information as requested.

I have on previous occasions provided information on the number of incidents of pupil suspensions and expulsions resulting from physical attacks on staff by education and library board area, parliamentary constituency and sector level.

However I do not believe it is appropriate to publish such information at school level as this would pose a significant risk that individual pupils and/or teachers could be identified.

Attacks on Teaching Staff

Mr Simpson asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of attacks on teaching staff, in each of the last three years, broken down by district council area. (AQW 2518/09)

The Minister of Education: Taispeánann an tábla thíos líon na bhfionraí a bhain le hionsaithe fisiciúla ar mhúinteoirí faoi chomhairle ceantair, i ngach bliain le trí bliana anuas a raibh figiúirí ar fáil dóibh.

The table below provides the number of suspensions for physical attacks on teachers by district council area, in each of the last three years for which figures are available.

Number of suspensions for physical attack by pupils on teachers from 2004/05 – 2006/07 by district council area.

District Council	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Antrim	9	9	*
Ards	*	*	*
Armagh	*	*	*
Ballymena	5	8	10
Ballymoney	6	*	*
Banbridge	8	8	*
Belfast	66	63	70
Carrickfergus	*	*	17
Castlereagh	7	10	*
Coleraine	9	12	13
Cookstown	*	*	*
Craigavon	10	12	11

District Council	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Derry	33	25	34
Down	7	16	8
Dungannon	*	6	*
Fermanagh	7	8	12
Larne	*	*	*
Limavady	5	7	*
Lisburn	14	15	11
Magherafelt	*	*	*
Moyle	5	5	*
Newry & Mourne	11	12	12
Newtownabbey	13	15	15
North Down	13	14	8
Omagh	8	13	19
Strabane	*	*	*
Total	236	258	240

* figures suppressed as there are less than five instances.

It should be noted that these figures relate to the number of suspensions not to the number of pupils suspended.

The numbers of expulsions are relatively small and are not disaggregated to district council area due to the risk that a school and/or pupil may be identifiable. There were 7 instances of expulsion in 2004/05, 4 in 2005/06 and 5 in 2006/07 relating to physical assaults on teaching staff.

The suspension and expulsions statistics for 2007/08 school year are currently being analysed by the Department and will be placed on the DE website when this has been completed.

Sports Strategy

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Education to outline the (i) contribution to date; and (ii) planned future contribution, from her Department to the implementation of the Sports Strategy. (AQW 2573/09)

The Minister of Education: I think sport and physical activity can make a really positive difference for our young people, both in terms of their health and their confidence, as well as their enjoyment in taking part. I am communicating directly with Gregory Campbell MLA, and previously communicated with Edwin Poots MLA, as the Minister for the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) on the content of the draft Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation 2008- 2018.

Bhí mo chuid oifigeach ag obair i gcomhar lena gcomhghleacaithe in DCAL agus iad ag forbairt na moltaí atá sa dréachtstraitéis. Tá plean gníomhaíochta á fhorbairt ag mo Roinn bunaithe ar an dréachtstraitéis.

My officials worked closely with their colleagues in DCAL as they developed the recommendations which are contained in the draft Strategy. My Department is also in the process of developing an action plan based on the draft Strategy. This will ensure that relevant links are made within school and beyond, and that we all play our part in making sure that our young people benefit from an approach which is joined up and has their interests, and that of society in general, at its core.

School Closures

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education to list the school closures that she has agreed to, since her time in office. (AQW 2594/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá 11 dúnadh scoile agus 2 thogra cónasctha faofa agam ó chuiagh mé i seilbh na hoifige. Tá an t-eolas liostaithe thíos.

I have approved 11 school closures and 2 amalgamation proposals since taking office. The information is listed below.

APPROVED SCHOOL CLOSURES FROM 8 MAY 2007

School	Date Of Closure
Minterburn PS, Caledon	31/08/2008
Collone PS, Armagh	31/08/2008
Shanmullagh PS, Ballinamallard	31/08/2008
Trillick PS, Omagh	31/08/2008
Conlig PS, Bangor	31/08/2008
Guinness PS, Ballynahinch	31/08/2008
Kindle Controlled Integrated PS, Ballykinlar	31/08/2008
Down Academy, Downpatrick*	31/08/2008
Donaghadee High School	31/08/2009
St Gabriel's College, Belfast	31/08/2008
Gaelscoil an Damba, Belfast	31/08/2008

* Associated with the opening of Blackwater Integrated College

CLOSURES RESULTING FROM AMALGAMATIONS

Schools	Date Of Amalgamation
Strabane Grammar School and Strabane High School to merge to form new school (to merge initially on the grammar school site)	To be agreed. Discussions on the implementation of the merger are being taken forward by the WELB
St Patrick's PS, Aughercloney and St Joseph's PS, Ahoghill amalgamated to form St Paul's PS, Ahoghill (on St Patrick's site)	1/04/2008

Attacks on Teaching Staff

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Education to name the 29 schools in the North Eastern Education and Library board where the physical attacks on teachers took place in 2006/07 and 2007/08. (AQW 2635/09)

The Minister of Education: Criedim nach mbeadh sé ceart ná cóir eolas dá leithéid a fhoilsiú ag leibhéal na scoile mar go mbeadh riosca suntasach ann go bhféadfaí daltaí agus/nó múinteoirí aonair a aithint.

I do not believe it is appropriate to publish such information at school level as this would pose a significant risk that individual pupils and/or teachers could be identified.

School Leavers

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of pupils in (i) each constituency; and (ii) each council area, who left school with no qualifications, broken down by (a) total; and (b) as a percentage of the total school leavers in each area, for each of the last five years. (AQW 2640/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá socraithe agam go gcuirfean an t-eolas a iarradh i Leabharlann an Tionóil.

I have arranged for the information requested to be placed in the Assembly Library.

Schools Maintenance

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail what schools maintenance is planned for each school, in the North Down constituency, for (i) the rest of 2008/9; and (ii) 2009-10. (AQW 2670/09)

The Minister of Education: Is é Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Oirdheiscirt, a mbíonn freagracht air as cothabháil na scoileanna rialaithe agus na scoileanna faoi chothabháil i dtoghcheantar Dhún Thuaidh, a shocraíonn méid an chistithe a leithdháiltear ar a bhuiséad cothabhála.

The South Eastern Education and Library Board, which has responsibility for the maintenance of controlled and maintained schools in the North Down constituency, determines how much funding it attributes to its maintenance budget. The Board have advised that it currently does not have any specific planned maintenance during the rest of 2008/09 or in 2009/10. Maintenance will be undertaken at schools on a response basis.

Attacks on Teaching Staff

Mr McCausland asked the Minister of Education how many physical attacks on teachers working in the Belfast Education and Library Board area occurred in the (i) 2006-07; and (ii) 2007-08, academic years. (AQW 2684/09)

The Minister of Education: In 2006/07 there were 70 instances of pupil suspensions for physical attacks on teachers in schools in the Belfast Education and Library Board area. The count is based on each incidence of suspension not on the number of pupils suspended.

Tá an Roinn ag déanamh anailíse faoi láthair ar na staitisticí maidir leis na daltaí a cuireadh ar fionraí nó ar díbríodh ón scoil iad le linn 2007/2008 agus cuirfear ar láithreán gréasáin na Roinne Oideachais iad nuair a bheas an anailís déanta.

The suspension and expulsions statistics for 2007/08 school year are currently being analysed by the Department and will be placed on the DE website when this has been completed.

Life Skills Programmes

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Education, for each of the last 3 years, how many children with Down's Syndrome have had access to Life Skills Programmes to facilitate their progressive independence in relation to adult services for (i) employment training; or (ii) further education, broken down by (a) total; and (b) as a percentage of the total number. (AQW 2685/09)

The Minister of Education: Ní choinníonn an Roinn Oideachais (DE) ná na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne (ELBanna) an t-eolas san fhormáid a iarradh. Chomh maith leis an oiliúint ar scileanna saoil a sholáthraítear i scoileanna ar bhonn rialta, is féidir liom a chur in iúl duit go bhfuil cláir scileanna saoil soláthartha ag na ELBanna do pháistí a bhfuil réimse riachtanas speisialta oideachais acu trí chistiú a chuir DE ar fáil ón Phacáiste Cistithe do Pháistí agus do Dhaoine Óga.

Neither the Department of Education (DE) nor the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) hold the information in the format requested. I can, however, advise you that in addition to the life skills training delivered routinely in schools, ELBs have successfully delivered life skills programmes to children with a range of special educational needs through funding made available through DE from the Children and Young People Funding Package. Total funding of 200k in 2006/07 and 2007/08 was available to the Education and Library Boards for this purpose.

This funding has enabled over 370 pupils to participate in life skills training programmes to improve self-help and independent living in each of the years funding was available. Programmes include a wide variety of school based life skills programmes for independent living and link courses with the local further education colleges. The school based programmes included practical work skills such as learning to use public transport, preparing for a working day in a unfamiliar place and also communication skills such as making and receiving telephone calls. Other programmes included essential adult literacy and numeracy and learning new life skills in catering and woodwork which has raised pupils self esteem and equipped them with skills which are easily transferred from school to further education to training and work placements.

In addition, I am advised by the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety that, whilst the provision of life skills courses is not a core function for Health and Social Care Trusts, all people with a learning disability

who attend day support services have a person centred service plan which may identify life skills training needs. This will be offered on site or in partnership with other agencies such as education, leisure services, community based groups and voluntary organisations.

Funding Awarded to 'Love for Life'

Mr Simpson asked the Minister of Education to detail the total funding awarded to 'Love for Life' by the Southern Education and Library Board, in each of the last 5 years. (AQW 2711/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá tugtha le fios ag Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Deiscirt (SELB) gurb é an cistiú iomlán a thug siad do 'Love for Life', i ngach bliain le 5 bliana anuas ná:

The Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) advises that the total funding it awarded to 'Love for Life', in each of the last 5 years is:

Year	SELB funding
2004/2005	£33,750
2005/2006	£11,250
2006/2007	£7,500
2007/2008	£10,000
2008/2009	£10,000
Total	£72,500

School Crossing Patrol Officers

Mr Savage asked the Minister of Education how many school-crossing persons have been employed in each academic year since 2003. (AQW 2730/09)

The Minister of Education: Bhí an teolas seo a leanas tugtha ag na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne faoi líon na n-oifigeach patróil thrasnú scoile a bhí fostaithe i ngach bliain acadúil ó 2003.

The Education and Library Boards have provided the following information on the number of school crossing patrol officers employed in each academic year since 2003:

	Academic Year					
	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
BELB	132	127	121	114	110	110
NEELB	156	152	152	150	149	148
SEELB	149	142	166	118	111	106
SELB	220	213	208	155	152	151
WELB	209	202	182	146	140	139
Total	866	836	829	683	662	654

Road Safety

Mr Savage asked the Minister of Education what consideration has been given to making road safety an essential part of the curriculum, especially in primary schools. (AQW 2731/09)

The Minister of Education: Is réimse í Sábháilteacht ar Bhóithre ar a mbíonn mo Roinn féin ag obair go géar leis an Roinn Comhshaoil le cinntiú go mbeidh daoine óga feasach ó thaobh na ceisteanna a bhaineann le sábháilteacht ar bhóithre de.

Road Safety is an area where my Department works closely with the Department of Environment to ensure that our young people are made aware of road safety issues.

Within the statutory revised curriculum, road safety education is provided to pupils from an early age, with programmes being provided across all Key Stages, from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 4. In primary schools this includes pupils being required to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to keeping themselves healthy and safe. In addition, the revised curriculum includes a new area of Learning for Life and Work where all young people, up to the age of 16, will be able to develop strategies in relation to preventing accidents on the road and, more generally, strategies for keeping safe and recognising, assessing and managing risk.

DOE, in discharging its statutory duty in relation to road safety, through its Road Safety Officers, provides all schools annually with free road safety teaching materials, and teachers are encouraged and supported to teach road safety on a regular, structured, basis. Road Safety Education Officers provide training and advice to teachers, as necessary, on the best use of materials to meet curricular requirements. The Education and Training Inspectorate maintains close and regular liaison with DOE, the Department of Education and CCEA in relation to road safety education in schools, and in support of provision in the statutory curriculum.

School Crossing Patrol Officers

Mr Savage asked the Minister of Education the total yearly cost of school-crossing patrol persons, per academic year, since 2003. (AQW 2734/09)

The Minister of Education: Bhí an teolas seo a leanas tugtha ag na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne agus léiríonn sé na costais a bhaineann le soláthar oifigeach patróil thrasnú scoile amháin i ngach bliain ó 2003.

The Education and Library Boards have provided the following information on the total annual cost of providing school crossing patrol officers in each year since 2003. I should, however, advise that Boards do not hold financial information in the academic year format, therefore, all figures provided are shown in financial year (April to March):

	Financial Year					
	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09*
BELB	£523k	£571k	£561k	£555k	£519k	£557k
NEELB	£693k	£563k	£665k	£674k	£653k	£642k
SEELB	£452k	£698k	£586k	£479k	£434k	£450k
SELB	£1,061k	£1,055k	£1,044k	£828k	£844k	£883k
WELB	£943k	£967k	£834k	£604k	£578k	£635k
Total	£3,672k	£3,854k	£3,690k	£3,140k	£3,028k	£3,167k

* Estimated

School Crossing Patrol Officers

Mr Savage asked the Minister of Education to detail the cost of employing one school crossing patrol person for the academic year 2007-08; and the salary comparison for each academic year from 2003/04. (AQW 2737/09)

The Minister of Education: Bhí an teolas seo a leanas tugtha ag na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne agus léiríonn sé na costais a bhaineann le soláthar oifigeach patróil thrasnú scoile amháin i ngach bliain ó 2003.

The Education and Library Boards have provided the following information which shows the costs associated with providing one school crossing patrol officer in each year since 2003. I should, however, advise that Boards do not hold financial information in the academic year format, therefore, all figures provided are shown in financial year (April to March):

	Financial Year				
	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
BELB	£3,962	£4,496	£4,636	£4,868	£4,718
NEELB	£3,739	£4,380	£4,418	£4,520	£4,801
SEELB	£3,874	£4,868	£3,521	£4,019	£3,913
SELB	£4,469	£4,541	£4,632	£4,722	£4,978
WELB	£3,267	£3,353	£3,456	£3,559	£3,645
Average	£3,862	£4,328	£4,133	£4,338	£4,411

I should also advise that payment for school crossing patrols will vary between each individual officer, dependent on the number of hours that they work and the time that they have served in their current post.

Major Capital Building Programmes

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education to outline her Department's major capital building programmes, for the next three years. (AQW 2742/09)

The Minister of Education: Is iad seo a leanas sa tábla thíos na príomhthionscadail chaipitiúla a ndéanfar dul chun cinn orthu i rith na trí bliana eile le teacht.

The major capital building projects which are to be progressed over the next three years are shown in the table below.

Project description	Location
Projects currently on Site	
Ashfield Girls HS - New replacement school	Belfast
Ballysillan Youth Club - New replacement accommodation	Belfast
Bangor Academy - New replacement school	Bangor
Boys Model - New replacement school	Belfast
Girls Model - New replacement school	Belfast
Grosvenor Grammar - New replacement school	Belfast
Holy Cross College - New replacement school	Strabane
Orangefield PS - New replacement school	Belfast
Pond Park P.S. - New replacement school	Lisburn
Towerview P.S. – New replacement school	Bangor
Abbey G.S. – New replacement school	Newry
Assumption G.S. – Extension & Refurbishment	Ballynahinch
Ballinderry P.S. – New replacement school	Lisburn
Ballymacrickett P.S. Glenavy – New replacement school	Crumlin
Brookefield Special School, – New replacement school	Moira
De La Salle College – New replacement school	Belfast
Drumragh Integrated College – New replacement school	Omagh
Mount Lourdes G.S. – Extension & Refurbishment	Enniskillen
St Colman's College – Extension & Refurbishment	Newry
St Dominic's H.S – Extension & Refurbishment	Belfast

Project description	Location
St Peter's P.S. Cloughreagh – New replacement school	Newry
St Catherine's College – Extension	Armagh
Templepatrick P.S. – New replacement school	Templepatrick
Banbridge Academy – Extension & Refurbishment	Banbridge
Projects currently in Planning	
Ballymoney HS - New replacement school	Ballymoney
Glendhu Nursery School – New replacement school	Belfast
Glenwood P.S. / Edenderry N.S. – New replacement school	Belfast
Greenwood Assessment Centre – New replacement school	Belfast
Holy Trinity College - New replacement school	Cookstown
Lagan College - Extension & Refurbishment	Belfast
Loreto Grammar - New replacement school	Omagh
Mitchell House Special School – New replacement school	Belfast
Our Lady's & St Patrick's GS - New replacement school	Belfast
Rainey Endowed School - New replacement school	Magherafelt
Ravenscroft Nursery School – New replacement school	Belfast
Springhill P.S. – New replacement school	Belfast
St Cecilia's College - New replacement school	Derry
St Joseph's PS - New replacement school	Carryduff
St Mary's College - New replacement school on new site	Derry
St Mary's PS - New replacement school	Portglenone
St Patrick's GS - New replacement school	Downpatrick
Strand / Sydenham P.S. – New replacement school	Belfast
Strandtown P.S. – New replacement school	Belfast
Taughmonagh PS - New replacement school	Belfast
Tor Bank Special - New replacement school	Dundonald
Artigarvan P.S. – New replacement school	Strabane
Arvalee / Cranny Special School – New replacement school	Omagh
Ballykelly P.S. – New replacement school	Limavady
Bangor G.S. – New replacement school	Bangor
Belmont Special School – New replacement school	Derry
Coranny & Cornagague P.S. – New replacement school	Roslea
Dean Maguire College – New replacement school	Carrickmore
Devenish College – New replacement school	Enniskillen
Dromore Central P.S. – New replacement school	Dromore
Ebrington P.S. – New replacement school	Derry
Edendork P.S. – New replacement school	Dungannon
Eglinton P.S. – New replacement school	Derry
Enniskillen Model P.S. – New replacement school	Enniskillen

Project description	Location
Foyle & Londonderry College – New replacement school	Derry
Glastry College – New replacement school	Ballyhalbert
Holy Family P.S. – New replacement school	Magherafelt
Hollywood P.S. – New replacement school	Hollywood
Knockbreda H.S. – New replacement school	Belfast
Knockevin Special School – New replacement school	Downpatrick
Limegrove / Glasvey Special School – New replacement school	Limavady
Lisbellaw P.S. – New replacement school	Lisbellaw
Lisnagelvin P.S. – New replacement school	Lisnagelvin
Little Flower Girls S.S. – New replacement school	Belfast
Lurgan College - New replacement school	Lurgan
Magherafelt H.S. – New replacement school.	Magherafelt
Methodist College – Extension & Refurbishment	Belfast
New Buildings P.S. – New replacement school	Derry
Omagh I.P.S. – New replacement school	Omagh
Parkhall College – New replacement school and Youth Provision	Antrim
Portadown College – New replacement school	Portadown
Priory College – New replacement school	Hollywood
St Bronagh's P.S. – New replacement school and Youth Provision	Rostrevor
St Columbanus College – New replacement school and Youth Provision	Bangor
St Columbkille's P.S. – New replacement school	Carrickmore
St Conor's P.S. – New replacement school	Omagh
St Joseph's Convent P.S. – New replacement school	Newry
St Louis G.S. – New replacement school	Kilkeel
St Mary's P.S. – New replacement school	Banbridge
St Patrick's & St Brigid's P.S. – New replacement school	Ballycastle
St Patrick's Academy – New replacement school	Dungannon
St Patrick's College, – New replacement school	Banbridge
St Paul's P.S. – New replacement school	Irvinestown
Strathearn G.S. – New replacement school	Belfast
Tannaghmore P.S. – New replacement school	Lurgan
The High School Ballynahinch – New replacement school	Ballynahinch
Carrick P.S. – New replacement school	Warrenpoint
Colaiste Feirste, – Extension & Refurbishment	Belfast
Dromintee P.S. Killeavey – New replacement school	Newry
Magherafelt P.S. – New replacement school	Magherafelt
Scoil Na Fuiseoige, – New replacement school	Belfast
St Clare's Abbey P.S. – New replacement school	Newry
St Colman's P.S. Lambeg – New replacement school	Lisburn

Project description	Location
St Columba's P.S. Straw – New replacement school	Draperstown
St Joseph's P.S. Madden – New replacement school	Armagh
St Mary's P.S. – New replacement school	Newcastle
St Oliver Plunkett P.S. – New replacement school	Forkhill
St Patrick's G.S. – Extension & Refurbishment	Armagh
St Teresa's P.S. – New replacement school	Lurgan
Victoria College – Extension & Refurbishment	Belfast
Whitehouse P.S – New replacement school	Newtownabbey

St Malachy's Youth Centre

Mr A Maskey asked the Minister of Education if her Department is in receipt of an economic appraisal for the proposed St Malachy's Youth Centre in the Markets area, South Belfast. (AQW 2769/09)

The Minister of Education: Scríobh an tUrramach Anthony Curran chugam ar son Iontaobhaithe St Malachy's Youth Centre ar an 25 Meitheamh 2008 ag iarraidh £990K i leith na gcostas a bhaineann le Club Óige nua a thógáil.

The Rev. Anthony Curran wrote to me on behalf of the Trustees of St Malachy's Youth Centre on the 25 June 2008 requesting £990K towards building a new Youth Club. Father Curran has written to the Department on a number of occasions since December 2001 about the proposed new St Malachy's Youth Centre; however the Department only received an up to date Economic Appraisal for this project on the 25 June 2008. In accordance with standard procedures, the appraisal was sent to both the Department's Economic Advisory Unit and Building Advisory Branch to determine whether the project is viable and whether the business case represents value for money.

Comments on the economic appraisal have been sent back to St Malachy's for action. To date no reply has been received. The Department cannot make any definite commitment at present to this project until the Economic Appraisal is approved and the existing competing demands on its capital budget are also considered.

St Malachy's Youth Centre

Mr A Maskey asked the Minister of Education what progress has been made in relation to the proposed St Malachy's Youth Centre in the Markets area, South Belfast. (AQW 2770/09)

The Minister of Education: Scríobh an tUrramach Anthony Curran chugam ar son Iontaobhaithe St Malachy's Youth Centre ar an 25 Meitheamh 2008 ag iarraidh £990K i leith na gcostas a bhaineann le Club Óige nua a thógáil.

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Comments on the economic appraisal have been sent back to St Malachy's for action. To date no reply has been received. The Department cannot make any definite commitment at present to this project until the Economic Appraisal is approved and the existing competing demands on its capital budget are also considered.

Parkhall Community College

Mr Burnside asked the Minister of Education what progress has been made on the proposed build programme for Parkhall Community College; and what is the proposed start date for work at the campus. (AQW 2773/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Oirthuaiscirt (NEELB) ag céim chun tosaigh faoi láthair maidir le dearadh foirgnimh nua scoile do Parkhall College chun freastal a dhéanamh ar rollú fadtéarmach (LTE) de 735 dalta.

The North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) is currently at an advanced stage in the design of a new school building for Parkhall College to accommodate a long term enrolment (LTE) 735 pupils. The LTEs for all new build schemes are kept under review. The Department and the NEELB will consider the appropriateness of the LTE as part of the consideration of the recent Development proposal to acquire controlled integrated status. It is estimated that construction work could start on site in summer 2009.

Parkhall Community College

Mr Burnside asked the Minister of Education to detail the anticipated enrolment figures for the proposed Parkhall Integrated College; and if enrolment will be increased by changing the status of the campus.

(AQW 2776/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Oirthuaiscirt (NEELB) ag céim chun tosaigh faoi láthair maidir le dearadh foirgnimh nua scoile do Parkhall College chun freastal a dhéanamh ar rollú fadtéarmach (LTE) de 735 dalta.

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Pupil Suspensions and Expulsions

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Education to give a breakdown of the numbers of pupils (i) expelled; and (ii) suspended, from (a) primary; and (b) post primary, controlled and maintained schools, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 2788/09)

The Minister of Education: Bailítear eolas ar dhaltá a cuireadh ar fionraí iad agus a caitheadh amach ón scoil iad ar bhonn bliantúil ó na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne agus foisítear an t-eolas seo ar láithreán gréasáin na Roinne nuair a bhíonn próiseas mionanailíse déanta air.

Information on pupil suspensions and expulsions is collected annually from the Education and Library Boards and published on the Department's website following a detailed analysis process. Statistics for the 2007/08 school year are currently undergoing final analysis and will be published in the coming weeks.

The figures requested for the school years 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2006/07 are set out in the table below:

PUPILS EXPELLED BROKEN DOWN BY SCHOOL AND MANAGEMENT TYPE:

School Year	School	School Management Type	
		Controlled	Catholic Maintained
2004/05	Primary	*	*
	Post-primary	19	23
2005/06	Primary	*	*
	Post-primary	14	20
2006/07	Primary	*	*
	Post-primary	11	14

Note: * = denotes figure less than five

This data includes controlled and catholic maintained schools only. It does not include expulsions from grant maintained and controlled integrated schools, voluntary grammar schools and other maintained schools, which are included in the 'other' category for statistical purposes during data collection.

Data includes pupils in Key Stages 1-4 only.

Pupils suspended broken down by school and management type:

School Year	School	School Management Type	
		Controlled	Catholic Maintained
2004/05	Primary	186	92
	Post-primary	2,017	1,894
2005/06	Primary	154	88
	Post-primary	2,102	1,878
2006/07	Primary	150	72
	Post-primary	1,850	1,772

Note: This data includes controlled and catholic maintained schools only. It does not include expulsions from grant maintained and controlled integrated schools, voluntary grammar schools and other maintained schools, which are included in the 'other' category for statistical purposes during data collection.

Data includes pupils in Key Stages 1-4 only.

Primary includes primary schools and prep depts.

Assembly Questions

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Education how much it costs her Department to employ someone to translate Assembly questions into Irish. (AQW 2790/09)

The Minister of Education: Is cuid thábhachtach í aistriú na gCeisteanna Tionóil de na freagrachtaí éagúlса a bhíonn ar an bheirt Oifigeach Foirne Gaeilge i mo Roinn. Dá dheasca sin, ní dhéantar na costais a thabhaítear i gcomhlíonadh an taise áirithe seo a ríomh ar leithligh.

The translation of Assembly Questions into Irish forms an intrinsic part of the various responsibilities of my Department's two Irish Language Staff Officers. Consequently, the costs incurred in this specific task are not separately calculated.

Teaching Posts

Mr Newton asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of teaching posts currently being filled by substitute/temporary teachers in (i) primary; (ii) secondary; and (iii) grammar, schools. (AQW 2798/09)

The Minister of Education:

School Type	Daily Paid Temporary teachers	Hourly Paid Temporary Teachers	Total
Primary	2270	268	2538
Post Primary	1426	91	1517
Total	3696	359	4055

Níl eolas faoi scoileanna ghramadaí dheonacha ar fáil go héasca agus mar sin de bhí costas díréireach ag baint leis.

Information on Voluntary Grammar schools is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Education and Skills Authority

Mr Bresland asked the Minister of Education what impact the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority will have on developing business cases for capital projects. (AQW 2820/09)

The Minister of Education: Sa pháipéar comhairliúcháin ar phleanáil bunaithe sa cheantar, sainaitníodh go mbeadh an príomhról ag an Údarás um Oideachas agus Scileanna (ESA) chun déileáil leis an phróiseas um phleanáil bunaithe sa cheantar amach anseo.

The consultation paper on area-based planning identified the Education and Skills Authority (ESA) as having the key role in leading the area-based planning process in future. This would include the development of business cases for capital projects in consultation with sectoral representatives within the more strategic context of area plans which assess the educational needs of the area. ESA will be able to bring greater coherence and consistency to our planning processes which will inform the work on business cases.

Extended Schools Programmes

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education how many schools in the Southern Education and Library Board area operate Extended Schools programmes; and how many have had their funding cut in the past year. (AQW 2839/09)

The Minister of Education: Bíonn séirbhísí breisithe lasmuigh den lá scoile tradisiúnta curtha ar fáil ag formhór na scoileanna laistigh de cheantar Bhord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Deiscirt, agus is féidir leo seo a dhéanamh trí iarrachtaí deonacha, trí mhaoinithe scoileanna agus trí acmhainní a fuarthas ó eagraíochtaí a bhronnann deontais.

Most schools within the SELB area offer extended services beyond the traditional school day and are able to do so through a combination of voluntary effort, school funds and resources raised from grant making organisations.

My Department supports extended activities in the most disadvantaged areas through the Extended Schools programme. As you know I have been highly supportive of this programme and have recently secured an additional £5m from the September monitoring round to restore previous funding levels.

In the current financial year 84 schools in the Southern Education and Library Board were allocated funding from the Extended schools programme.

Of these schools:

- 28 have had funding reduced when compared to 2007/08 allocations. This has been due to either a drop in pupil enrolment figures or because the school concerned decided to withdraw from a clustering arrangement (schools which cluster are entitled to an additional 15% allocation).
- A further 8 schools were allocated reduced funding because the percentage of pupils enrolled who are classified as disadvantaged or lived in disadvantaged areas fell just below the qualifying threshold.

There were 16 schools which were no longer eligible for the programme because the percentage of qualifying pupils enrolled fell short of the qualifying threshold. In those cases I was able to provide funding for the period April-June 2008 to see the schools through to the end of the last school year.

New Senior Technical High School

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education what plans she has to build a new senior technical high school in Lurgan. (AQW 2840/09)

The Minister of Education: Fógraíodh scoil athsholáthair do Lurgan Collage ar an suíomh reatha i mí Márta 2006 agus tá dul chun cinn á dhéanamh ar an obair i gcomhar le Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Deiscirt.

A replacement school for Lurgan College on the existing site was announced in March 2006 and work is being progressed with the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB). A revised economic appraisal was necessary due to proposed changes to the original plans as subsequent to the announcement the SELB felt it was desirable to retain a link with the existing listed building. The revised appraisal is currently with the department for approval.

New School Buildings

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education what plans she has to bring forward the date for completion of the new school buildings at Lurgan College and Portadown College from the present estimate of 2012/2013, to help boost construction industry employment; and what discussions she has had with Executive colleagues on this matter. (AQW 2841/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá obair an dá scéime a bhaineann le Lurgan College agus Portadown College ag dul chun cinn le Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Oirdheiscirt (SELB).

Work on both schemes for Lurgan and Portadown Colleges is being progressed with the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB). Revised economic appraisals were, however, necessary for both due to proposed changes to the original recommended options. Subsequent to the announcement the SELB decided that in respect of Lurgan College it was desirable to retain a link with the existing listed building. In the case of Portadown College the Board requested a major change to the preferred option.

The revised appraisal for Lurgan College is currently with the Department for approval. The SELB has recently submitted a further revision to the appraisal for Portadown College. The Department and the Board are committed to advancing the schemes as soon as possible. The SELB have also confirmed that the estimated length of contract for both projects is three years. I have had no discussions with Executive colleagues on the schemes.

Educational Psychologists

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education how many children are waiting to see an educational psychologist in each school in the Southern Education and Library Board area. (AQW 2842/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá tugtha le fios ag Príomhfheidhmeannach Bhord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Deiscirt dom go mbíonn samhail um roinnt an ama do sholáthar seirbhíse in úsáid ag Seirbhís Siceolaíochta Oideachais an Bhoird agus bíonn scoileanna ag cur a gcuid riachtanas in ord tosaíochta don bhliain faoin tsamhail seo, i rith mhí Mhéan Fómhair, in éineacht leis an siceolaí oideachais (EP) a bhíonn ainmnithe acu.

I have been advised by the Chief Executive of the Southern Education and Library Board that the Board's Educational Psychology Service uses a time allocation model of service delivery under which schools prioritise their needs for the year, during September, together with their named educational psychologist (EP). As such, schools hold their own waiting lists and submit completed referral forms as appropriate throughout the year. Agreed referrals may be sent to the EPs a few days or weeks prior to assessment. As a consequence this data is not held centrally by the Board.

It is therefore not possible to state how many children are waiting to see an educational psychologist in each school.

Neighbourhood Renewal

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education how much money has her Department contributed to the delivery of Neighbourhood Renewal in (i) Lurgan; (ii) Brownlow; and (iii) Portadown, in each of the last three years. (AQW 2855/09)

The Minister of Education: Mar is eol daoibh, bíonn príomhfhreagracht ag an Roinn Forbartha Sóisialta as feidhmiú na Straitéise um Athnuachan Comharsanachta.

As you will be aware the Department of Social Development has lead responsibility for the implementation of the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy.

My Department fully supports the strategic aims of the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy in tackling poverty and social exclusion in the north and welcomes the work undertaken by the various Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships. The Strategy sits very comfortably with our general policy and priorities for improved educational outcomes and narrowing differentials. Given the link between education performance and social disadvantage it comes as no surprise that the Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships in Lurgan, Brownlow and North West Portadown have identified education as a key issue in their Action Plans.

The Extended Schools Programme has allowed eligible schools serving these areas to develop programmes to meet the needs of their pupils, typically through Breakfast Clubs and After School provision. Details of Extended

school funding, which is in addition to core funding allocated to the schools in question over the past 3 financial years are as follows:-

Neighbourhood Renewal Area	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9
Lurgan	£203,182	£203,168	£138,609
Brownlow	£188,884	£189,159	£188,584
NW Portadown	£171,613	£173,487	£155,606

I have also asked all Extended Schools to give a priority to engagement with Neighbourhood Renewal Partnerships as part of the process of developing their action plans for the current year.

In addition to this funding, colleagues in the Southern Education and Library Board participate in the work of Neighbourhood Partnerships including Lurgan, Brownlow and North West Portadown. Total cost to the SELB for staff time amounts to £50k over the 2007/08 and 2008/09 years.

Class Sizes

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Education what the average (i) P1; (ii) P2; and (iii) P3, class size is in the Southern Education and Library Board area; and to detail the schools that have classes in excess of her Department's maximum guideline of 30 pupils. (AQW 2862/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá an t-eolas a iarradh sna táblaí thíos.

The information requested is contained in the tables below.

AVERAGE CLASS SIZE FOR YEAR 1, 2 AND 3 CLASSES IN SCHOOLS IN THE SOUTHERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD AREA – 2007/08

Year	Average Class Size
1	22
2	24
3	24

Primary schools that have Year 1, 2 or 3 classes exceeding 30 pupils in the Southern Education and Library Board area – 2007/08

- Waringstown Ps
- Fair Hill Ps, Dromore
- Drumadonnell Ps
- Mount St Catherine's Ps, Armagh
- St Joseph's Convent Ps, Newry
- St Patrick's Ps, Newry
- St Patrick's Ps, Dungannon
- St Mary's Ps, Dungannon
- St Dallan's Ps, Warrenpoint
- Portadown Integrated Ps

Source: Annual school census

Note: Figures do not include classes that are composite with any other year group.

History Curriculum

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education if the Holocaust is still a part of the history curriculum. (AQW 2900/09)

The Minister of Education: Soláthraíonn an curaclam athbheithnithe réimse deiseanna do scoileanna leis an tUileoscadh agus ceisteanna eile a bhaineann leis a phlé.

The revised curriculum provides a range of opportunities for schools to explore the Holocaust and related issues.

At Key Stage 2 (Years 5 to 7) there are opportunities in the curricular areas, the World Around Us, and Personal Development & Mutual Understanding, for pupils to explore areas such as human rights and social responsibility, how they and others interact in the world, causes of conflict, and appropriate responses.

At Key Stage 3 (Years 8 to 10) the statutory Minimum Content for History requires opportunities to be provided to pupils to investigate the impact of significant events of the 20th century on the world and investigate critical issues in history or historical figures who have behaved ethically or unethically. In addition, Local and Global Citizenship provides opportunities for pupils to explore issues relating to diversity in societies, identify the challenges and opportunities which diversity and inclusion present, in local, national and global contexts; and investigate key human rights principles and local and global scenarios where human rights have been seriously infringed. The Education and Library Boards have provided post-primary schools with a resource to assist them on delivering teaching about the Holocaust.

Teaching Methods

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education when her Department last assessed primary school teachers' understanding of teaching methods in (i) English; (ii) Mathematics; and (iii) ICT. (AQW 2902/09)

The Minister of Education: Déanann an Chigireacht Oideachais agus Oilíuna (ETI) measúnú ar cháilíocht theagasc an Bhéarla, an Mhata agus na Teicneolaíochta Faisnéise agus Cumarsáide i ngach uile chigireacht a dhéantar ar bhunscoileanna.

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) assess the quality of teaching in English, Maths and ICT in all inspections of primary schools. Judgements made on quality, include an evaluation of each teacher's knowledge, skills and understanding. In the 2006-2008 period, over 90% of primary schools inspected were providing a satisfactory or better quality of education with around 75% of lessons in English, Maths and ICT being evaluated as good or better.

Teacher Guidelines

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education what guidelines are in place for teachers to (i) initiate discussion on; and (ii) respond to pupil requests to discuss in science class, alternatives to Darwinian evolution. (AQW 2903/09)

The Minister of Education: Bíonn m'fhócas fós dírithe ar thacaíocht a thabhairt d'oideachas ár ndaoine óga ar fad thar gach uile chuid den churaclam.

My focus remains on supporting the education of all our young people across all areas of the curriculum. The revised curriculum offers greater opportunities for alternatives to evolution views to be explored. It also provides the flexibility for teachers themselves to determine how to teach, using their professional judgement about the approaches to be used. The Department of Education does not tell teachers how to teach; that is a matter for their professional judgement.

Regarding the Teachers TV poll, I note that, out of some 1,200 teacher responses to this survey, only 9 were from the north of Ireland, and that the responses received included a wide range of often very different opinions.

Bíonn dualgas reachtúil ar Chomhairle Churachlaim Scrúdúcháin agus Mheasúnaithe (CCEA) le comhairle a thabhairt dom faoin churaclam scoile anseo.

The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) has a statutory duty to advise me on the school curriculum here. In providing its advice, CCEA takes account of the views of interested parties. Its professional advice is that it is important to distinguish between teaching an evidence based approach to scientific theories and knowledge in science lessons, and exploring other beliefs about how the world came into existence, which could take place in other subjects such as RE. This aligns with professional advice provided to schools by the Association for Science Education (ASE).

Teacher Guidelines

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education for her assessment of a recent Teachers TV poll, which stated that (i) almost 50% of respondents believe that excluding alternatives to evolution was counter-productive and would alienate pupils; and (ii) 31% of respondents, including 18% of science teachers, believe that alternative explanations to Darwinian evolution should be given equal status in lessons. (AQW 2904/09)

The Minister of Education: Bíonn m'fhócas fós dírithe ar thacaíocht a thabhairt d'oideachas ár ndaoine óga ar fad thar gach uile chuid den churaclam.

My focus remains on supporting the education of all our young people across all areas of the curriculum. The revised curriculum offers greater opportunities for alternatives to evolution views to be explored. It also provides the flexibility for teachers themselves to determine how to teach, using their professional judgement about the approaches to be used. The Department of Education does not tell teachers how to teach; that is a matter for their professional judgement.

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Student Teachers

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Education what is the proportion of student teachers, who on finishing their course, took up full-time permanent teaching posts, in each of the last three years. (AQW 2912/09)

The Minister of Education: Ní hé an Roinn a bhíonn mar fhostóir na múinteoirí agus ní féidir léi teacht ar an eolas seo go héasca.

The Department does not employ teachers nor does it readily hold this information. However, the Department has analysed the employment patterns of newly qualified teachers during the period 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008, using information provided by the General Teaching Council (GTC) on those teachers who graduated during registration years 2005/06 to 2007/08 and who are currently registered with the Council. The information is as follows:

	(1) 2005/06	(1) 2006/07	(1) 2007/08
Total number of currently registered graduates	669	708	712
Number employed on a full-time permanent basis during the period 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008	391	282	157
Proportion of graduates employed on a full-time permanent basis	58.45%	39.83%	22.05%

Note:

1. The years stated refer to the GTC Registration Year, i.e. 1 April to 31 March.

School Leavers

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Education how many school leavers left without achieving at least 5 GCSEs at grade C or above, or the equivalent vocational qualifications, in each academic year since 2004-05,

broken down by parliamentary constituency; and the percentage of these leavers that went into employment.
(AQW 2925/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá an teolas a iarradh sonraithe sna táblaí thíos:

The information requested is detailed in the tables below:

NUMBER OF SCHOOL LEAVERS NOT ACHIEVING AT LEAST 5 GCSE'S A*-C (INC EQUIVALENT) THAT HAD A DESTINATION RECORDED AS EMPLOYMENT BY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY 2004/05

Parliamentary Constituency	Number of school leavers not achieving at least 5 GCSE's A*-C (inc equiv)	Number of school leavers not achieving at least 5 GCSE's A*-C (inc equiv) that had a destination recorded as Employment	Percentage of school leavers not achieving at least 5 GCSE's A*-C (inc equiv) that had a destination recorded as Employment
Belfast East	396	58	14.6
Belfast North	571	115	20.1
Belfast South	295	45	15.3
Belfast West	817	183	22.4
East Antrim	433	72	16.6
East Derry	526	57	10.8
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	485	67	13.8
Foyle	713	94	13.2
Lagan Valley	438	52	11.9
Mid Ulster	576	107	18.6
Newry And Armagh	590	78	13.2
North Antrim	553	93	16.8
North Down	304	41	13.5
South Antrim	469	82	17.5
South Down	633	68	10.7
Strangford	476	72	15.1
Upper Bann	571	61	10.7
West Tyrone	315	38	12.1
Missing or Invalid Postcodes	201	40	19.9
	9362	1423	15.2

NUMBER OF SCHOOL LEAVERS NOT ACHIEVING AT LEAST 5 GCSE'S A*-C (INC EQUIVALENT) THAT HAD A DESTINATION RECORDED AS EMPLOYMENT BY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY 2005/06

Parliamentary Constituency	Number of school leavers not achieving at least 5 GCSE's A*-C (inc equiv)	Number of school leavers not achieving at least 5 GCSE's A*-C (inc equiv) that had a destination recorded as Employment	Percentage of school leavers not achieving at least 5 GCSE's A*-C (inc equiv) that had a destination recorded as Employment
Belfast East	360	99	27.5
Belfast North	586	217	37.0
Belfast South	282	67	23.8
Belfast West	718	346	48.2
East Antrim	432	169	39.1
East Derry	531	121	22.8

Parliamentary Constituency	Number of school leavers not achieving at least 5 GCSE's A*-C (inc equiv)	Number of school leavers not achieving at least 5 GCSE's A*-C (inc equiv) that had a destination recorded as Employment	Percentage of school leavers not achieving at least 5 GCSE's A*-C (inc equiv) that had a destination recorded as Employment
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	443	176	39.7
Foyle	646	180	27.9
Lagan Valley	452	153	33.8
Mid Ulster	517	190	36.8
Newry And Armagh	588	96	16.3
North Antrim	569	158	27.8
North Down	309	104	33.7
South Antrim	337	162	48.1
South Down	613	163	26.6
Strangford	461	140	30.4
Upper Bann	595	169	28.4
West Tyrone	501	99	19.8
Missing or Invalid Postcodes	194	67	34.5
	9134	2876	31.5

NUMBER OF SCHOOL LEAVERS NOT ACHIEVING AT LEAST 5 GCSE'S A*-C (INC EQUIVALENT) THAT HAD A DESTINATION RECORDED AS EMPLOYMENT BY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY 2006/07

Parliamentary Constituency	Number of school leavers not achieving at least 5 GCSE's A*-C (inc equiv)	Number of school leavers not achieving at least 5 GCSE's A*-C (inc equiv) that had a destination recorded as Employment	Percentage of school leavers not achieving at least 5 GCSE's A*-C (inc equiv) that had a destination recorded as Employment
Belfast East	371	84	22.6
Belfast North	526	118	22.4
Belfast South	294	43	14.6
Belfast West	666	160	24.0
East Antrim	413	86	20.8
East Derry	501	64	12.8
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	437	96	22.0
Foyle	718	101	14.1
Lagan Valley	420	87	20.7
Mid Ulster	434	97	22.4
Newry And Armagh	512	57	11.1
North Antrim	487	87	17.9
North Down	338	62	18.3
South Antrim	441	95	21.5
South Down	579	74	12.8
Strangford	448	94	21.0
Upper Bann	563	89	15.8

Parliamentary Constituency	Number of school leavers not achieving at least 5 GCSE's A*-C (inc equiv)	Number of school leavers not achieving at least 5 GCSE's A*-C (inc equiv) that had a destination recorded as Employment	Percentage of school leavers not achieving at least 5 GCSE's A*-C (inc equiv) that had a destination recorded as Employment
West Tyrone	416	50	12.0
Missing or Invalid Postcodes	190	40	21.7
	8754	1584	18.1

School Crossing Patrol Officers

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of school crossing patrols in North Down, in each of the last five years. (AQW 2945/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá an t-eolas seo a leanas curtha ar fáil ag Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Oirdheiscirt faoi líon na bpatról trasrianta scoile i gceantar Dhún Thuaidh ón bhliain 2003.

The South-Eastern Education and Library Board has provided the following information on the number of school crossing patrols in the North Down area since 2003:

2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
30	29	25	24	20

Disciplinary Procedures

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Education what guidance her Department gives to (i) Education and Library Boards; and (ii) Boards of Governors, on disciplinary procedures involving pupils who have been found to have used violence in schools. (AQW 2948/09)

The Minister of Education: Foilsítear gach imlitir agus doiciméad treorach ón Roinn ar láithreán gréasáin na Roinne agus déantar iad a scaipeadh go forleathan fosta.

All Departmental circulars and guidance documents are published on the Department's website and are also widely circulated.

'Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour', published by the Department in June 2001, provides advice on the development of a school's discipline policy. The detail of a school's policy however, is a matter for the school and the Board of Governors, in consultation with pupils and their parents.

The Department, in partnership with the five Education and Library Boards, and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, developed a Regional Policy Framework on the 'Use of Reasonable Force/ Safe Handling'. Published in May 2004, this guidance provides schools with a structured framework to enable them to develop a policy on the use of reasonable force/safe handling of pupils.

Visual Strategy Implementation Group

Mr Lunn asked the Minister of Education for the timescale for nomination of a senior Departmental official to the Visual Strategy Implementation Group. (AQW 2955/09)

The Minister of Education: Níor tugadh cuireadh don Roinn Oideachais (DE) le hainmniúchán a sholáthar don Ghrúpa Feidhmithe um Stráitéis Amhairc.

The Department of Education (DE) has not been invited to provide a nomination to the Visual Strategy Implementation Group. The Department was made aware of this group in November 2008 by the Chief Executive Designate of the Education and Skills Authority. After establishing the origins and purpose of the group, DE nominated the Head of Special Education Branch to attend a meeting on 13th November 2008.

Following this nomination, the Department was specifically asked not to send any representatives to the meeting until the Director of The Royal National Institute of Blind People would meet with me and the Permanent Secretary. Such a meeting has not been requested but the Department remains willing to provide a nominee as stated in previous communications.

Pupils Excluded from School

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Education how many and what percentage of pupils have been temporarily excluded from school in the (i) maintained; and (ii) controlled sectors in each Education and Library Board, in each of the last five years, broken down by gender in both primary and secondary level schools.

(AQW 2957/09)

The Minister of Education: Taispeántar sna táblaí thíos líon agus céatadán (bunaithe ar líon iomlán na scoile) na ndaltaí a cuireadh ar fionraí ó scoileanna rialaithe agus scoileanna Caitliceacha faoi chothabháil iad i ngach bliain le cúig bliana anuas:

The number and percentage (based on total school population) of pupils suspended from controlled and catholic maintained schools for each of the last five years is shown in the tables below:

2002/03	Controlled		Catholic Maintained	
ELB Area	No. of pupils suspended	% of total school pop'n	No. of pupils suspended	% of total school pop'n
BELB	484	0.90	405	0.75
NEELB	753	1.12	229	0.34
SEELB	483	0.81	276	0.46
SELB	350	0.52	670	1.00
WELB	177	0.32	557	1.00
Total	2247	0.74	2137	0.71

2003/04	Controlled		Catholic Maintained	
ELB Area	No. of pupils suspended	% of total school pop'n	No. of pupils suspended	% of total school pop'n
BELB	468	0.89	517	0.98
NEELB	752	1.13	313	0.47
SEELB	533	0.90	267	0.45
SELB	355	0.54	571	0.86
WELB	173	0.32	567	1.04
Total	2281	0.76	2235	0.75

2004/05	Controlled		Catholic Maintained	
ELB Area	No. of pupils suspended	% of total school pop'n	No. of pupils suspended	% of total school pop'n
BELB	390	0.76	528	1.03
NEELB	810	1.23	282	0.43
SEELB	556	0.95	180	0.31
SELB	372	0.57	500	0.76
WELB	201	0.38	506	0.95
Total	2329	0.79	1996	0.68

2005/06	Controlled		Catholic Maintained		
	ELB Area	No. of pupils suspended	% of total school pop'n	No. of pupils suspended	% of total school pop'n
BELB		380	0.76	452	0.90
NEELB		792	1.22	230	0.35
SEELB		588	1.02	243	0.42
SELB		410	0.63	533	0.82
WELB		185	0.35	526	1.00
Total		2355	0.81	1984	0.68

2006/07	Controlled		Catholic Maintained		
	ELB Area	No. of pupils suspended	% of total school pop'n	No. of pupils suspended	% of total school pop'n
BELB		436	0.89	392	0.80
NEELB		813	1.26	269	0.42
SEELB		318	0.56	149	0.26
SELB		316	0.49	464	0.71
WELB		200	0.39	585	1.13
Total		2083	0.73	1859	0.65

Notes:

1. Includes pupils in Key Stage 1– 4 only.
2. Total school population includes pupils in Year 1– 7 attending primary schools, Year 8 – 12 attending post-primary schools and aged 4– 15 years attending special schools.
3. This data includes controlled and catholic maintained schools only. It does not include suspensions from grant maintained and controlled integrated schools, voluntary grammar schools and other maintained schools, which are included in the 'other' category for statistical purposes during data collection.

Statistics on suspensions and expulsions for the 2007/08 school year are undergoing final analysis and will be published in the coming weeks.

Pupils Excluded from School

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Education how many and what percentage of pupils have been permanently excluded from school in the (i) maintained; and (ii) controlled sectors in each Education and Library Board, in each of the last five years, broken down by gender in both primary and secondary level schools.
(AQW 2958/09)

The Minister of Education: Taispeántear sna táblaí thíos líon agus céatadán (bunaithe ar líon iomlán na scoile) na ndaltaí a caitheadh amach ó scoileanna Rialaithe agus scoileanna Caitliceacha faoi Chothabháil iad i ngach bliain le cúig bliana anuas.

The number and percentage (based on total school population) of pupils expelled from Controlled and Catholic Maintained schools for each of the last five years is shown in the tables below:

2002/03	Controlled		Catholic Maintained		
	ELB Area	No. of pupils expelled	% of total school pop'n	No. of pupils expelled	% of total school pop'n
BELB		*	#	15	0.028
NEELB		9	0.013	*	#
SEELB		6	0.010	*	#
SELB		0	0	7	0.010

2002/03	Controlled		Catholic Maintained	
ELB Area	No. of pupils expelled	% of total school pop'n	No. of pupils expelled	% of total school pop'n
WELB	*	#	8	0.014
Total	22	0.007	37	0.012

2003/04	Controlled		Catholic Maintained	
ELB Area	No. of pupils expelled	% of total school pop'n	No. of pupils expelled	% of total school pop'n
BELB	0	0	*	#
NEELB	11	0.017	*	#
SEELB	10	0.017	*	#
SELB	*	#	19	0.029
WELB	*	#	8	0.015
Total	25	0.008	37	0.012

2004/05	Controlled		Catholic Maintained	
ELB Area	No. of pupils expelled	% of total school pop'n	No. of pupils expelled	% of total school pop'n
BELB	*	#	6	0.012
NEELB	10	0.015	7	0.011
SEELB	6	0.010	*	#
SELB	*	#	*	#
WELB	*	#	5	0.009
Total	20	0.007	23	0.008

2005/06	Controlled		Catholic Maintained	
ELB Area	No. of pupils expelled	% of total school pop'n	No. of pupils expelled	% of total school pop'n
BELB	*	#	6	0.012
NEELB	5	0.008	*	#
SEELB	5	0.009	0	0
SELB	*	#	8	0.012
WELB	0	0	*	#
Total	14	0.005	22	0.008

2006/07	Controlled		Catholic Maintained	
ELB Area	No. of pupils expelled	% of total school pop'n	No. of pupils expelled	% of total school pop'n
BELB	*	#	0	0
NEELB	0	0	*	#
SEELB	8	0.014	*	#
SELB	*	#	*	#
WELB	0	0	7	0.014
Total	12	0.004	14	0.005

Notes:

1. Includes pupils in Key Stage 1–4 only.

2. Total school population includes pupils in Year 1–7 attending primary schools, Year 8–12 attending post-primary schools and aged 4–15 years attending special schools.
3. This data includes controlled and catholic maintained schools only. It does not include expulsions from grant maintained and controlled integrated schools, voluntary grammar schools and other maintained schools, which are included in the 'other' category for statistical purposes during data collection.
4. * denotes figure less than five
5. # denotes a figure which has been treated to prevent disclosure of small numbers elsewhere.

Statistics on suspensions and expulsions for the 2007/08 school year are undergoing final analysis and will be published in the coming weeks.

Pupils Excluded from School

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Education how many and what percentage of pupils have had a fixed period exclusion (i) once; (ii) twice; (iii) more than twice; and (iv) more than five times in the (a) maintained; and (b) controlled school sectors, in each Education and Library Boards, in the last five year, broken down by gender in both primary and secondary level schools. (AQW 2959/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá socraithe agam go gcuirfean an t-eolas a iarradh i Leabharlann an Tionóil. I have arranged for the information requested to be placed in the Assembly Library.

Bullying of Pupils

Mr Simpson asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to her answer to AQW 2313/09, when did her Department published and sent out the guidance to schools. (AQW 2976/09)

The Minister of Education: Foilsíodh agus dáilíodh an treorú 'Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour', chuig scoileanna i mí an Mheithimh 2001.

The guidance, 'Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour', was published and distributed to schools in June 2001.

British and Irish Anti-Bullying Forum

Mr Simpson asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to her answer to AQW 2313/09, how much time she spent attending the British and Irish Anti-Bullying Forum in September 2008. (AQW 2977/09)

The Minister of Education: D'fhreastail mé ar an gcruinniú seo ar feadh uair a chloig agus 15 noiméad. I attended this meeting for 1 hour and 15 minutes.

Pupils with Special Needs

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of pupils registered as having special needs, in each Education and Library Board, in each of the last three years. (AQW 2986/09)

The Minister of Education: Tá an t-eolas a iarradh sa tábla seo a leanas. The information requested is contained in the following table.

PUPILS REGISTERED AS HAVING SPECIAL NEEDS BY EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD – 2005/06 – 2007/08.

Year	School type	ELB					Total
		BELB	WELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	
2005/06	Nursery	200	124	104	235	78	741
	Primary	5,733	6,545	5,923	6,645	6,708	31,554
	Post primary	4,000	3,608	2,685	3,217	3,295	16,805
	Special	1,248	748	1,010	1,199	394	4,599
	Total	11,181	11,025	9,722	11,296	10,475	53,699
2006/07	Nursery	308	177	192	272	100	1,049
	Primary	6,061	6,563	6,031	6,535	6,685	31,875
	Post primary	5,154	4,204	2,936	3,567	3,897	19,758
	Special	1,245	749	1,016	1,145	402	4,557
	Total	12,768	11,693	10,175	11,519	11,084	57,239
2007/08	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	13,339	11,575	10,704	11,518	11,198	58,334

Source: Annual school census

Note:

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

A pupil with special needs is defined as any pupil who is registered at Stage 1 – 5 on the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.

Employees with Cancer

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Education to clarify if it is accepted practice in her Department for employees with cancer and undergoing treatment to be issued with a final written warning due to their sick leave record. (AQW 2994/09)

The Minister of Education: Ní thugann an Roinn Oideachais rabhaidh scríofa deiridh d' fhostaithe a bhíonn as láthair mar gheall ar thinneas agus iad faoi chóireáil ailse.

The Department of Education never issues final written warnings to employees who are absent due to sickness while undergoing treatment for cancer.

Alternative Full-Time Education

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Education to detail the alternative full-time education arrangements that are put in place to ensure that pupils that are (i) temporarily; and (ii) permanently, excluded from (a) primary; and (b) post-primary school, broken down by Education and Library Board area. (AQW 3000/09)

The Minister of Education: Bíonn scoileanna freagrach as obair oiriúnach a sholáthar, a chomlfonfar sa bhaile, do dhaltáí atá ar fionraí ionas go mbeidh leanúnachas san oideachas ann agus gur féidir leis an dalta filleadh ar an scoil arís gan deacracht.

Schools are responsible for providing suitable work, for completion at home, by pupils who have been suspended, to ensure continuity of education and that the pupil can re-integrate without difficulty.

Where a continuous period of suspension exceeding 15 days is in place, the relevant Education and Library Board is expected to assist with making appropriate educational provision for the pupil. This may involve attendance at a tutor centre or Further Education College, Pupil Referral Unit or home tuition. The actual provision will be determined by the needs of the pupil and the options available in the area. The Board may also meet with the school and the parents of a pupil to consider the options for longer term arrangements including re-integration.

In the case of pupils who have been expelled from a school, education provision is put in place by the responsible Education and Library Board, which is appropriate to their age, ability and any special educational needs that they may have. The actual provision may include education in another school, attendance at a Further Education College, home tuition, or a placement on an alternative education project.

Pupils Excluded from School

Dr McDonnell asked the Minister of Education if a pupil can be (i) temporarily; or (ii) permanently, excluded from school if they have been statemented. (AQW 3002/09)

The Minister of Education: Is féidir daltaí a bhfuil ráiteas ar riachtanais speisialta oideachais (SEN) acu a chur ar fionraí agus/nó a dhíbirt ón scoil.

A pupil with a statement of special educational needs (SEN) can be suspended and/or expelled from school.

Pupils with SEN statements should be expelled only in the most exceptional circumstances and only after every other practicable means of retaining the pupil in school has been fully explored in consultation with the relevant ELB. Schools can ask their Education and Library Board (ELB) to review the pupil's statement, consider additional support or an alternative placement.

EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING

Apprenticeships

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many people (i) started; and (ii) completed, a formal apprenticeship in each of the last five academic years, broken down by industry sector; and what is the target number that his Department hopes to reach on an annual basis. (AQW 2571/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning (Sir Reg Empey): The information requested is provided in Annex A which has been placed in the library. The data in the Annex A reflects all those who started a Jobskills Modern Apprenticeship programme in the past five years and the number of those particular clients who have gone on to achieve their apprenticeship or who are still on the programme.

It should be noted that a full apprenticeship can take up to four years to complete, therefore data for the Training for Success 2007 and ApprenticeshipsNI cohorts have not been included in this response as there has been insufficient time for completion of training or achievement of related qualifications.

The Department does not set targets for the number of apprentices starting in a particular occupational area. There is an overall target of 10,000 apprentices on programme by 2010. The current occupancy on the Jobskills, Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI programmes currently stands at just over 9000.

Sector Skills Councils

Mr Newton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to confirm the number of Sector Skills Councils (i) that have a Sector Skills agreement approved by his Department; (ii) that have a Sector Skills agreement still to be approved; (iii) that have staff employed in Northern Ireland; and (iv) that operate in Northern Ireland without a locally based staff. (AQW 2822/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning: There are currently 23 Sector Skills Councils which have a Sector Skills Agreement approved by the Northern Ireland Project Board. It is anticipated that the remaining 2 Sector Skills Councils will receive approval for their Sector Skills Agreements by December 2008.

Eighteen Sector Skills Councils employ a Northern Ireland based manager with the remaining seven operating without locally based staff. It is anticipated that 2 of those without a Northern Ireland Manager plan to appoint one in the near future.

Benefits Available to Students

Mr Lunn asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to compare the benefits available to students (i) in full-time education; and (ii) in apprenticeships. (AQW 2831/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning: In relation to apprenticeships, it is a requirement that all apprentices are in permanent remunerative employment from the first day of the provision, and the Department requires that employers pay them the going rate for the job. Consequently, the Department does not provide any additional benefits to apprentices due to their employed and remunerated status, other than those benefits that are generally available to people in employment such as Child Tax Credit, Working Families' Tax Credit, or Disability Working Allowance. The Department also provides supplementary Support Funding to Training Suppliers which can be used in a variety of ways to assist apprentices who have a disability.

Students from less well off families in full-time education may be eligible for an Education Maintenance Allowance. This is a means tested weekly payment of up to £30 based on attendance. In addition to this, they may also be eligible for performance bonuses of £100 up to three times per year.

The Department provides the Further Education Colleges with funding to provide financial support to FE and HE students through a number of earmarked initiatives; these are available to all students including full time students.

FE Awards – The Western Education and Library Board make awards to full time students in respect of courses approved for further education purposes by the Department. These Awards can include for example, Tuition Fees, Maintenance Grant (support for living costs), Childcare and Disability Students' Allowance. Such awards are made subject to the conditions specified in the current Further Education Award Arrangements and also subject to available funding.

Student Support Funds - which are discretionary, allow FE colleges to provide financial help to students whose access to, or participation in, further education is inhibited by financial considerations, or who, for whatever reason, including physical or other disabilities, face financial difficulties in meeting their cost of living.

Additional Support Funds - allow FE colleges to provide additional support to students with a disability in mainstream FE Provision. This can be in the form of Technical Support (the purchase of specialised enabling equipment such as brailers, specialist software and hearing loops, for example) or Human Support (Specialist Tutor/Lecturer, Interpreter or Classroom Assistant, for example).

Care to Learn NI Scheme – FE colleges can provide childcare support for 16 to 20 year-old parents in Further Education provision.

It is, however, difficult to compare apprentices with students in full time education, as apprentices are already in permanent employment are therefore waged employees which gives them a guaranteed income, which is not the case with full-time students.

Benefits Available to Apprentices

Mr Lunn asked the Minister for Employment and Learning (i) what consideration he is giving to; and (ii) what discussions he has had with other Departments about, bringing into line the benefits available to apprentices with those available to students in full time education. (AQW 2835/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning: I refer to the response that I provided to you in a separate Written Question (AQW 2831/09) in which I compared the benefits that were available to apprentices and students in full-time education.

I would again emphasise that students in full-time education and apprentices are not entirely comparable, as apprentices have permanent, remunerated employment status, whereas students do not.

However, apprentices under the age of 19 are exempted from the National Minimum Wage until they reach their 19th birthday. If they begin an apprenticeship at the age of 19, they are also exempt for the first year.

The Low Pay Commission (LPC) is currently consulting on a review of low pay, including apprenticeships. I have provided information to the LPC as part of this consultation and their report is expected in February 2009. When this report is received, I will consider its findings and will then decide how best to proceed on this issue. Should the exemptions under the National Minimum Wage Regulations remain, then one possible action is to consider a minimum wage rate as a condition of the funding for apprenticeship training.

Apprentices

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what financial assistance is available to apprentices who lose their jobs to enable them to continue the further education element of their apprenticeship. (AQW 2928/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning: In light of the current economic downturn and the subsequent increase in redundancies for apprentices, I made a statement on 11th November 2008 to the Assembly in respect of contingency arrangements that the Department is introducing to allow apprentices who have been made redundant to continue with their training. These arrangements will be introduced initially for apprentices in the areas of construction, motor vehicle industry, and engineering, where the need for such arrangements is greatest.

Under these arrangements, apprentices in these occupational areas will be able to complete the NVQ element of an apprenticeship Framework under the Steps to Work initiative, and the Essential Skills and Technical Certificate separately in FE Colleges. Whilst on Steps to Work, apprentices will be entitled to a benefit-based training allowance (i.e. Jobseeker's Allowance plus a £15.38 weekly top-up) and may qualify for other passported benefits.

Unemployment Figures

Ms Ní Chuilín asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to provide by parliamentary constituency (i) the current unemployment figures; and (ii) the contingencies the Department has in place to deal with perceived risks in relation to unemployment figures. (AQW 2961/09)

The Minister for Employment and Learning:

- (i) Information on unemployment by Parliamentary Constituency area, as measured by the number of claimants for Jobseeker's Allowance, is published by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment on their website at the following link <http://www.detini.gov.uk/cgi-bin/downdoc?id=4006>. The most recent data, relating to October 2008, are reproduced in the Table which has been placed in the Library.
- (ii) A comprehensive range of services is available through my Department's network of 35 Jobs and Benefits offices and JobCentres and through contracted Providers to help the unemployed find work. The services include mandatory work-focused interviews; action planning for certain clients and measures designed to improve the job prospects for those who have become unemployed. These services are subject to regular review.

The Department has taken steps to adjust its current programmes in light of changing economic circumstances. For example, contingency measures for apprentices, which I announced on 11 November, have been introduced.

Local office Managers have responded to the increase in unemployment by ensuring that resources are provided to meet the initial needs of those clients. As this increase in unemployment has been sustained a number of contingency measures have been put in place including recruitment of temporary staff, temporary promotions, offering part-time staff an increase in hours, and allowing overtime in exceptional circumstances, including opening offices to the public on Saturday. Longer term measures will include close monitoring of the increase in the register and recruitment of additional staff.

ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Ulster Scots Language and Culture

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what assistance (i) has been given; and (ii) can be given, by her Department, for promoting the Ulster Scots language and culture to tourists.

(AQW 2583/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Mrs A Foster): Both the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Tourism Ireland are well aware of the number of people, especially in North America, who claim Ulster Scots ancestry and have undertaken a number of targeted promotions to reach that market. In March 2008, the Ulster Scots Agency held their Board meeting in Tourism Ireland's office in Dublin and were given a presentation outlining the considerable amount of marketing activity that had been carried out in the previous year to reach the Ulster Scots sector.

This year a new Ulster Scots initiative was undertaken, targetting American visitors arriving on the cruise ships visiting Belfast. The Belfast Visitor & Convention Bureau, in conjunction with the Ulster Scots Agency, Ulster Scots Heritage Council and Carrickfergus Borough Council, developed a 2-hour Ulster Scots tour which tells the story of the Ulster Scots and the role they played in Ulster and North America. It includes visits to Carrickfergus Castle, the Andrew Jackson Centre and the United States Rangers Centre. Initial feedback has been good and this will help inform the development of a broader Ulster Scots product.

NITB produced 'Uniquely Northern Ireland – Uncover Landscapes & Legends' in September 2008. This consumer publication promotes what is unique about Northern Ireland's culture and heritage and includes sections on Ulster Scots as a cultural experience as well as a genealogical product. The publication has been distributed to Tourism Ireland's overseas offices worldwide and Tourist Information Centres throughout Northern Ireland, and is available as a brochure download on NITB's consumer website www.discovernorthernireland.com

In recent years, Tourism Ireland has targeted the Ulster Scots segment in the United States through a comprehensive programme of advertising, direct marketing, publicity and promotions to encourage more of them to visit Northern Ireland. This has included implementing a programme of promotions aimed specifically at the Ulster Scots segment. For instance, each year since 2005, Tourism Ireland has mounted a strong Northern Ireland presence at the annual Stone Mountain Highland Festival. Tourism Ireland has also had a presence at annual events such as the Grandfather Mountain Games (2006), the Fall Homecoming at the Museum of Appalachia (2006), the Americana Conference and Exhibition in Nashville (2007) and Philadelphia Garden Show (2007).

NITB has recently undertaken an audit of the Ulster Scots product within Northern Ireland. This has revealed that while there are some interesting stories to tell, many of the sites connected with the Ulster Scots are not staffed, have poor interpretation and are not open at times convenient to visitors. When the audit is complete in December this year, the focus will turn to identifying where the product can be usefully developed looking in particular at interpretation and access.

Tourism Ireland continues to engage with the Ulster Scots Agency, the Ulster Historical Foundation, the Orange Order, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, and other agencies and bodies in Northern Ireland, with a view to ensuring that all aspects of Ulster Scots language, culture and heritage in Northern Ireland are reflected strongly in its overseas promotional materials, activities and marketing campaigns.

Renewable Energy

Mr Brolly asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action her Department is taking to encourage the public to use renewable energy in their homes.

(AQO 1422/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment:

To date my Department, through the Reconnect scheme, has supported 4100 household renewable energy installations since July 2006 at a total cost of £10.3 million. It is expected that the final number of installations will be in the region of 4,300 at a cost of £10.8 million, once all claims have been processed.

My Department continues to provide funding for Action Renewables to provide free technical advice to householders on renewable energy technologies and offer a signposting service to the Low Carbon Building Programme, which

offers grant support to domestic households for the installation of renewable energy technologies. The programme is set to remain open until 2010 and households in Northern Ireland are eligible to apply.

Additionally there is a reduced rate of VAT at 5% for small scale renewable technologies, and for those technologies generating electricity, Renewable Obligation Certificates are available.

In addition, I understand that the Department for Social Development (DSD) will be co-funding a pilot with Northern Ireland Electricity to test a number of renewable technologies, mostly in hard to treat rural homes. Following the Northern Ireland Audit Office report DSD has also proposed a number of changes to the Warm Homes Scheme which are now subject to public consultation. One of the recommendations is to introduce renewable technologies in hard to treat properties as an alternative to oil.

Invest NI

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the Invest NI's food companies showcase innovations. (AQW 2789/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Invest NI in the past 12 months has held its biggest ever promotion of Northern Ireland food companies in external marketplaces with 40 showcase events in GB, the Republic of Ireland, Europe, North America and the Middle East.

This has involved 14 exhibitions and 26 Meet the Buyer events. So far this year the products of over 160 NI companies have been presented to buyers either individually or collectively.

In the past 3 weeks alone the products of 40 companies have been showcased at a Bakery Show in London (OoH Live) and the BBC Good Show in Birmingham.

Early in the new year Invest NI will be publishing a regional food supplement in the Caterer & Hotel Keeper, the UK's premier Catering/Hospitality and Foodservice trade magazine, which will showcase 25 of Northern Ireland's leading food companies to the magazine's 90,000 readership.

London 2012 Olympic and Paralympics Games

Lord Browne asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many businesses have registered on the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympics Games' website, CompeteFor. (AQW 2802/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: As of Monday 24th November 2008 statistics from the CompeteFor site show 46,678 registrations from businesses across the UK of which 563 are from Northern Ireland businesses.

To date more than 200 of these NI businesses have received direct or indirect support from Invest NI in relation to preparation of tenders and in meeting the business readiness criteria and in particular the Quality Management System requirement.

London 2012 Olympic and Paralympics Games

Lord Browne asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many potential job opportunities could be created as a direct result of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympics Games. (AQW 2885/09)

The Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Delivery of the 2012 Olympic Games in London offers the prospect of c£9bn in Games related contract opportunities creating job opportunities at different times and for different durations across a diverse range of industries and sectors. Although many of the higher-profile main contracts have already been awarded, a long tail of sub-contracts remains to be let over the next 3 years.

NI businesses are actively seeking work directly through prime contacts and indirectly through sub-contact work but are not obliged, for reasons of commercial confidentiality and sensitivity, to publicly announce any successes.

Based on the limited evidence currently available and applying the working assumption that £1m of business sustains 20 jobs, it is estimated that c500 jobs will be sustained in NI as a result of the 2012 Olympics/Paralympics.

ENVIRONMENT

River Pollution

Mr Burns asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) the rivers in (a) Northern Ireland; and (b) the South Antrim constituency, that are 'polluted beyond acceptable levels', as defined by his Department; (ii) the legislation and criteria used to define a river as polluted; and (iii) the action his Department is taking to clean these rivers. (AQW 2534/09)

The Minister of the Environment (Mr S Wilson): The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) monitors a significant number of rivers in Northern Ireland against a range of key indicators of pollution.

As a significant amount of work is required in the preparation of a reply my officials will write to you directly when the information has been collated.

Ulster Farm By-Products

Mr Burns asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to his answer to AQW 1944/09, what tests his officials have performed in the past year to investigate the cause and nature of the offensive odours emanating from Ulster Farm By-Products; and if any of these incidents of air pollution have resulted in sanctions being imposed on the offending company. (AQW 2536/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The tests carried out by both the Company and Northern Ireland Environment Agency in order to investigate odour arising from Ulster Farm By-Products were listed in the answer to your previous question AQW122/09. The tests carried out by NIEA were those undertaken in March 2006.

NIEA has issued two enforcement notices to the Company as a result of breaches in their permit which has given rise to odours off site.

Official Visits

Mr Gallagher asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the number of official visits he has carried out since taking up office, broken down by the number of occasions he used (i) a Ministerial car; (ii) public transport; and (iii) any other form of transport. (AQW 2568/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Since taking up office I have carried out 38 official visits using my Ministerial car.

Noise Nuisance

Mr Craig asked the Minister of the Environment how many prosecutions there have been for noise nuisance in the Lagan Valley constituency, over the last five years. (AQW 2589/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The Department records the number of noise complaints received by each of the twenty six councils, and publishes this information annually in the form of the Noise Complaint Statistics for Northern Ireland report. The information however is not disaggregated down to Parliamentary Constituency level.

Water Pollution Monitoring

Mr Burns asked the Minister of the Environment to outline what water pollution monitoring arrangements, permanent or otherwise, are in place for the Glenavy River. (AQW 2604/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) monitors river water quality at two locations on the Glenavy River, at Ballydonaghy Bridge and at Leap Bridge. Within the river catchment, there is also a monitoring station on the Stoneyford River at the 'Y' Bridge and on the Rushyhill River at Leathemstown. These monitoring stations are 'permanent' and samples are collected 12 times per year for chemical results and up to twice a year for biological results. The results from these samples are used to assess

the quality of the river water under the General Quality Assessment (GQA) scheme, the Freshwater Fish Directive and the Water Framework Directive.

Sports Strategy

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the (i) contribution to date; and (ii) planned future contribution, from her Department to the implementation of the Sports Strategy. (AQW 2618/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Two agencies within my Department, the Environment and Heritage Service (now the Northern Ireland Environment Agency) and the Planning Service, participated in DCAL led focus groups in 2005 and 2006 and considered how a range of issues, including environmental and planning issues, should be reflected in any new sports strategy. My Department subsequently provided comments on early drafts of a new sports strategy. It is envisaged that the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure will have lead responsibility for the implementation of the new sports strategy, and that my Department will be represented on a Ministerial led Monitoring Group set up to oversee the implementation of this strategy.

The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) will continue to work in partnership with Sport NI and others who are involved in the delivery of the Sports Strategy. NIEA will consider any application for financial support from organisations that are involved in the development and implementation of the Strategy where it relates to access and enjoyment of the countryside.

In Planning Service, the Strategic Projects Team has undertaken to provide planning advice to prospective developers at each stage of the Elite Facilities Programme competition and to carry out detailed pre-application discussions on the successful proposals chosen by Sport NI. Over recent months discussions have taken place with Sport NI and a number of sporting organisations, schools and district council officials regarding the provision of a variety of sporting facilities. Individual meetings with a number of planning consultants and sporting groups who are competing for funding from Sport NI for their various sporting projects have also been facilitated.

Officials from Local Government Policy Division have also, on a number of occasions, met with officials from Sport NI in relation to the linkages between the delivery of the Sports Strategy and the community planning process that will be led by the new councils after 2011. This engagement will continue as work is taken forward in order to develop greater detail on the outworking of both the Sports Strategy and the community planning process.

Class 2 HGV Driving Licence

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment when he will introduce legislation to reduce the age limit for a class 2 HGV driving licence from 21 to 18 years of age. (AQW 2626/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Driving licences, and consequently minimum ages for obtaining them, are set by European legislation. The second EU directive (91/439/EEC) on driving licences set the minimum age for acquiring a large goods vehicle (LGV) licence at 21 years. However, a more recent piece of EU legislation (2003/59/EC) allows drivers to obtain an LGV licence from the age of 18 years subject to their acquiring a certificate of professional competence, in addition to holding the relevant category of driving licence. This directive will apply to all LGV drivers from September 2009.

The Department is currently working on the legislation which will, among other things, reduce the age limit for drivers of LGVs (Category C and associated sub-categories) from 21 to 18 years of age. The circumstances in which the age limit will be reduced are that the driver must be undertaking driving lessons, sitting the driving test, or have already acquired the certificate of professional competence.

The legislation will be introduced early in 2009 and will take effect for drivers of LGVs from September 2009.

There are no plans to reduce the age limit for drivers of LGVs to 17 years of age.

Class 2 HGV Driving Licence

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment if he intends to reduce the age restriction for a class 2 HGV licence to (i) 17 years; or (ii) 18 years. (AQW 2627/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Driving licences, and consequently minimum ages for obtaining them, are set by European legislation. The second EU directive (91/439/EEC) on driving licences set the minimum age for acquiring a large goods vehicle (LGV) licence at 21 years. However, a more recent piece of EU legislation (2003/59/EC) allows drivers to obtain an LGV licence from the age of 18 years subject to their acquiring a certificate of professional competence, in addition to holding the relevant category of driving licence. This directive will apply to all LGV drivers from September 2009.

The Department is currently working on the legislation which will, among other things, reduce the age limit for drivers of LGVs (Category C and associated sub-categories) from 21 to 18 years of age. The circumstances in which the age limit will be reduced are that the driver must be undertaking driving lessons, sitting the driving test, or have already acquired the certificate of professional competence.

The legislation will be introduced early in 2009 and will take effect for drivers of LGVs from September 2009.

There are no plans to reduce the age limit for drivers of LGVs to 17 years of age.

Equality Legislation

Mr Simpson asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the involvement his Department has in assisting local councils to fulfil their obligations under equality legislation. (AQW 2634/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 provides that all public authorities, in carrying out their functions in Northern Ireland, shall have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between certain specified individuals and groups, and have desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion and racial group.

The new duties, which came into operation on 1 January 2000, required all public authorities to submit an equality scheme to the Equality Commission. District councils, as public authorities, have submitted equality schemes and are reporting directly to the Equality Commission on their Section 75 duties. My Department has no involvement in assisting them to fulfil their obligations under equality legislation.

Ulster Farm By-Products

Mr Burns asked the Minister of the Environment if all pipes at Ulster Farm by-products which put discharge into the Glenavy River have been built in accordance with the discharge permits granted by his Department. (AQW 2651/09)

The Minister of the Environment: There are 7 discharges into the Glenavy River from the Ulster Farm By-Products site which are all regulated by NIEA's permit under the Pollution Prevention and Control Regulations (NI) 2003.

The company recently introduced a facility to recycle treated effluent for reuse on the site, mainly as wash down water. As part of this modification a new pipe was installed to pass treated effluent to the dam that forms the company's water intake from the Glenavy River and the intake from the river was adjusted. This dam has often overflowed in the past, but in the previous mode of operation, the overflow comprised unused river water returning to the river. However, following introduction of the treated effluent recycle, the dam overflowed over the weekend 15-16 November. The treated effluent which overflowed was compliant with the discharge standards in the permit for the effluent treatment plant discharge and did not cause pollution, but it was an unauthorised release and NIEA issued an enforcement notice to prevent a recurrence.

Ulster Farm By-Products

Mr Burns asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) the number and locations of all pipes at the Ulster Farm by-products site which discharge into the Glenavy River; (ii) how many of these pipes have been built in the last year; and (iii) if the addition of new discharge pipes requires a revision of the permits issued by his Department. (AQW 2652/09)

The Minister of the Environment:

- (i) There are seven pipes that discharge into the Glenavy River from the Ulster Farm By-Products site, and they are all regulated under the Company's permit. The process effluent discharge from the site is located at the bottom of a series of steps below the effluent treatment plant. There are two storm water discharges below this and three upstream. The cooling water discharge is also located upstream of the process effluent discharge.
- (ii) A new pipe used to recycle treated effluent, referred to in the answer to AQW 2651/09, was introduced over the last few weeks which discharges to the Company's water intake dam.
- (iii) The addition of a new discharge point from any permitted installation requires a variation to the permit. The discharge which resulted from the installation of the new recycling pipe was not covered by the permit and that is why the Northern Ireland Environment Agency issued an enforcement notice.

Water Quality Test

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the beaches that passed the water quality test this year; and whether the results were affected by unseasonably bad weather. (AQW 2655/09)

The Minister of the Environment: I am encouraged that despite another wet summer, only one bathing water out of twenty four identified bathing waters in Northern Ireland failed to achieve the mandatory requirements of the EC Bathing Waters Directive.

The twenty three that complied with the requirements included: Magilligan (Benone), Magilligan (Downhill), Castlerock, Portstewart, Portrush (Mill), Portrush (Curran), Portrush (Whiterocks), Portballintrae (Salmon Rock), Ballycastle, Waterfoot, Carnlough, Ballygalley, Brown's Bay, Helen's Bay, Crawfordsburn, Groomsport, Millisle, Ballywalter, Tyrella, Murlough Co. Down, Newcastle, Cranfield (Nicholson's Strand) and Cranfield Bay.

As a result of heavy and sustained rainfall Ballyholme again failed to meet the Directive's requirements.

Heavy and sustained rainfall affects bathing water quality as it increases overflows from sewer networks and run off from agricultural land. Heavy rain can also highlight deficiencies in the sewerage infrastructure and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency continues to press Northern Ireland Water to give a high priority to these.

Cycling Proficiency Scheme

Mr Savage asked the Minister of the Environment what plans he has to expand and upgrade the cycling proficiency scheme. (AQW 2659/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The current Cycling Proficiency Scheme is well established, with 596 primary schools participating in 2007 and with almost 8,000 children passing the test. The number of schools involved in the scheme has also been growing.

In considering any new proposals to expand or upgrade the current scheme, my Department must have regard to its statutory duty, which is to promote road safety in order to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on Northern Ireland's roads. Resources are therefore targeted primarily at addressing the main causes of road traffic casualties.

Cycling casualties have been falling for a number of years. Figures for the period up to 24 November 2008 show that two pedal cyclists have been killed so far this year compared with two for the same period in 2007 and none in 2006. There have been no child cyclist fatalities since 2005. Over the last three years, on average, 10 children have been seriously injured on bikes. This represents a reduction of over 64% on the average of 28 for the baseline period of 1996-2000. The figures suggest that while there is no room for complacency, and while efforts to drive the figures down even further must continue, the existing strategy is working.

I have no plans, therefore, to expand or upgrade the current scheme at this time.

Safe Cycling Strategy

Mr Savage asked the Minister of the Environment what consideration his Department has given to the development of a 'safe cycling' strategy. (AQW 2660/09)

The Minister of the Environment: I have no plans at present to develop a 'safe cycling strategy'. The Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy 2002-1012 included a wide range of measures to improve safety for all road users, and a number of these were aimed at cyclists. A replacement road safety strategy, for publication in 2010, will consider further measures to continue to improve cyclists' safety.

The Highway Code for Northern Ireland, which I launched in July 2008, includes rules, information and advice for all road users and has numerous inclusions specifically for cyclists.

My Department promotes safe cycling by encouraging teachers to educate and train child cyclists through its long established Cycling Proficiency Scheme. Around 8,000 pupils participate in this scheme every year.

Road Safety Education Officers carry out a programme of visits to all schools promoting cycle training, providing appropriate training and teaching materials, quality assuring training and, in schools participating for the first time, undertaking testing. All schools are encouraged to include on-road instruction wherever possible and approximately ten per cent of participants receive this training.

I should also note that the Department for Regional Development's Roads Service has a cycling strategy, and is responsible for promoting and encouraging cycling activity and for providing appropriate infrastructure and facilities, including cycle lanes.

Newry Southern Relief Road

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of the Environment how many enquiries have been made to his Department in relation to the contemplated Newry southern relief road linking the A1 at Cloghoge and the A2 at Ballinacraig. (AQW 2694/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The draft Banbridge Newry & Mourne Area Plan 2015, published in August 2006, defined an area of search for a proposed Southern Bypass for Newry City, linking the A1 Dublin Road to the A2 Warrenpoint Road and within which a preferred route will be identified in due course.

As a result of the statutory public consultation that followed publication of the draft Plan two letters in support of this road scheme were received, both of which highlighted the benefit of the Southern Bypass to the trade using the port of Warrenpoint, and the major economic and environment benefits to the entire Newry & Mourne area.

One letter of objection to this road scheme was received. This submission objected to the omission of any reference to the Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) and coastal policy area, which would be affected by the Southern Bypass, and suggested that specific reference should be made to the need to minimise the impacts through mitigation and provision of suitable compensation and enhancement.

Also, in February 2008 the former Environment & Heritage Service received an enquiry from Scott Wilson, consultants appointed by the Department for Regional Development's Roads Service for the scheme, seeking its view on any designated sites or other features of ecological interest within the area covered by the proposal.

It is possible that the issue of the Southern Bypass may have been raised in correspondence in relation to planning applications in or adjacent to the proposed area of search. Such information would however require a manual search of applications and would result in a disproportionate cost.

Strategic Waste Infrastructure Fund

Mr Easton asked the Minister of the Environment to outline his Department's major capital building programmes, for the next three years. (AQW 2744/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The Strategic Waste Infrastructure Fund (SWIF) is available to the three Waste Management Groups (arc21, the Southern Waste Management Partnership 2008 & the North West Region Waste Management Group) to assist local government with the significant costs of delivering the new waste infrastructure required to meet the landfill diversion targets in the EU Landfill Directive (1999/31/EC).

SWIF will provide up to £200m or 50% of the cost of the capital investment for Northern Ireland as a whole, whichever is the lower. This will reduce the impact of the cost of providing the new residual waste services on ratepayers.

Capital expenditure for the strategic waste infrastructure for the next 3 years totals £75.2m and can be broken down as follows:-

	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Estimated Capital Build	-	-	£300,000	£74,900,000

Licence for Pest Species

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment what discussions the Minister has held with the British Association for Shooting and Conservation and the Countryside Alliance NI on agreeing the birds to be covered by this year's general licence for pest species. (AQW 2751/09)

The Minister of the Environment: I had no discussions with either of the named organisations before the 2008 licence was issued.

Red Kite

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment what discussions has his Department had with BASC and CINI about the introduction of Red Kites. (AQW 2775/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The Department of the Environment has had no discussions with either of the named organisations about the re-introduction of the Red Kite.

Listed Buildings

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment what consideration he has given to increasing the amount of grants available for refurbishment of homes that are subject to an Northern Ireland Environment Agency (i) B1; or (ii) B2 order. (AQW 2780/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The Department of the Environment has reviewed the levels of grants to listed buildings and launched a new grant-aid scheme on the 20 May 2008. Listed buildings grant-aid, administered by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency is now available for all homes which are listed buildings, ie, buildings which are of special architectural or historic interest. The grant-aid is for the maintenance and repair of the original fabric of listed buildings, and has been increased from 20% for B1 listed dwellings, to 35% for all listed dwellings, irrespective of grade. Most B2 grade listed houses were not eligible for any grant-aid assistance prior to 20 May.

In addition, grant-aid is available to fund 75% of the costs of repairs for listed homes with thatched roofs and original roof structures. Related professional fees of appropriately qualified advisors can also be grant aided at 75%. Enhanced grant aid of 90% may be applicable to owners of listed dwellings who are in receipt of income based job seekers allowance, income support or Guaranteed Pension Credit.

Wind Turbines

Mr McKay asked the Minister of the Environment to detail all the (i) wind turbines; and (ii) wind farms in the North Antrim constituency; and list the applications, currently with the Planning Service for wind turbines. (AQW 2795/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Since 2002 there have been 68 applications for wind turbines in the North Antrim Constituency Area, 5 of which have yet to be determined.

The wind turbine applications to be determined are D/2008/0390/F, G/2008/0687/F, D/2008/0404/F, E/2008/0128/F and D/2008/0482/F

There have been 5 applications approved for wind farms since 2002 with a total of 33 turbines.

The following wind farm applications have yet to be determined:-

Proposed Applications	Reference	Name	No.of Turbines
	G/2006/0754/F	Elginny Hill	22
	G/2006/0842/F	Rathsherry	16
	D/2006/0599/F	Glenbuck II	5
	D/2008/0404/F	Corkey Ext.	1
Total			44

Transition Committee

Mr Weir asked the Minister of the Environment to confirm that £150,000 per annum, will be made available to each transition committee in the Review of Public Administration process, to cover all costs, including (i) councillor remuneration; and (ii) officers salaries. (AQW 2815/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The details of a funding package, to assist each Transition Committee to carry out its change management and programme management duties, will be circulated to district councils shortly. The grant is intended to cover the cost of a supplementary allowance for councillors; the salary of a Change Management Officer; and support costs of the Change Management Team.

Red Kite

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment to reconsider introducing Red Kites to Northern Ireland in light of the evidence from the rest of the UK indicating that they are eating other birds. (AQW 2871/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The project to re-introduce the Red Kite to Northern Ireland had been planned for some years and has progressed to the stage where 40 juvenile birds were released in South Down earlier this year.

In developing the project, RSPB followed internationally agreed guidelines for the reintroduction of species, developed by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. The project was fully considered by the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside which recommended to the Department of the Environment that the reintroduction programme should be allowed to progress. On this basis, a licence was issued by the Department to facilitate the release of the birds at a suitable location in South Down.

Many native species of mammal and bird are predatory and will eat other species including birds. The Red Kite is a known scavenger and studies show that from time to time they will take a small number of birds. This level of predation will not have a significant impact on local bird populations.

Greenhouse Gases

Mr McKay asked the Minister of the Environment what he is doing to ensure a 25% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2025. (AQW 2877/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Achievement of a 25% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2025 is the collective responsibility of all Northern Ireland Executive Ministers through the Programme for Government.

Carbon Footprint

Mr McKay asked the Minister of the Environment if he has measured his carbon footprint, since taking office. (AQW 2880/09)

The Minister of the Environment: I have not measured my carbon footprint since taking office.

Use of Seat Belts

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of the Environment who is responsible for the enforcement of the use of seat belts on buses. (AQW 2916/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Responsibility for the enforcement of the use of seat belts on buses is a matter for the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

It is also the responsibility of the bus operator to inform passengers aged 14 and above of the legal requirement to wear a seat belt, and failure to inform them is an offence.

Planning Applications

Mr Gallagher asked the Minister of the Environment how many planning applications have been deferred pending the publication of the revised PPS14; and when the new policy will be announced. (AQO 1370/09)

The Minister of the Environment: As of November 2008 there are around 2180 applications deferred that relate to refusals under the original draft PPS 14.

Revised rural planning policy is contained in draft PPS 21 which was published for a four month period of public consultation on Tuesday 25 November 2008.

MOT Test Centres

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the length of time it has taken to recruit staff for MOT Test Centres. (AQO 1411/09)

The Minister of the Environment: My Department is currently nearing the end of an exercise to recruit 69 vehicle examiners. This exercise is likely to take 22 weeks to complete compared to 52 weeks for the previous recruitment exercise. Given the stringent processes which have to be followed, and the large number of staff being recruited, I consider this to be acceptable.

Red Grouse Project

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the cost of the Red Grouse Project and to give his assessment of its value in retaining red grouse on moorlands. (AQO 1385/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The combined cost of a survey of Red Grouse in Northern Ireland, a comparative genetic study of Grouse from Ireland and Scotland, and the authorising of the Red Grouse Action Plan totals £69,366 over the past 5 years.

Conservation Action for Red Grouse will be progressed by drawing together partners to take forward the Action Plan. For example the local Director of the British Association for Shooting and Conservation has agreed to chair a Steering Group that has been tasked with arranging a workshop for Red Grouse action early in 2009.

I am satisfied that the scientific research underpinning the Red Grouse Action Plan targets will be complemented by the involvement of the major stakeholders from the sporting, landowning, environmental and public sectors working together to an agreed work programme and that they will make a positive contribution to the conservation of this iconic moorland bird.

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan

Mr Poots asked the Minister of the Environment when Planning Service expects to receive the findings of the Planning Appeals Commission on the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan. (AQO 1475/09)

The Minister of the Environment: I understand that the preliminary timescale for delivery of the report to the Planning Service is early summer 2010, however, the Planning Appeals Commission would hope to be in a position to announce a firmer timescale later this year.

Revised PPS14

Mr McElduff asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the revised PPS14. (AQO 1428/09)

The Minister of the Environment: Revised rural planning policy is contained in draft PPS 21 which was published for consultation and with immediate effect on Tuesday 25 November 2008.

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Mr Brady asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on co-operation between the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and the Environmental Protection Agency in the Republic of Ireland. (AQO 1432/09)

The Minister of the Environment: I can report that there continues to be significant co-operation between the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Officers maintain a close working relationship through regular planned meetings and ad hoc exchanges of information.

NIEA and EPA have signed up to the second tranche of The European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law Transfrontier Shipment (IMPEL TFS) enforcement actions, through which they have been maintaining a programme of joint inspections of waste movements, with more planned early 2009. NIEA also maintains regular liaison with EPA with regard to enforcement against illegal cross-border dumping.

NIEA officials meet regularly with EPA colleagues to discuss the implementation of Producer Responsibility Directives such as the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) and Batteries Directives. The latest meeting took place in Dublin on 19 November 2008.

NIEA and EPA experts continue to productively collaborate on the delivery of the Water Framework Directive through formal meetings and mutually supportive scientific activities. Considerable time and effort has been saved through the development of single monitoring and classification programmes for crossborder rivers and lakes.

At an operational policy level both agencies are represented on the North-South Water Framework Directive Co-ordination Group, which is jointly chaired by the Department of the Environment and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the work of the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust. (AQO 1360/09)

The Minister of the Environment: I recently had the opportunity to visit Armoy and meet with the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust to hear at first hand about the wide range of activities that it carries out.

The Trust published a Management Plan for the Antrim Coast and Glens Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) this year. It is currently working to co-ordinate delivery of this Plan and the Causeway Coast AONB Management Plan. It is also developing a Management Plan for the more recently designated Binevenagh AONB.

Drink-Driving

Ms Ní Chuilín asked the Minister of the Environment what action his Department is taking to discourage drink-driving over the Christmas period. (AQO 1426/09)

The Minister of the Environment: The Christmas/New Year anti drink drive campaign 'Just One' commenced on 27 November 2008 and will continue throughout the Christmas and New Year holiday period ending in early January 2009. The campaign will consist of a 60 second TV advertisement, washroom posters and glow boxes displayed in pubs, clubs and restaurants throughout Northern Ireland, and online activity carrying the 'Never Ever Drink & Drive' strapline.

The Christmas/New Year anti drug driving campaign 'Smashed' will commence on 4 December 2008 and continue until early January 2009. The campaign will consist of a 40 second TV advertisement and outdoor activity in partnership with PSNI carrying the "You'll get smashed if you drive on drugs" strapline.

The Coca Cola designated driver initiative, which is supported by my Department, was launched over three days at various venues throughout Northern Ireland from 25 – 27 November. A Departmental spokesperson will be in attendance at various events over the three days. The scheme, which will be operational in 500 venues across Northern Ireland, offers three free soft drinks to designated drivers during the festive season.

Review of Public Administration

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of the Environment what priority he will give to efficiency and value for money when designing service delivery models under the Review of Public Administration. (AQO 1371/09)

The Minister of the Environment: I can confirm that efficiency and value for money are important considerations which will be fully taken into account in designing and assessing operating models for the delivery of services by the new councils to be established in 2011. It is proposed that the models will be assessed against the key principles and characteristics which have underpinned the Review of Public Administration process. These include democratic accountability, community responsiveness, partnership working, cross community concerns, equality and human rights, subsidiarity, quality of service, the effective co-ordination and integration of services, innovation and effectiveness and efficiency.

Policy Development C, which is one of three panels established to support the Strategic Leadership Board which I chair, has identified the need to engage consultants to assist in taking forward an assessment of all the local government service delivery options. The assessment will embrace the functions transferring from central government, functions currently delivered by local government on a group basis and corporate support services. The consultancy procurement process has been initiated and it will take several weeks to complete. It is, therefore, likely to be January 2009 before the consultants are appointed.

The consultants will work closely with a team of central and local government officers drawn from the business areas subject of the assessment. They will also consult with the five main political parties.

The assessment is due to be completed in May 2009.

Planning Policy

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of the Environment how current planning policy complies with EU directives for sustainable development. (AQO 1466/09)

The Minister of the Environment: There is no EU Directive on sustainable development.

Climate Change Bill

Mr McCartney asked the Minister of the Environment what discussion he has had with the Minister for Regional Development in relation to targets in the Climate Change Bill; and how his Department will ensure these targets are met. (AQO 1425/09)

The Minister of the Environment: I have had no discussions with the Minister of Regional Development on targets in the UK Climate Change Bill. Any discussions on this issue, by Ministers, preceded my term in office.

It is the duty of the Secretary of State for Department of Energy and Climate Change to ensure that the net UK target is met.

Areas of Special Scientific Interest

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment what plans he has to review the consultation process on the proposed designations of Areas of Special Scientific Interest. (AQO 1389/09)

The Minister of the Environment: When declaring Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs), the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) is required by the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 to consult with parties specified in the Order.

The procedures followed by NIEA in its declaration process go beyond its statutory obligations, and every effort is made to ensure that all interested parties receive due notice of the ASSI declaration, are properly informed about it, and are provided with the opportunity to make representations.

I am satisfied that the consultation process applied by NIEA is fit for purpose and I have, therefore, no plans to review it.

FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

Civil Servants

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many civil servants in each Department are, at present, not assigned a post. (AQW 2193/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel (Mr N Dodds): At present the Northern Ireland Civil Service has one member of staff (in the Department for Social Development) who is not assigned a post.

Car Pool

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if all Ministers in the Executive (i) are provided with official motor vehicles and drivers from a common pool; and (ii) have availed of this service; and if not, what variations have occurred. (AQW 2278/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: Not all Ministers within the Northern Ireland Executive are provided with vehicles and drivers from within a common pool.

The Ministers for DFP, DCAL, DOE, DSD, DHSSPS, DEL and DETI use both a vehicle and driver supplied from the Central Transport Unit (CTU) of the Department of Finance and Personnel.

The Deputy First Minister, Junior Minister Kelly and the Ministers for DARD, DE and DRD use a vehicle supplied by CTU. They use drivers supplied by their political party and at no cost to the public purse.

The First Minister and Junior Minister Donaldson use vehicles and drivers supplied by the PSNI.

Civil Servants

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the number of civil servants; (ii) the number of senior civil servants; and (iii) the total salary cost including pension, in each of the last ten years. (AQW 2383/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: Table 1 sets out the following information for each of the ten years from 1999 to 2008:-

- (i) the number of Northern Ireland civil servants (permanent and casual) working in the 11 Departments, including their Agencies, at 1 January in each year; and
- (ii) the number of senior civil servants (NICS Unified Grade 5 and above) at 1 January in each year.

Table 2 sets out the total salary costs, including pension, to the 11 Departments, including their Agencies, for each of the financial years from 2001/02 to 2007/08. Figures for the previous three financial years are not available since prior to the introduction of Resource Accounting in 2001 salary costs were not separately reported by all Departments.

TABLE 1: NORTHERN IRELAND CIVIL SERVANTS IN THE 11 DEPARTMENTS, INCLUDING THEIR AGENCIES, AS AT 1 JANUARY IN EACH YEAR.

Year	(i) Staff Headcount	(ii) Senior Civil Service
1999	23977	207
2000	24215	209
2001	25027	217
2002	26270	227
2003	26948	218
2004	27939	225
2005	28105	237
2006	27977	226
2007	26855	227
2008	24501	209

Notes:

Staff on Career break are excluded.

Staff on secondment within the NICS are included within the Departments to which they are seconded.

Both permanent and casual staff are included.

Staff in executive Agencies are included in the figures for their parent Department.

TABLE 2: TOTAL SALARY COSTS, INCLUDING PENSION, TO THE 11 DEPARTMENTS, INCLUDING THEIR AGENCIES

Year	Total £000s
2001/02	558,419
2002/03	594,672
2003/04	637,780
2004/05	671,909
2005/06	702,600
2006/07	711,522
2007/08	680,717

Notes:

These figures have been collated from those reported in the Departmental Resource Accounts.

Payment of Invoices to Businesses

Dr Farry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if he plans to introduce a policy on the prompt payment of invoices to businesses, similar to the ten-day payment pledge announced by Lord Mandelson, on 21 October 2008. (AQW 2435/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: Cashflow is a major issue facing many companies at present and the public sector can support local businesses in a practical way by ensuring that invoices are dealt with promptly and that suppliers are paid without any undue delay. I have therefore asked all Departments to ensure that invoices are paid within 10 days following checking and approval and that their payments systems have been changed to support this objective.

Permanent Secretaries

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for the total (i) salary; (ii) bonus; and (iii) pension, paid to Permanent Secretaries in each of the last four financial years. (AQW 2474/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The total salary amount paid to NICS Permanent Secretaries, including the Head of the Civil Service, in each of the last four financial years is set out in the table below.

YEAR	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Total £	1,393,519	1,356,362	1,346,670	1,333,302

The total amount in bonuses paid to NICS Permanent Secretaries, including the Head of the Civil Service, in each of the last four financial years is set out below.

YEAR	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Total £	54,800	67,000	86,000	111,500

The total pension earned* by Permanent Secretaries, including the Head of the Civil Service, in the last four financial years is set out below.

YEAR	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Total £	13,907.78	15,110.69	17,050.92	17,922.80

* The figures relating to pension represent the total amount of pension earned by the Permanent Secretaries in each financial year and does not include pension payments made to retired Permanent Secretaries. Pension is not paid to current employees.

Sports Strategy

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the (i) contribution to date; and (ii) planned future contribution, from his Department to the implementation of the Sports Strategy. (AQW 2574/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The Department of Finance and Personnel has, in the normal course of business, had a role in reviewing the Northern Ireland Sports Strategy. The department will continue to provide advisory services to DCAL and the other departments taking forward the implementation of the Sports Strategy as necessary.

Procedures for Paying Invoices

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of departmental procedures for paying invoices, and the likelihood of businesses completing work but not getting invoices paid promptly, given the current economic climate. (AQW 2644/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: Cashflow is a major issue facing many companies at present and the public sector clearly has a role to play by ensuring that invoices are dealt with promptly and that suppliers are paid without any undue delay. I have asked all Departments to ensure that invoices are paid within 10 days following checking and approval and that their payments systems have been changed to support this objective.

By ensuring that bills are paid more quickly the public service can support local businesses in a practical way during this period of economic downturn.

Department's Staff Annual Report

Mr Simpson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many staff in his Department did not achieve an acceptable mark in their annual report, in the last reporting year. (AQW 2675/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The number of staff in DFP who did not achieve an acceptable mark for the 07/08 reporting year is 11.

Capital Investment Infrastructure Projects

Mr Savage asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if his Department is actively working to ensure that local consultancy and construction companies are employed to undertake work on capital investment infrastructure projects. (AQW 2695/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: Public Procurement is subject to the EU Treaty which requires freedom of movement, transparency and non-discrimination on the basis of nationality. Public Sector buyers therefore cannot restrict their purchases to specific locations or suppliers.

Consultants and contractors are selected for public sector contracts of up to £5k and £30k respectively from the Constructionline database. Constructionline is the UK's register of local and national construction-related service providers, pre-qualified to work for the public sector.

Projects with values exceeding the £5k and £30k thresholds but below the EU threshold are advertised in the local Press and/or on the website of the relevant Centre of Procurement Expertise (CoPE). Consultants and Contractors registered with Constructionline can then respond to the opportunities advertised.

Opportunities exceeding the EU thresholds (£90k for services and £3.5m for works) are advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union, the local Press and/or the website of the relevant CoPE.

Government recognises the vitally important role played by Small and Medium Sizes Enterprises (SMEs) in the Northern Ireland economy and encourages SMEs to join together to form consortia to bid for contracts and/or to look for opportunities within the supply chains of successful tenderers.

Central Procurement Directorate

Mr Savage asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to give his assessment of the Central Procurement Directorate, outlining if it is (i) meeting the key performance indicators; and (ii) playing a positive, proactive and assisting role in the tendering process. (AQW 2696/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: In 2007-2008 Central Procurement Directorate successfully contributed towards the achievement of 3 of my Department's Public Service Agreement commitments. In addition, Central Procurement Directorate achieved all seven of its key business objectives and made a significant contribution to the successful delivery of the Procurement Board's Strategic Plan 2005-2008.

Central Procurement Directorate plays a key role in assisting the private sector through regular engagement with representative and lead bodies within the construction, goods and service industries and the social economy sector. These engagements provide a forum through which Central Procurement Directorate can engage in supplier education and provide guidance to those, including SMEs and Social Economy Enterprises, wishing to do business with the Northern Ireland Public Sector.

Central Procurement Directorate

Mr Savage asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) how many court proceedings have been brought against the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD); (ii) who brought proceedings against CPD; (iii) the legal costs; and (iv) the compensation costs paid out. (AQW 2699/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: In the period from 1 April 2005 to 28 November 2008 CPD awarded some 3200 contracts and legal proceedings against CPD have been taken on four occasions. Details of the proceedings are set out below.

Plaintiff	Legal Costs	Compensation Paid
TSI Ireland (trading as Rainbow Telecoms)	Nil	Nil
Goldblatt McGuigan	£62,419	Nil
Leonard Personnel	£1,469	Nil
McLaughlin & Harvey Ltd	£1,035,000	Nil

Central Procurement Directorate

Mr Savage asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many people are employed in the Central Procurement Directorate; and for his assessment of whether this represents value for money. (AQW 2700/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: As at 31 March 2008, Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) had 342 permanent staff in post.

The operating cost of CPD for the year ended 31 March 2008 was £14.3m. The Value for Money (VfM) gains made by CPD during the same year amounted to £17.1m. During the three year period to 31 March 2008, CPD generated gross VfM gains of £58.9m, making a substantial contribution to the Northern Ireland Public Sector target of £250m VfM gains from procurement over the period. The achievement of these gains provides clear evidence of the added value of professional procurement practice and the contribution which professional procurement can make to the delivery of better public services.

Minister Engagements

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what his engagements were on Monday 24 November 2008. (AQW 2805/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: On Monday 24, November I had meetings with officials, Assembly members and Ministerial colleagues at Parliament Buildings.

Further to this, I met with the President of the European Parliament and visited the new site of the Public Records Office at the Titanic Quarter.

Chancellor's Pre-budget Statement

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the Chancellor's Pre-budget Statement. (AQW 2811/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Rt Hon Alistair Darling MP, delivered his Pre-Budget Statement to Parliament on 24 November 2008.

My assessment of the Pre-Budget Report is set out in the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) News Release of 24 November 2008 which is available on the Northern Ireland Executive website.

Pest Control

Mr Burns asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline what pest control measures are in place in (i) Parliament Buildings; and (ii) Stormont Estate. (AQW 2813/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: A contract for pest control services is currently in place with Cannon Hygiene Ltd., Unit 5-7 Abbey Business Park, Mill Road, Newtownabbey BT36 7BA.

This is a multi-client contract covering a wide number of properties across both the NICS Estate and the wider public sector. It includes Parliament Buildings and other properties within the Stormont Estate. The contract conditions require the service provider to inspect each property six times per year, to put appropriate pest prevention measures in place and to respond to emergency call-outs.

Pest Control

Mr Burns asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail how much money has been spent on pest control in Parliament Buildings; and Stormont Estate, in each of the last five years. (AQW 2814/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: Costs for pest control services for Parliament Buildings and the wider Stormont Estate are shown below for each of the past 5 years:

Location	Year 2004	Year 2005	Year 2006	Year 2007	Year 2008 (YTD)
Parliament Buildings	£300.00	£300.00	£300.00	£300.00	£120.00
Stormont Estate	£1,950.00	£2,525.00	£2,325.00	£2,941.00	£3,240.00

Capital Programme

Mr O'Loan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to list for each Department the (i) actual monthly spend so far in this financial year; (ii) anticipated spend for the remainder of the year; and (iii) total amount budgeted, for the capital programme of the Executive for 2008-9. (AQW 2828/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The information requested was made available to the Committee for Finance and Personnel on 26 November 2008.

Barnett Consequentials

Mr O'Loan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to (i) state the rules for the further allocation of Barnett consequentials to the NI block, after the initial CSR allocation; and (ii) list all Barnett consequentials received or agreed since January 2008, including those resulting from the pre-budget statement of the Chancellor on 24 November 2008. (AQW 2829/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The funding arrangements for the Devolved Administrations for the period covered by the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review are set out in the Statement of Funding Policy (October 2007) which is available on the HM Treasury website.

Since January 2008, the NI Executive has received additional Barnett consequentials as part of Budget 2008 in March and the Pre-Budget Report in November 2008. Further details are set out in Table 1 below:

TABLE 1: NI EXECUTIVE BARNETT CONSEQUENTIALS SINCE JANUARY 2008

£ million	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Current Expenditure:			
Budget 08	5.5	5.2	10.1
PBR 08	0.1	11.8	11.7
Capital Expenditure:			
Budget 08	0.1	0.1	0.0
PBR 08	11.11	78.41	-128.82

Notes:

This includes the option for the NI Executive to accelerate £9.4 million of capital expenditure into 2008-09 and £76.8 million into 2009-10 with a consequential reduction of £86.2 million in 2010-11. The Executive has not yet formally decided to avail of this opportunity.

This includes the £42.7 million negative Barnett allocation as a result of the reduction in the 2010-11 CSR07 allocation for the Department of Health in England. This has been compensated for by additional access to the NI Executive's capital EYF stock in 2010-11 for the same amount.

Civil Service

Mr Gardiner asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of civil service jobs in the (i) Craigavon Borough Council; and (ii) Banbridge District Council areas, broken down by office location. (AQW 2866/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The number of staff in post in the two district council areas, broken down by office location, is detailed in the attached table.

District Council	Dept	Building Address			Staff
Banbridge	DSD	Crown Blds	Castlewellan Road	Banbridge BT32 4AX	31
Banbridge	DRD	Govt. Office	45 Newry Street	Banbridge BT32 3EA	12
Banbridge	DRD	Cobert Dept.	Aughnacloy Road	Banbridge BT32 3RU	21
Banbridge	DEL	18 Castlewellan Road	Banbridge	BT32 4AZ	26
Banbridge	DSD	Banbridge Business Ctr	62 Scarva Road	Banbridge BT32 3QD	14
Total Banbridge					104
Craigavon	DARD	Seagoe Industrial Estate	Craigavon	BT63 5QE	88
Craigavon	DOE	Marlborough House	Central Way	Craigavon BT64 1AD	281
Craigavon	DOE	Oxford Island Inf. Centre	Oxford Island	Craigavon BT66 6NJ	1
Craigavon	DRD	Cairn Industrial Estate	Craigavon	BT63 5RH	92
Craigavon	DSD	Crown Blds	2 Alexander Crescent	Lurgan BT66 6BD	52
Craigavon	DEL	Alexander Crescent	Lurgan	BT66 6BB	35
Craigavon	DSD	Crown Blds	Jervis Street	Portadown BT62 3DA	64
Craigavon	DCAL	Magowan House	27A West Street	Portadown BT62 3PM	9
Craigavon	DFP	16 West Street	Portadown	BT62 3PD	24
Craigavon	DEL	140 Jervis Street	Portadown	BT62 3DA	29
Total Craigavon					675
Total					779

Notes:

Data source as at 1 January 2008.

Figures do not include those on career break.

Figures include both permanent and casual staff.

Civil Servants

Ms Anderson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel when he expects to make an announcement on issuing back pay owed to civil servants. (AQW 2933/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: Due to the complexities involved, achieving a negotiated resolution of any equal pay settlement may take some time.

Work is still ongoing to determine the size and scope of the equal pay issue, those staff affected by it, and what options might exist to resolve it. Negotiations have commenced between Departmental officials and Trade Union Side and several meetings have already taken place with a view to addressing this issue as soon as possible. In addition, discussions are continuing at both official and Ministerial level with the Treasury with a view to minimising the impact on public services.

Classroom Assistants

Ms Anderson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if he intends to prioritise the Education Minister's bid under December Monitoring for additional funds to implement the job evaluation scheme for classroom assistants in integrated schools. (AQW 2935/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: In the first instance it is a matter for the Minister of Education to determine her priorities within her existing budget allocations. I am, however, aware that the Department of Education have made a bid in December Monitoring. The Executive will need to consider this funding proposal against available resources and competing priorities. I expect to be in a position to announce the outcome of December Monitoring on the 15 December.

In-Year Monitoring Process

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the amount surrendered to date, by each Department in the most recent monitoring round. (AQW 2952/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: As part of the In-Year Monitoring process it is normal practice for NI departments to consult with their respective Assembly Committees as regards the content of their Monitoring Round submissions.

Departments are required to submit their monitoring round submission to DFP by 4 December 2008, requests for further detail should be referred to specific departments.

I will be making a statement on the December monitoring round in the near future.

Public Expenditure

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to list the percentage increases in public expenditure, in each financial year since 1998/99. (AQW 3004/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: As a result of changes in budgeting treatment it is not possible to provide public expenditure statistics, as requested, for the period before 2003-04 with an acceptable degree of accuracy. Table 1 below sets out the percentage increase in public expenditure by Northern Ireland Executive departments since 2004-05.

Increases in Public Expenditure

Mr Dallat asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the projected percentage increases in public expenditure, in each of the next four years. (AQW 3005/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The Budget 2008-11 document set out the Executive's spending plans for 2008-09 to 2010-11. Over the next two year public expenditure by Northern Ireland departments is planned to increase by 3.8% in 2009-10 and 4.0% in 2010-11.

The Northern Ireland Executive will not receive allocations for the period 2011-12 to 2012-13 until the next national Spending Review. Therefore it is not possible to provide the figures requested in respect of these years.

Efficiency Savings

Ms J McCann asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what consideration he has given to seeking further efficiency savings from Departments and the assessment he has made of the impact further savings will have on frontline services. (AQW 3120/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: There are currently no plans in place to increase the level of savings to be achieved by Northern Ireland departments in the period 2008-09 to 2010-11, over and above the 3% per annum efficiency target currently in place.

However, the increased value for money savings target for UK departments announced in the 2008 Pre-Budget Report will have implications in terms of the level of funding available to the Northern Ireland Executive in 2010-11. Although the impact on the Block Grant will only be confirmed once decisions have been made as regards the nature of the additional savings for Whitehall departments, the Executive will need to consider the most appropriate response in order to maintain delivery against the targets set out in the Programme for Government.

Primary responsibility for the delivery of efficiency savings lies with individual departments although it has been made clear that the impact on the delivery of priority frontline services should be minimised. However, this does not exclude the possibility of savings being achieved through frontline services becoming more efficient in providing the same or a higher level of services for the people of Northern Ireland.

Central Procurement Directorate

Ms J McCann asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what steps he is recommending to the Central Procurement Directorate to ensure SMEs are supported in the public procurement process. (AQW 3121/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) in my Department provides support to both SMEs and Social Economy Enterprises (SEEs) and has regular engagement with representative and lead bodies from both groups. The purpose of this engagement is to help SMEs and SEEs by increasing their understanding of the procurement process including supporting 'meet the buyer' events and supplier education programmes.

In addition to this individual suppliers can request information and clarification on specific tenders from CPD and are routinely offered debriefs on the quality of their tenders following the completion of tender competitions. The purpose of these debriefs is to assist individual SMEs or SEEs to compete more effectively for future opportunities

CPD has recently introduced an e-sourcingNI platform which has significant benefits for SMEs and SEEs by providing a standardised approach to bidding for Government business. The web based technology allows buyers and suppliers to interact on line via a secure web interface and affords suppliers a common registration portal thereby reducing costs and effort for both SMEs and SEEs and giving them visibility to all government opportunities.

CPD has also published guidance for SMEs and SEEs seeking to do business with the public sector and for buyers on steps to help remove barriers faced by these suppliers. This guidance is available on CPD's website.

Public Procurement Process

Ms J McCann asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if he will recommend that social clauses are incorporated into the public procurement process at the tendering stage to encourage social economy enterprises to apply for public procurement contracts. (AQW 3122/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: Guidance on integrating Equality of Opportunity and Sustainable Development in Public Sector Procurement was launched on 29 May 2008. The guidance provides practical advice and case studies for policy makers and practitioners to assist them to more effectively integrate equality of opportunity and sustainable development considerations, including social clauses, into public sector procurement.

This guidance recommends that identification of equality of opportunity and sustainable development outputs should be considered at the outset of projects by policy makers and programme providers in Departments. Procurement professionals can then assist Departments in the delivery of these equality and sustainable development outputs, where possible with incorporation at the specification stage.

This guidance was approved by both the Procurement Board and the Northern Ireland Executive. The implementation of the guidance, supported by appropriate training, will support the Executive's approach in delivering its priorities under the Programme for Government.

Public Procurement Regulations and Northern Ireland Procurement Policy provide the scope to take account of social issues where they are relevant to the subject matter or performance of the contract and fit with the detailed rules for specifications, selection and award. It is for individual Departments to determine how best to apply it in their respective business areas.

In line with Public Procurement Policy all contracts awarded by public bodies in Northern Ireland have social clauses relating to equality of opportunity and health and safety considerations.

Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit

Mr Ross asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to provide an update on the Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit. (AQO 1356/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: Since its establishment earlier this year, the prime focus of PEDU has been on working with the Planning Service to seek to improve the time taken to process planning applications.

Following a data analysis phase in the summer a joint Delivery Review team was established between PEDU and Planning Service. The team worked under a terms of reference agreed by Ministers and the Delivery Review

formally commenced on the 1st October. Using a methodology similar to that employed by the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit the team were asked to conclude the Delivery Review over an eight week period. On the 25th November the review team reported their findings, on schedule, at a meeting of the Environment Minister and myself.

Other areas of work include a short piece of work with Land and Property Services as regards rates collection levels; an assessment of the Delivery Plans proposed by departments to underpin the funding provided for Innovation in the Budget process.

PEDU also continues to lead my Department's work on the establishment of a robust Performance Management and Monitoring system, to drive the delivery of the commitments and targets that Departments signed up to when they secured funding in the budget. An early mechanism has been established that has enabled OFMDFM and DFP officials, including PEDU staff, to examine monitoring returns on performance against those targets.

Government Construction Projects

Mr Gallagher asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what action he is taking to ensure that the procurement system is fit for purpose, in light of the recent successful court action by businesses in relation to major Government construction projects. (AQO 1387/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The EU procurement regime, described by the Directives and Regulations, is not static. It is subject to change, driven by evolving European and domestic case law, European Commission communications, new and revised Directives and amendments to the existing UK Regulations.

In order to ensure that the procurement system is fit for purpose, the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) continuously reviews and updates its procedures in line with Office of Government Commerce guidance and the developing field of public procurement law.

The recent court action is not in the long-term interests of the construction industry or Government, particularly given the current downturn within the industry. Through the Construction Industry Forum for Northern Ireland (CIFNI), officials are working with the construction industry to examine how modern methods of construction procurement can be taken forward in Northern Ireland in a way that mitigates the potential for litigation.

Location of Public Sector Jobs

Mr Brolly asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how he will take forward the recommendations in the Report on the Review of the Location of Public Sector Jobs. (AQO 1420/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: This was an independent Review commissioned by the Executive and its recommendations now have to be carefully considered. In a recent Assembly debate on 21 October, a motion was passed that committed the Minister of Finance and Personnel to report to the Assembly and the Executive in a timely manner, having carefully considered the various consequences, including value for money, of the report's recommendations with views on how this matter may be addressed. I have issued a paper to my Executive colleagues to gather their initial opinions. These, together with the views of the Finance Committee and the points raised during the Assembly debate, will be useful in assessing the degree of consensus on the proposals that have been put forward.

When I have considered these I will put a paper to the Executive outlining my views in due course.

Civil Service

Mr McQuillan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what is his policy on diversity and equality in the Civil Service. (AQO 1361/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: It is NICS policy that all eligible persons shall have equal opportunity for employment, training and advancement in the civil Service on the basis of their ability, qualifications and aptitude for the work. All staff have a right to a good and harmonious working environment and atmosphere, where they can apply their diverse talents and no worker feels under threat of intimidated. And, in order to maintain the confidence of the whole community, the Civil Service is committed to taking steps towards making its workforce more representative of Northern Ireland's diverse society.

My Department has recently published an Employment Equality and Diversity Plan which outlines the steps the Civil Service, as an employer, will take over the next few years to promote equality and diversity.

Copies of this plan have been placed in the Assembly Library and it can also be accessed via the DFP web site.

Budget for 2009-10

Mr Attwood asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in light of the downturn in property values and other issues, if he will bring a Budget for 2009-10 before the Assembly. (AQO 1398/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: In January 2008 the Executive agreed and the Assembly approved a set of expenditure plans for Northern Ireland departments for the years 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11, which included the Budget for 2009-10.

In light of the fact that significant additional resources are not expected to become available to Northern Ireland over the next two years the Executive agreed in March 2008 that there would be little merit in conducting a formal Budget exercise this year.

However, a Strategic Stocktake is being conducted to assess the nature of pressures and easements that have emerged since the Budget was agreed, in preparation for next year's in-year monitoring process.

Although there a number of significant expenditure pressures facing the Executive, the precise scale and timing of these additional costs remain uncertain. Therefore, it would be unwise to take precipitous action at this time when, as we have seen from recent experience, circumstances can change dramatically in a matter of months.

In addition, I am content that there is sufficient scope within the in-year monitoring process for the Executive to address, where appropriate, the pressures that are identified by departments in 2009-10 with input from Assembly Committees into departmental monitoring returns whilst I will continue to make full statements to the Assembly regarding the outcome of each round.

HM Treasury

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to provide details of any recent discussions he has had with HM Treasury. (AQO 1364/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: I have had discussions with the Treasury in the context that the Executive was either to proceed with the introduction of water charges from April 2009, or to face reductions to other public services on an unprecedented scale - up to £900 million over this year and next.

The outcome of our discussions means that charges can be deferred for a further year at this most difficult time – representing a most welcome saving for hard pressed households next year, with no impact on wider public services, beyond the direct revenue foregone from the introduction of charges.

Efficiency Savings

Mr McCarthy asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to report on the monitoring of the delivery of efficiency savings. (AQO 1435/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: As part of the Budget 2008-11 process the Executive agreed that Northern Ireland departments should deliver 3% per annum cash savings over the period 2008-09 to 2010-11.

The aim of the 3% target was to drive out inefficiency and use the resources released to improve the public services provided by the Northern Ireland Executive.

Departments have agreed to publish their Efficiency Delivery Plans (EDPs) against which the achievement of the efficiencies will be monitored. Their publication is intended to ensure that Departments are open and transparent about the actions they are taking to achieve the efficiency targets agreed by the Executive.

Although primary responsibility for the delivery of the Executive's 3% efficiency target lies with the individual departments, my officials will monitor the implementation of EDPs as part of their normal engagement with departments on financial matters.

Fuel Poverty

Mr Simpson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to provide an update on the ministerial initiative to tackle fuel poverty. (AQO 1348/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The Executive has already taken a number of measures to reduce the cost of living in Northern Ireland through for example the freeze in domestic regional rates whilst a rebate is under consideration for those who carry out energy efficiency improvements to their homes.

In terms of Fuel Poverty, more work needs to be done before the Executive can conclude on the appropriate response to this issue, particularly given the recent decline in the cost of crude oil as well as the emergence of other pressures such as the downturn in the global economy.

I have met with the Minister for Social Development, the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Minister for Enterprise Trade and Investment in taking forward an action plan to develop proposals to combat the effects of rising energy costs with the aim of considering options for a response as part of the December monitoring round.

Rate Reform

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the initiatives he is taking on rate reform. (AQO 1349/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: I have recently made a number of announcements on rating, having listened carefully to consultees' views and Finance and Personnel Committee Members.

I intend laying regulations in the new year to reduce the maximum capital from £500,000 to £400,000, ensuring that ratepayers locally will pay no more than the average bill for the highest council tax band in England. I also intend to proceed with the Executive's decision to rate empty homes at 100% from April 2010, providing housing market conditions have improved by then.

In addition to limiting rate bills and improving housing supply I want to ensure that people receive the benefits to which they are entitled. Improved data sharing powers will enable advice to be targeted towards those likely to qualify for rate reliefs.

Legislation allowing a rates deferment scheme for home owning pensioners will be introduced in the new year, for implementation in April 2010, providing a payment option that would remove the worry of rates from their day to day budgeting.

I am also reviewing the relief scheme for those in full time education, training and young people leaving care. Announcements on both this and green rebates will be made shortly.

Many changes have been, and are to be, introduced into the rating system. There have been great strides made by this Executive to make the system more acceptable.

However, following these measures, I think what is badly needed is a period of stability, for ratepayers, local government and last but not least Land and Property Services, who have borne the brunt of the pressures arising from the major reforms that have taken place over the past couple of years.

Civil Service

Mr Storey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what progress is being made on the civil service equal pay claim. (AQO 1347/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: Over the summer and early autumn, work has been ongoing to address the Equal Pay pressure faced by the Executive whilst discussions are continuing at both official and Ministerial level with the Treasury with a view to minimising the impact on public services. Engagements have commenced and will continue to take place with the trade union with the aim of resolving this issue.

Strategic Stock-Take Exercise

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the arrangements for, and purpose of, the strategic stock-take exercise. (AQO 1358/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The Executive agreed in March 2008 to conduct a strategic stocktake of the Budget position for forward years (2009-10 and 2010-11) to allow Ministers and their departments to review progress to date against 3 year plans.

Returns were formally commissioned from departments on 24 September 2008 with responses due by 24 October 2008 registering any significant emerging pressures and easements. The returns are currently being evaluated by my officials.

As I explained to the Assembly on 14 October, the focus of the strategic stocktake is on surveying the landscape at this early stage to inform our strategic approach to managing any pressures through the in year monitoring process. No decisions on adjusting budgets will be taken at this stage and any re-allocations will only be made at future monitoring rounds.

The Assembly will be informed of the outcome of the strategic stocktake once Executive agreement has been reached.

Land and Property Service

Dr Farry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to report on measures being taken to improve the performance of the Land and Property Service. (AQO 1430/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: Through its Customers and Business Improvement Directorate, Land & Property Services is working on a range of improvements across all business areas, including work with the Performance and Delivery Unit (PEDU). Improvement measures include GeoHub, which is a new technology to better inform policy development and service delivery right across Northern Ireland. Another example of the work ongoing is a data-sharing strategy, which will drive improvements across all areas of work, including improving assurance about losses from vacant properties and reducing the potential for rate evasion.

With regard to rate collection, Land & Property Services has implemented a detailed recovery plan to increase collection levels, reduce the amount of rating debt, and improve service delivery to customers. Progress regarding this was provided to the Finance and Personnel Committee on 22 October 2008. Land and Property Services is also improving liaison with local councils and has set up a Strategic Steering Group to look at data transfer, IT and improving councils' understanding of the Penny Product estimates.

Rate Relief and Disabled Person's Allowance

Mr McLaughlin asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what action he has taken following the report, 'Access to Benefits on take-up of Rate Relief and Disabled Person's Allowance', produced by A2B and what progress has been made to ensure a better take-up of these benefits. (AQO 1413/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: The report was passed to Land and Property Services in order to allow the Agency to carry out an assessment of how best to implement the recommendations and to identify what the resource implications are.

My understanding is that this assessment is nearly completed and that an implementation plan will be available around the end of this month.

Many of the recommendations in the 'A2B' report are beyond the remit of my Department and rating policy. With the support of Margaret Ritchie an inter-departmental working group has been set up to take these recommendations forward.

This group, which will meet at official level, is to be chaired by DSD and will include representatives from Land and Property Services, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, as well as the central Anti-Poverty Unit in OFMDFM. The first meeting is due to take place at the end of this month.

Regional Rates

Mr Neeson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to report on the projected income from the regional rate for the 2008/09 financial year. (AQO 1431/09)

The Minister of Finance and Personnel: In the Budget 2008-11 the projected income from regional rates for 2008-09 was set at £525 million.

Land and Property Services are actively working to reduce the level of arrears and this will result in regional rates income in excess of that planned for in the Budget.

HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Capital Investment Budget

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail all capital projects he intends to roll out over the next three years. (AQW 2192/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Mr M McGimpsey): Having made a bid for £1.1 billion in the CSR my allocated capital investment budget over the next 3 years, 2008/09 to 2010/11, is just under £700m following the outcome of the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review.

In light of the funding constraints I commissioned on 31 May 2008 a Review of Capital Priorities over the next 10 years. I am currently considering the report, which has already highlighted that some very difficult decisions will need to be taken in order that the limited funding available to me will be allocated to areas of highest need across all Programmes of Care, and optimise the benefits for the entire population of Northern Ireland.

To date I have announced that I intend to roll out the following projects, which are planned to commence in the next 3 years:

Trust	Project
Belfast	Shankill, Beechall and Castlereagh Health & Care Centres
	Royal Victoria Hospital - Critical Care Block, Phase 2a IT and Commencement of enabling works for the new Women's and Children's Hospitals
	Redevelopment of mental health and learning disability facilities at Muckamore Abbey Hospital
	Replacement of Conicar ward, Muckamore at Iveagh
	Regional Mental Health Facility for Adolescents & Children & Families at Forster Green
	New Mental Health Community facility in North Belfast
Northern	Carnview Children's Home
	Ballymena, Larne and Carrick Health & Care Centres
	Redevelopment of facilities at Antrim Area Hospital and Whiteabbey Hospital
South Eastern	Ulster Hospital Redevelopment Phase A and Phase B
	Downe Enhanced Local Hospital
	Lisburn Assessment Resource Centre (LARC)
	Redevelopment of a range of key services at Lagan Valley Hospital
	Dunmurry Health & Care Centre
Southern	Interim upgrade works at Daisy Hill (Renal Unit & car park)
	Portadown Health & Care Centre
	Trauma & Orthopaedics and Theatre 5, Craigavon Area Hospital
	Newry Social Education Centre (SEC)

Trust	Project
Western	Altnagelvin Redevelopment
	New South West Acute Hospital (inc enabling works, ICT and equipment)
	Gransha Mental Health Unit
NIFRS	Investment in the NI Fire & Rescue Services
NIAS	Investment in NI Ambulance Services
ICT	Investment in supporting information technology across the health and social care sector

I have further decisions to make and will be making announcements on these in due course.

All Capital Projects are subject to Business Case approval.

Royal Victoria Hospital

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he can give the figures for (i) surgical site infections since 1 January 2008, on Ward 4F in the Royal Victoria Hospital; and (ii) how many patients were treated on Ward 4F during the same period. (AQW 2256/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:

- (i) Surgical site infection surveillance in neurosurgery is not mandatory but as good practice the Trust has established a voluntary surveillance programme. Validated data for surgical site infection surveillance for neurosurgery for 2008 will be available in early 2009.
- (ii) 440 patients have been treated in Ward 4F in the Royal Victoria Hospital for the period 1 January to 30 September 2008.

Cataract Operations

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many cataract operations have been carried out in each of the last 3 years. (AQW 2560/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The number of cataract operations carried out in Health and Social Care Hospitals in Northern Ireland in each of the past three years is detailed below:

Year	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007
Cataract Operations	8,391	9,441	8,718

Source: Hospital Inpatient System

These figures do not relate to individuals, as a person may have more than one cataract procedure carried out in a year.

Cataract Operations

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are on the waiting list for a cataract operation. (AQW 2561/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The inpatient waiting time position, for cataract surgery, at 30th June 2008, the most recent quarter for which official data are available, 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.

Abortions

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many abortions were performed legally in Northern Ireland in each of the last 5 years. (AQW 2577/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The number of abortions carried out in Health and Social Care Hospitals in Northern Ireland in each of the last 5 years is shown below:

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007*
Number of Abortions	73	59	82	69	99

Source: Hospital Inpatient System

*Figures shown for 2007 are provisional and as such may be subject to change

Health Provision

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail his Department's plans for increasing investment in health provision, in the Mid-Ulster constituency. (AQW 2579/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Under the Investment Strategy for NI my Department received some £3.3 billion over the next 10 years. This funding is to address an identified investment need within health and social care of £7.8 billion.

There will be capital investment in the CSR period in regional facilities which the population of Mid-Ulster will be able to access. However, in light of the funding constraints I commissioned on 31 May 2008 a Review of Capital Priorities over the next 10 years. I am currently considering the report, which has already highlighted that some very difficult decisions will need to be taken in order that the limited funding available to me will be allocated to areas of highest need across the health service.

It is not possible to provide information on the increased investment in health provision on a parliamentary constituency basis. The four Area Boards are responsible for the allocation of resources at a local level. Investments made in one constituency may have benefits to those in neighbouring constituency or even at a regional level and it is therefore impossible to quantify the extent and subsequent effect of investments at constituency level.

Abortions

Mr Hamilton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many women are estimated to have travelled to Great Britain for an abortion, in each of the last 5 years. (AQW 2590/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The numbers of abortions carried out in England and Wales, where the woman gave an address in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years is shown below:

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007*
Number of Abortions	1318	1280	1164	1295	1343

Source: Department of Health England and Wales

In each of the last five years, there were less than five abortions carried out in Scotland where the woman gave an address in Northern Ireland.

Source: Department of Health Scotland

Agenda for Change

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many former members of staff in the Health Service are waiting to receive back pay under Agenda for Change. (AQW 2593/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Over 88% of all Health Service staff, including staff who have left the service since October 2004, have now received back pay due to them under Agenda for Change. Details of the actual number of staff who have left the service and are still waiting to receive their arrears is not held centrally and can only be obtained at disproportionate costs.

Autism

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many of the staff are working with people with autism, in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust area. (AQW 2610/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Across the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust the following staff are dedicated to autism spectrum disorder services:

- 0.2 wte Consultant Paediatrician sessions
- 2.60 wte Speech and Language Therapists
- 1.53 wte Clinical Psychologists.
- 1 Psychological therapist

A further psychological therapist will be appointed in the next 3 months. In addition a range of professionals across the Trust provide services to individuals with autism within their total resources, along with addressing other conditions, eg, developmental delay and complex health needs.

Autism

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what the current waiting time is for children awaiting a diagnosis of autism, in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust area. (AQW 2611/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is not collected centrally, and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Autism

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many children are currently on a waiting list for diagnosis of autism in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 2612/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is not collected centrally, and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Autism

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline what steps his Department is taking to address the lack of service provision for children with autism, in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust area. (AQW 2613/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust have advised me that they are working to full capacity within dedicated autism resources and have in place a comprehensive training and development plan in relation to ASD. They have advised me that diagnostic services are available for all those referred to them with possible Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD), including Asperger's Syndrome. All clinics are staffed by specialists who are trained and experienced in assessment and diagnosis of ASD. Specialist practitioners work in a variety of locations across the Trust area and within a variety of professions, to include Clinical Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy and Paediatric Medicine.

Foster Care

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to provide the number of (i) registered foster carers; and (ii) children currently in foster care. (AQW 2614/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: From the latest information available;

(i) At 31 October 2008, there were 1,776 registered foster carers in Northern Ireland.

(ii) At 31 March 2008, there were 1,376 children in foster care in Northern Ireland.

General Practitioner Centres

Mr Gallagher asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the cost of operating General Practitioner out-of-hours centres, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust, for 2007-08. (AQW 2615/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The table below details the cost of operating out of hours centres, broken down by Health and Social Care Trusts in 2007-08.

Trust	Operating Costs 2007-08
Northern	£4,864,000
South Eastern	£4,044,179
Southern	£3,847,407
Belfast	£3,173,088
Western	£5,400,000
Total	£21,328,674

Sports Strategy

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline (i) the contribution from his Department; and (ii) the planned contribution, to the implementation of a sports strategy. (AQW 2619/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: In November 2007 I stated my intention to support the Sports Strategy for Northern Ireland which is currently being considered by the Executive. My Department's strategic interest in this strategy arises from the cross-governmental population health strategy "Investing for Health", which recognises the role of sport in tackling a range of health issues, including obesity and mental health and wellbeing.

To date the contribution of my Department is as follows;

- representation on a Minister-led Steering Group set up in 2005, by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL), to oversee the development of a planned new sports strategy,
- participation in a DCAL led focus group which considered how health issues should be reflected in a new strategy, and;
- provided comments on early drafts of a new sports strategy that was submitted to us for consideration.

My Department will also be represented on a Monitoring Group set up to oversee the implementation of this strategy. I confirm I intend to continue my support of this strategy which I believe will contribute to improvements in physical activity and lead to overall health benefits.

Use of WIFI

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if WIFI uses a similar signal to mobile phones and if exposure to it for more than a few hours a day causes a significant loss of male fertility; and, if so, what evidence supports this. (AQW 2629/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The radio signals from WiFi computer technology are of a similar type and magnitude to those from mobile phones, however, mobile phones are generally used much closer to the body so exposures are usually much greater from phones.

There is no evidence that emissions from WiFi could affect male fertility (the heating thus produced is too small).

Children with Special Needs

Mr Hilditch asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline what steps he is taking to address the lack of clubs/societies and voluntary organisations that are available for children with special needs, outside school hours. (AQW 2638/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The most effective and sustainable means of promoting independent organisations of this type is to make various types of funding available to underpin the services they provide. Examples of this type of funding include contracts with voluntary and community sector organisations for after school activities and non-recurring refunding aimed at children and adolescents with learning disabilities. Local Health and Social Care Trusts provide this type of funding.

Car Parking at Hospitals

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the amount paid by staff for car parking at hospitals, across all Health and Social Care Trusts. (AQW 2641/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The amount paid by staff for car parking at HSC hospitals is as follows:

Trust	Hospital	Amount 2007/08
Belfast Trust	Royal Group (1)	387,910
	Belfast City	154,310
	Mater	34,891
South Eastern	Ulster	186,000
Note (1): This amount is received by the PFI contractor, not the Belfast Trust		
Total		763,111

Pay Bands for Nursing Grades

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to give a detailed list of pay bands for all nursing grades. (AQW 2642/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Nurses are paid on one of a range of Agenda for Change pay bands depending on the responsibilities of the job that they are doing. These pay bands range from band 4 (salary range £17,316 to £20,818), band 5 (salary range £20,225 to £26,123) band 6 (salary range £24,103 to £32,653) band 7 (salary range £29,091 to £38,352), band 8(a) (salary range £37,106 to £44,527), band 8(b) (salary range £43,221 to £53,432) or band 8(c) (salary range £52,007 to £64,118).

Capital Budget

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail his capital budget for the next three years. (AQW 2643/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The DHSSPS capital allocation for the Budget period 2008-2011 was approved at £728m. This figure included assumed income from the sale of surplus land of £95m. However, the recent severe downturn in the NI property market has meant that planned receipts have had

to be reduced from the £95m originally planned to approximately £55m. The available capital budget for DHSSPS for 2008-2011 is therefore £688m.

Ravara Residential Home

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust has put in a proposal to close Ravara Residential Home, Bangor. (AQW 2645/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust is in the process of reforming and modernising its statutory residential care services in order to best serve the needs of older people throughout the Trust area. A proposal to close three statutory homes, including Ravara House, Bangor was presented at the Trust's Board on 19 November 2008. This proposal is now out for public consultation from 20 November 2008 to 12 February 2009.

Neonatal Nurses

Mrs Hanna asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action is being taken to (i) tackle the shortage of qualified nurses in neonatal specialty; (ii) assess the risk that the shortage of neonatal nurses represents to patients; and (iii) provide additional investment to tackle the shortage of neonatal nurses; and, what assessment has the Department made of the training and recruitment process that will be necessary to boost the number of neonatal nurses. (AQW 2661/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: A 2006 report on specialist neonatal services, commissioned by the Chief Medical Officer, made a number of recommendations to strengthen specialist neo-natal services including measures to increase the complement of appropriately trained neonatal nurses. In 2007/08, an additional £800k was allocated for neonatal and paediatric intensive care services, which facilitated the introduction of a further neonatal intensive care cot in the Ulster Hospital and supporting nursing staff, as well as allowing for additional nurse staffing in Antrim Area Hospital. In 2008/09 £430k recurrent funding was allocated to the Royal Jubilee Maternity Hospital, funding additional nursing staff.

Maintaining appropriate neo-natal nurse staffing levels will clearly help manage risk to this patient group. The Department, as part of its workforce planning arrangements, will continue to review the supply and demand of appropriately trained staff to meet service needs. The workforce planning cycle comprises a major review approximately every 3 years, with interim update reviews. A review of the nursing and midwifery workforce has recently been initiated. This will identify any potential recruitment difficulties and indicate where any special initiatives might be necessary.

Tuberculosis

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if there have been any cases of tuberculosis, over the last three years. (AQW 2664/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The number of cases of tuberculosis up to 21 October are as follows:

Year	Pulmonary TB	Non-pulmonary TB	Total
2005	44	31	75
2006	43	18	61
2007*	40	24	64
2008*	29	22	51

* Data for 2007 and 2008 are provisional.

Parkinson's Disease

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people suffer from Parkinson's Disease. (AQW 2665/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:

Information is not available on the number of people who suffer from Parkinson's Disease.

Osteoporosis

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people suffer from osteoporosis. (AQW 2666/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The number of people suffering from osteoporosis is not available.

Multiple Sclerosis

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people suffer from multiple sclerosis. (AQW 2667/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The number of people suffering with multiple sclerosis in Northern Ireland is not available.

Kidney Dialysis

Mr Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are receiving kidney dialysis. (AQW 2668/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The estimated number of people receiving kidney dialysis treatment during 2006/07, at Health and Social Care Hospitals in Northern Ireland is 1107.

Public Liability Claims

Mr Moutray asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many public liability claims have been successful (i) in total; and (ii) broken down by Health and Social Care Trust; and, what was the amount paid out (a) in total; and (b) broken down by Health and Social Care Trust, in each of the last three years. (AQW 2682/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is set out in the table below, which details the total number of public liability claims and total amount paid out in damages, broken down by Trust for the years 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08.

PUBLIC LIABILITY CLAIMS – TOTAL NUMBER AND AMOUNTS PAID OUT PER TRUST (£)

	2005/2006		2006/2007		2007/2008	
	No.	Amount	No.	Amount	No.	Amount
Northern	5	45,500	5	33,250	10	68,138
Western	14	22,724	22	22,078	16	37,470
South Eastern	12	9,328	20	85,500	7	11,000
Southern	2	7,334	8	25,474	2	52,850
Belfast	13	10,750	17	30,351	17	81,166
NI Ambulance	0	0	2	308,400	0	0

	2005/2006		2006/2007		2007/2008	
	No.	Amount	No.	Amount	No.	Amount
Totals	46	95,636	74	505,053	52	250,624

Sexual Health Promotion

Dr Farry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to explain why there is no funding for a sexual health promotion worker targeting gay and bisexual men. (AQW 2690/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: There are procedures in place for the provision of Departmental funding. Applications for funding must be in line with the Department's aims and objectives and must satisfy eligibility and assessment criteria. A voluntary organisation was unsuccessful in its application submitted in November 2007 for a sexual health promotion project targeting gay and bisexual men.

Sexual Health Strategy

Dr Farry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why the Health Promotion Agency has failed to meet with the Rainbow Project ahead of the launch of the Sexual Health Strategy. (AQW 2691/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I have been advised that the Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland has not been approached to meet with The Rainbow Project.

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he is taking to increase funding for sufferers of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME). (AQW 2702/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: It is the responsibility of the Health and Social Services Boards to plan and allocate resources to meet the needs of their local population, including those with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis. In determining their priorities for funding, Boards will take into account local circumstances, the strategic objectives established for the HSC and competing demands and pressures for a wide range of health and social care services generally. To date, Boards have not identified resource pressures in this area and consequently, my Department has not made any bids for additional funding specifically for Myalgic Encephalomyelitis.

Promoting Mental Health Strategy

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps his Department is taking to raise awareness of mental health issues within (i) the media; (ii) health clinics; (iii) hospitals; and the (iv) workplace. (AQW 2703/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Promoting Mental Health Strategy contains 20 actions to improve mental health and emotional well being, including action on addressing work-related stress. My Department has allocated £750,000 to Health and Social Care and the Health Promotion Agency to implement the actions which include raising public awareness of mental health issues, promotion of coping skills, and improving knowledge and skills of health professionals.

In conjunction with the Health and Safety Executive, my Department supports physical and mental health promotion programmes which have a particular focus on health service and workplace settings. These include "A Healthy Service - Supporting Health in Hospital" and the "Workwell" initiative which provides training on creating a healthy environment and, through which, a healthy workplace guide has been developed. In addition, the Health Promotion Agency, in partnership with the University of Central Lancashire, has offered in Northern Ireland a new accredited course "Healthy Settings: theory, policy and practice". This course is being offered again in the New Year.

I have met local newspaper editors to emphasise the need for responsible reporting of mental health issues. The Health Promotion Agency also works closely with the media and has participated in the development of agreed guidelines for sensitive reporting of suicide.

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people have been admitted to hospital with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME), broken down, if available, by age group. (AQW 2704/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The number of admissions to Health and Social Care Hospitals in Northern Ireland in 2006/07 where a diagnosis of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis was recorded, is given in the table below;

Age	Admissions
<20	3
20-29	7
30-39	19
40-49	6
50-59	7
60+	8
Total	50

Source: Hospital Inpatient System

Deaths and discharges are used as an approximation of admissions. These figures do not denote individuals as a person may be admitted to hospital more than once in a year.

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis

Mr Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he would consider a specialised clinic for those diagnosed with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis. (AQW 2706/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: It is the responsibility of the Health and Social Services Boards to plan and allocate resources to meet the needs of their local population, including those with myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS). In determining their priorities for service development, Boards will take into account local circumstances, the strategic objectives established for the HSC and competing demands and pressures for a wide range of health and social care services generally.

There is a specialist ME/CFS clinic at the Belfast City Hospital which provides a service within the Belfast Trust area. Health and Social Services Boards have not to date identified a need for additional specialist clinics to support people with this syndrome.

Love for Life

Mr Simpson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the total funding awarded to 'Love for Life' by (i) the Southern Health and Social Services Board; and (ii) the Southern Health and Social Care Trust, in each of the last 5 years. (AQW 2710/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Funding to Love for Life has been awarded by

- (i) the Southern Health and Social Services Board; and
- (ii) the Southern Health and Social Care Trust for each of the last 5 years as follows:

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
(i) SHSSB	Nil	£20,550	£30,450	£16,552	Nil to date
(ii) SHSCT	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	£30,000

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if his Department plans to intervene to prevent the closure of (i) Ravara House; (ii) Loch Cuan House; and (iii) Northfield House. (AQW 2750/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Trust's proposals, which do not include Northfield House, are now the subject of a planning process, the current stage of which is full public consultation, which will run from November 20th 2008 to February 12th 2009. No decision will be taken by the Trust until such times as it has given full and proper consideration to the response to the consultation. If at that point the Trust decides to pursue the closure of one or more of the facilities, its decision will be subject to endorsement by the Eastern Health and Social Services Board. The process provides discretion for the Board to refer the proposals to me for a final decision if it considers them to be major and controversial in nature. Given, therefore, the ongoing nature of this process, and the fact that I may be involved at a later stage, it would not be appropriate for me, or my Department, to intervene at this time. Similarly, at this early stage of the process no dates have been set for closure, and no preparations have been made to transfer residents from those homes included in the proposal.

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the discussions his Department has had with the South Eastern Health and Social Care trust on the future of (i) Ravara House, Bangor; (ii) Loch Cuan House, Newtownards; and (iii) Northfield House, Donaghadee. (AQW 2754/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Trust's proposals, which do not include Northfield House, are now the subject of a planning process, the current stage of which is full public consultation, which will run from November 20th 2008 to February 12th 2009. No decision will be taken by the Trust until such times as it has given full and proper consideration to the response to the consultation. If at that point the Trust decides to pursue the closure of one or more of the facilities, its decision will be subject to endorsement by the Eastern Health and Social Services Board. The process provides discretion for the Board to refer the proposals to me for a final decision if it considers them to be major and controversial in nature. Given, therefore, the ongoing nature of this process, and the fact that I may be involved at a later stage, it would not be appropriate for me, or my Department, to intervene at this time. Similarly, at this early stage of the process no dates have been set for closure, and no preparations have been made to transfer residents from those homes included in the proposal.

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the closure dates for (i) Ravara House, Bangor; (ii) Loch Cuan House, Newtownards; and (iii) Northfield House, Donaghadee. (AQW 2755/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Trust's proposals, which do not include Northfield House, are now the subject of a planning process, the current stage of which is full public consultation, which will run from November 20th 2008 to February 12th 2009. No decision will be taken by the Trust until such times as it has given full and proper consideration to the response to the consultation. If at that point the Trust decides to pursue the closure of one or more of the facilities, its decision will be subject to endorsement by the Eastern Health and Social Services Board. The process provides discretion for the Board to refer the proposals to me for a final decision if it considers them to be major and controversial in nature. Given, therefore, the ongoing nature of this process, and the fact that I may be involved at a later stage, it would not be appropriate for me, or my Department, to intervene at this time. Similarly, at this early stage of the process no dates have been set for closure, and no preparations have been made to transfer residents from those homes included in the proposal.

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what provision has been planned for the relocation of residents of (i) Ravara House, Bangor; (ii) Loch Cuan House, Newtownards; and (iii) Grove House, Ballynahinch. (AQW 2816/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Trust's proposals, which do not include Northfield House, are now the subject of a planning process, the current stage of which is full public consultation, which will run from November 20th 2008 to February 12th 2009. No decision will be taken by the Trust until such times as it has given full and proper consideration to the response to the consultation. If at that point the Trust decides to pursue the closure of one or more of the facilities, its decision will be subject to endorsement by the Eastern Health and Social Services Board. The process provides discretion for the Board to refer the proposals to me for a final decision if it considers them to be major and controversial in nature. Given, therefore, the ongoing nature of this process, and the fact that I may be involved at a later stage, it would not be appropriate for me, or my Department, to intervene at this time. Similarly, at this early stage of the process no dates have been set for closure, and no preparations have been made to transfer residents from those homes included in the proposal.

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if his Department plans to intervene to prevent the closure of Grove House in Ballynahinch. (AQW 2817/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Trust's proposals, which do not include Northfield House, are now the subject of a planning process, the current stage of which is full public consultation, which will run from November 20th 2008 to February 12th 2009. No decision will be taken by the Trust until such times as it has given full and proper consideration to the response to the consultation. If at that point the Trust decides to pursue the closure of one or more of the facilities, its decision will be subject to endorsement by the Eastern Health and Social Services Board. The process provides discretion for the Board to refer the proposals to me for a final decision if it considers them to be major and controversial in nature. Given, therefore, the ongoing nature of this process, and the fact that I may be involved at a later stage, it would not be appropriate for me, or my Department, to intervene at this time. Similarly, at this early stage of the process no dates have been set for closure, and no preparations have been made to transfer residents from those homes included in the proposal.

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the discussions his Department has had concerning the future of Grove House in Ballynahinch. (AQW 2818/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Trust's proposals, which do not include Northfield House, are now the subject of a planning process, the current stage of which is full public consultation, which will run from November 20th 2008 to February 12th 2009. No decision will be taken by the Trust until such times as it has given full and proper consideration to the response to the consultation. If at that point the Trust decides to pursue the closure of one or more of the facilities, its decision will be subject to endorsement by the Eastern Health and Social Services Board. The process provides discretion for the Board to refer the proposals to me for a final decision if it considers them to be major and controversial in nature. Given, therefore, the ongoing nature of this process, and the fact that I may be involved at a later stage, it would not be appropriate for me, or my Department, to intervene at this time. Similarly, at this early stage of the process no dates have been set for closure, and no preparations have been made to transfer residents from those homes included in the proposal.

Respite Care Beds

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many (i) residents; and (ii) respite care beds are in Grove House in Ballynahinch. (AQW 2819/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust have indicated that Grove House in Ballynahinch has

- (i) 10 residents and
- (ii) 14 respite care beds.

At Risk Register

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many (i) children are on the At Risk Register; and (ii) At Risk cases are unallocated, in each Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 2845/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The table below shows the latest available information held centrally on the number of children on the Child Protection Register as at 31 March 2008 within each Health and Social Care Trust.

HSC Trust	Total
Belfast	603
Northern	331
South Eastern	417
Southern	314
Western	406

Health and Social Care Trusts continue to report that there are currently no unallocated cases of a child protection nature.

At Risk Register

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps are being taken to (i) reduce the number of unallocated Children At Risk cases; and (ii) to assess and prioritise unallocated Children At Risk cases, in the Western Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 2847/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: All referrals to the Western HSC Trust are screened on the day of receipt by a senior social worker to identify if any cases are of a child protection nature. Such cases are allocated to social work staff and dealt with as a matter of priority. A front-line Gateway Service has been established which includes experienced senior practitioners. A number of expert principal practitioner posts have also been created to support less experienced staff within the Trust. A single assessment tool has been developed to assess the needs of children and help improve identification of child protection issues. This tool will ensure a more consistent approach to contributing and capturing relevant information on children, analysis of the information, and identification of risks to children. Common supervision standards have been issued to all Trusts and a caseload weighting system for social services staff is being introduced. A substantial and ongoing multi-disciplinary child protection training programme is underway for Trust staff.

Capital Investments

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the capital investments made in (i) Lurgan Hospital; (ii) Craigavon Area Hospital; (iii) Saint Luke's Hospital, Armagh; (iv) Longstone Hospital, Armagh; (v) Mullinure Hospital, Armagh; (vi) South Tyrone Hospital; and (vii) Armagh Community Hospital, since 1995.

(AQW 2886/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is not available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Capital Investments

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail business cases that were submitted to his Department seeking approval for capital programmes for (i) Lurgan Hospital; (ii) Craigavon Area Hospital; (iii) Saint Luke's Hospital, Armagh; (iv) Longstone Hospital, Armagh; (v) Mullinure Hospital, Armagh; (vi) South Tyrone Hospital; and (vii) Armagh Community Hospital, in (a) 2004; (b) 2005; (c) 2006; and (d) 2007.

(AQW 2887/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is not available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Capital Investments

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the business cases currently with his Department seeking approval for capital programmes for (i) Lurgan Hospital; (ii) Craigavon Area Hospital; (iii) Saint Luke's Hospital, Armagh; (iv) Longstone Hospital, Armagh; (v) Mullinure Hospital, Armagh; (vi) South Tyrone Hospital; and (vii) Armagh Community Hospital. (AQW 2888/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is not available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Capital Investments

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the business cases submitted to his Department for capital investment by the (i) Armagh and Dungannon Health and Social Care Trust; (ii) Newry and Mourne Health and Social Care Trust; and (iii) Craigavon and Banbridge Health and Social Care Trust, in each of the last four years of their existence. (AQW 2890/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is not available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Southern Health and Social Care Trust

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much was saved by his Department with the creation of the Southern Health and Social Care Trust following the merger of Armagh and Dungannon; Newry and Mourne; and Craigavon and Banbridge Health and Social Care Trusts. (AQW 2891/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Plans for organisational restructuring and rationalisation as a result of the Review of Public Administration (RPA) will result in savings of £53m per annum across the entire HSC system by 2010/11. The Southern Health and Social Care Trust have been advised that its savings target over the three year Comprehensive Spending Review period is as follows:

	2008/09 £'m	2009/10 £'m	2010/11 £'m
Savings target	2.7	5.4	5.5

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the proposed annual budget for the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust for (i) 2006-7; (ii) 2007-8; (iii) 2008-9; (iv) 2009-10. (AQW 2895/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust came into operation in April 2007. The actual income of the Trust for 2007-8 and the proposed budgets for 2008-09 and 2009-10 are as follows:

Financial Year	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Actual/Budget (£m)	417.4	423.4	428.0

Toner Report Recommendations

Mr Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the progress made on the implementation of the Toner Report recommendations. (AQW 2896/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Toner Report was published in July 2008 and contained 63 recommendations. Of the 55 recommendations directed towards the Western HSC Trust/Western HSS Board, 50% had already been fully implemented by the end of October and significant progress has been made against the others. By end December 2008, approximately 85% of these recommendations will have been fully implemented. All Trust/Board recommendations should be fully implemented by end March 2009. Of the 8 remaining recommendations, 4 fall to the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety; 1 to the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority; 1 to the Northern Ireland Social Care Council; and 2 to the Police Service of Northern Ireland. Of the 4 recommendations directed to DHSSPS, 1 has been completed and work on 3 is underway. Work is underway on the two recommendations directed to RQIA and NISCC.

Officials continue to monitor progress on implementation of the Toner Report recommendations and will be meeting again with Western HSC Trust and Western HSS Board representatives within the next few weeks to review their progress.

Home Help Services

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many hours of home help were provided by each of the Health and Social Care Trusts, in each of the last three years. (AQW 2897/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information is not available in the format requested.

Home Help Services

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for the total amount spent on home help provision provided by each of the Health and Social Care Trusts, in each of the last three years. (AQW 2898/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The table below details resources allocated to Trusts for Home Help services over the last 3 years.

TOTAL DOMICILIARY CARE FUNDING 2006/07 TO 2008/09

Trusts	2006/07 £'000	2007/08 £'000	2008/09 £'000
BHSST	34,994	36,239	36,388
NHSST	29,011	31,829	34,808
SEHSST	24,854	26,460	27,121
SHSST	26,310	27,979	28,964
WHSST	20,220	21,946	22,425
Total	135,389	144,453	149,706

Home Help Services

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people in each of the Health and Social Care Trust areas have been receiving home help, in each of the last three years. (AQW 2899/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The number of people in receipt of home help services on 31 March in 2006, 2007 and 2008 in each of the Health and Social Care Trust areas is shown in the table below.

PERSONS RECEIVING A HOME HELP SERVICE ON 31 MARCH

Health and Social Care Trust	2008	2007	2006
Belfast HSC Trust	6,491	6,986	6753
Northern HSC Trust	4,032	4,232	4,355
South Eastern HSC Trust	3,528	3,786	3,865
Southern HSC Trust	4,208	4,430	5,019
Western HSC Trust	4,340	4,479	4,874
Northern Ireland	22,599	23,913	24,866

Home Help is one of a number of services designed to support people in their own homes, including day care, meals services and domiciliary care which has increased by 18.5% since 31 March 2006, from 8,110 at 31 March 2006 to 9,608 at 30 June 2007.

Home Help Services

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what cutbacks have been made during 2008 in home help provision in (i) the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust; and (ii) Northern Ireland as a whole. (AQW 2901/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: (i) The South Eastern HSC Trust has advised that there have been an overall increase in the provision of domiciliary care packages (which includes Home Help) in 2008.

(ii) Figures for the whole of Northern Ireland are not available.

Health Service Pension Department

Ms Anderson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to provide an assurance that the terms and conditions of Civil Service staff currently employed within the Health Service Pension Department will not be altered as part of proposals to create a new Regional Shared Services Organisation. (AQW 2930/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The necessary provisions of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) Regulations 2006, along with appropriate arrangements to protect Occupational Pensions, have been incorporated in the Health and Social Care (Reform) Bill.

An assurance can be given that arrangements are in place to safeguard the interests of staff who transfer to the new HSC organizations as a result of the Review of Public Administration (RPA). All contractual terms contained within the NICS Staff Handbook will be protected in accordance with TUPE Regulations and will transfer with staff to their new employment.

I understand that the DFP Minister will be seeking the agreement of the Executive that some Civil Servants may have the option of temporary transfer to the new RPA bodies in which case they will also retain all their NICS terms and conditions of service.

Health Service Pension Department

Ms Anderson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to provide an assurance that Civil Service staff currently employed within the Health Service Pension department at Waterside House in Londonderry/Derry will not be relocated as part of proposals to create a new Regional Shared Services Organisation. (AQW 2932/09)

The Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: There is no intention to relocate these staff as part of the establishment of the new Regional Business Services Organisation (RBSO) on 1st April 2009.

The location of services managed by the RBSO as 'shared' services for Health & Social Care will be the subject of public consultation in due course. Decisions on long-term location will follow consideration of the responses to that consultation.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Translink

Mr Burns asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail, for each of the last five years, (i) the number of accidents involving Translink buses and (a) pedestrians; and (b) other vehicles; (ii) the number of accidents where Translink was (a) held liable; (b) not held liable; and (c) settled out of court; and how much compensation was paid by Translink to injured parties. (AQW 2469/09)

The Minister for Regional Development (Mr C Murphy): The following table gives the requested information.

Year	Pedestrian Accidents	Other vehicle Accidents	Liabe	Not Liabe	Settled Out Of Court	Compensation Paid
03/04	41	1292	n/a	n/a	739	£330,157.00
04/05	47	1325	n/a	n/a	789	£363,830.00
05/06	37	1313	945	405	786	£506,396.00
06/07	45	1547	1114	478	793	£224,387.00
07/08	56	1489	1066	479	623	£116,107.00
Total	226	6966	3125	1362	3730	£1,540,877.00

Translink

Mr Savage asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail how much Translink has invested in (i) bus services; and (ii) other areas, in the past five years. (AQW 2475/09)

The Minister for Regional Development:

I have been informed by Translink that the capital investment in bus and other services in the last five years is as follows:-

	Capital Investment Bus Purchases	Capital Investment Bus Stations	Capital Investment Other*
	£'000	£'000	£'000
2003/04	13,636	89	27,570
2004/05	9,658	3,264	47,940
2005/06	22,848	755	37,597
2006/07	20,393	962	11,051
2007/08	50,085	2,023	27,167
Total	116,620	7,093	151,325

* This figure includes capital investment on rail services.

Public Transport

Mr Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development to make a statement on the provision of concessionary fares on all public transport, to people under 18 years of age, who are in full time education.

(AQW 2564/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: As part of the Comprehensive Spending Review I bid for resources to provide free travel for all children under the age of 18. Unfortunately this bid was unsuccessful and it was decided to provide free travel for all persons aged 60 to 64. I have no plans at present to extend the scheme to older children.

Roads Service

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the total amount of money spent by the Road Service on the A29, in the last ten years.

(AQW 2578/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service does not record details of the total annual expenditure on individual roads. I am, therefore, unable to provide the requested information.

Investment Plans

Mr Craig asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) his Departments investment plans; and (ii) the projects scheduled to be delivered, including the dates for completion, for the Lagan Valley constituency, for the next five years.

(AQW 2588/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: The Investment Strategy, agreed by the Executive in January 2008, sets out firm capital allocations for the 3 years to 2010-11 and indicative capital allocations for the 7 years thereafter.

My Department's Roads Service investment plans for Lagan Valley are contained within the Investment Delivery Plan (IDP) for Roads as part of the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland. The focus of the proposed IDP is the strategic road network, but it does include provision for smaller schemes.

Those projects involving improvements to the strategic road network within the Lagan Valley constituency are:

- A1 Belfast to Dublin dual carriageway - junction improvements at Hillsborough and Dromore are currently being implemented as part of Package 2 of Roads Service's Design Build Finance and Operate programme. The contractor's current programme indicates that the new flyover at Dromore Road, Hillsborough, will be available for use by December 2009 and the new underpass at Banbridge Road, Dromore by January 2010.
- M1/A1 Sprucefield Bypass - 4 kilometres of new dual carriageway from the M1 motorway to A1 at Hillsborough, bypassing Sprucefield Retail centre. The date for completion is between 2013/14 to 2017/18, outside the 5 year period questioned.
- M1 between junctions at Saintfield Road, Lisburn and Blacks Road, Belfast – replacement of 4km of central median safety barrier. Provisional date for completion is end of August 2009. This scheme is not contained within the IDP.

While the IDP does make provision for Non Strategic Major Improvements, Local Road Improvements and Road Safety Schemes, Street Lighting Improvements and Other Capital Requirements, it should be noted that any road scheme proposed will be subject to the availability of the necessary lands and finance and must compete for priority with all other minor works proposals. Therefore, it is not possible at this stage to be more specific about a work programme, or to outline a five year plan for potential schemes across the whole of Lagan Valley. However, I understand the Lagan Valley constituency covers areas from both Lisburn and Banbridge Council districts. Roads Service presents their programme of work to Councils in the Spring of each year. These provide details of indicative Minor Works and Traffic Calming programmes of work for a three year period and other activities, such as resurfacing, on an annual basis.

The relevant Council Reports for these areas can be accessed from the Roads Service internet site at the following web address:

www.roadsni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-council_reports.htm

If required, a hard copy of these reports can be made available upon request from Roads Service. For the Lisburn Council Report the relevant Roads Service official to contact is Mr Tom McCourt, Divisional Roads Manager, Eastern Division, Tel. 028 9025 3004. For the Banbridge Council Report, the Roads Service contact is Mr Bertie Ellison, Acting Divisional Roads Manager, Southern Division, Tel. 028 3832 0250.

My Department also plans to invest in public transportation projects in the Lagan Valley constituency over the next 5 years. A major project to complete a track relay of the rail line between Knockmore and Lurgan is currently being planned. Subject to an Economic Appraisal and the availability of funding and other budget decisions, the project is likely to be completed in 2014 with costs estimated at £55m.

A project to upgrade the pedestrian crossing at the railway crossings at Meeting House Lane and Glebe Road in Dunmurry has been approved. The project is scheduled to be completed in February 2010 at an estimated costs of £2.5m.

Work on improving the rail stations on the Portadown line, to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act and Northern Ireland Rail's New Rail Vision, is nearing completion. The cost relating to stations in the Lagan Valley area £1.7m.

Northern Ireland Rail will be seeking approval from my Department to provide additional Park & Ride facilities at Lisburn Station. If all goes to plan, this will be in place by December 2011 at a cost of £3m. There are also plans to provide additional Park & Ride facilities in Moira by January 2011, at a cost of £675,000.

As part of the project to purchase 20 new trains, several of which will be deployed to increase frequency and capacity on the line between Belfast and Portadown, some of the platforms on the railways network will have to be extended. For the Lagan Valley area this will involve work at:

- Dunmurry - £115,000
- Derriaghy - £243,000
- Lambeg - £154,000
- Hilden - £191,000

In addition to the recent opening of the new Lisburn Bus Centre, work is planned to improve Dromore Bus Depot. This will be at a cost of £900,000 and is due for completion in July 2011. Work is also planned for improvements to the Boundary Wall at Lisburn Depot, which will improve its security. Completion is expected by November 2012 at a cost of £220,000.

Flooding in Marguerite Park

Mr Spratt asked the Minister for Regional Development what measures his Department will take to alleviate the threat of flooding in Marguerite Park, Upper Lisburn Road, Belfast. (AQW 2600/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the flooding problems experienced at Marguerite Park are caused by hydraulic incapacity in the Upper Lisburn Road sewer which forces flows to back-up into Marguerite Park during heavy rainfall. NIW proposes to alleviate the problem by upgrading around 100 metres of sewer in the Upper Lisburn Road to increase capacity, and diverting some of the flow to an upgraded sewer in Balmoral Park. This solution is an integral part of the £12 million Boucher Road scheme which will include the provision of a large hydraulic upgrade sewer designed to reduce the discharge frequency of 11 Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) and also to alleviate flooding problems in Upper Lisburn Road and Balmoral Park.

NIW recognises that providing a solution to the on-going flooding problem in Marguerite Park is a priority. However, in terms of phasing and environmental impact, implementation of the scheme can only take place after the Boucher Road elements of the scheme are completed in order to avoid creating pollution to local watercourses. At present, NIW has a construction start date of Autumn 2010.

Sports Strategy

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline (i) the contribution from his Department; and (ii) the planned contribution, to the implementation of a sports strategy. (AQW 2616/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service supports the Department for Culture Arts and Leisure's proposal for a Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation in the North. The uptake of sport and physical recreation is likely to contribute to a healthier population, who are consequently more likely to walk or cycle as an alternative for journeys often now undertaken by car, thereby reducing our carbon footprint.

Roads Service provides and promotes the use of facilities for walking and cycling on the public road network through:

- The Regional Transportation Strategy and Transport Plans, which contributes to improvements for walking and cycling, making it easier for the population to walk and cycle throughout the North;
- The Safer Routes to Schools Project by promoting initiatives designed to support healthier and more sustainable transport options for children, parents and school staff; and
- Travelwise N.I. which promotes the use of sustainable transport options, such as, walking and cycling for commuters and employers.

Traffic Flows

Mr Moutray asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the average daily traffic flows between Lurgan and Moira. (AQW 2648/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it collects data from approx 300 automatic traffic counting sites located throughout the North's road network. Roads Service has advised that there is one automatic traffic counting site located on the A3 between Lurgan and Moira at Magheralin. The annual average daily traffic volume recorded at this site during 2008 is 13,778 vehicles.

Road Improvements

Mr Moutray asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans his Department has for road improvements in Upper Bann, in the next 3 years. (AQW 2649/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service presents their programme of work to Councils in the Spring of each year, with a follow up progress meeting held during the Autumn. While it is normal to provide details of our indicative Minor Works and Traffic Calming programmes of work for a three year period, it is only possible to provide details of the other activities, such as carriageway resurfacing, on an annual basis.

I understand the Upper Bann constituency covers areas from both Craigavon and Banbridge Council districts. The relevant Council Reports for these areas can be accessed from the Roads Service internet site at the following web address:

www.roadsni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-council_reports.htm

If required, a hard copy of these reports can be made available upon request from Roads Service. The relevant Roads Service official to address such a request is Mr Bertie Ellison, Acting Divisional Roads Manager, Roads Service, Southern Division. Mr Ellison can be contacted at Marlborough House, Central Way, Craigavon, (Tel. 028 3832 0250).

Water Main Replacement Works

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to his answer to AQW 2187/08, to provide a timescale, including start date for and duration of, the water main replacement works in Limavady town centre. (AQW 2662/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that work on the Watermain Rehabilitation Project for Limavady town centre and the surrounding area will commence during January 2009 and is expected to continue for around 9 months.

Traffic Situation in Newry

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the traffic situation in Newry; and what action his Department is taking to address it. (AQW 2723/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the current traffic problems in Newry have been aggravated by the current large influx of shoppers from the South. Most of these shoppers travel on the main North/South route through Newry, from the Dublin Road to Abbey Way, and as a result they must pass through five sets of traffic signals and a pedestrian crossing.

When the added activity generated by Christmas shopping is taken into account, the volumes of traffic far exceed the capacity of these junctions, which are operating at maximum efficiency. While traffic light timings could be altered to give extra time to the main route, this would be to the detriment of the side roads, including the shopping centre entrance and exits, as well as the main Warrenpoint Road, which could exacerbate congestion in the vicinity.

There are plans to introduce a new traffic control system linking all of the signals, but this will not be introduced until the new Newry By-Pass has been completed and is operational.

In the meantime, attention will be given to local measures, such as concentrating on illegal parking, at strategic points, and the blocking of yellow box junctions.

Carrickfergus Railway Station

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development if his Department will release the land on which the Carrickfergus Road Service Depot stands, to facilitate the provision of a further extension to the park and ride facility at Carrickfergus Railway Station. (AQW 2725/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has been in discussions with Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC) on this matter. Roads Service has no objection, in principle, to releasing the land upon which the Roads Service Depot is currently sited.

However, as the Roads Service Depot provides a base for work essential to the roads infrastructure in the Carrickfergus area, no move can be considered until an alternate site, which meets Roads Service's needs, is provided. As a result of the ongoing discussions, NITHC are investigating potential sites and are to report back alternatives to Roads Service for consideration.

Northern Ireland Water

Mr Savage asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) how much has been paid out to; and (ii) how many claims have been made by (a) residential; and (b) business, consumers in claims for property damage against Northern Ireland Water since its inception. (AQW 2876/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that since its inception in April 2007 the company has received 555 property damage claims and to date has paid out a total of £133,098. The records held by the company do not differentiate between residential and business claimants.

Deceleration Lanes

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost of providing the deceleration lanes on the B52 Randalstown to Portglenone Road at its junction with the B18 Roguery Road and Whitesides Road. (AQW 2998/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the works on the B52 Randalstown to Portglenone Road, at its junction with the B18 Roguery Road and Whitesides Road, were implemented as part of a collision remedial scheme. The works were completed on 25 November 2008 at an estimated cost of £33,000. The contractor's final account for the works is awaited, therefore, the final cost will not be available until this is received and certified by Roads Service.

George Best Belfast City Airport

Mr McCallister asked the Minister for Regional Development what implications the proposed extension to the runway of the George Best Belfast City airport will have on the Good Practice Guide to the Assessment and Management of Aircraft Noise Disturbance in airports. (AQO 1461/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: The Guide, produced by my Department, gives advice on good practice in the assessment and management of aircraft noise disturbance around existing airport facilities. It does not apply to forecasting the noise impact of proposed airport facilities.

The noise impact of the proposed extension to the runway of George Best Belfast City Airport will be considered by the Department of the Environment within the planning process, in accordance with guidance on Environmental Impact Assessment.

Should the Planning Service approve the runway extension, I would expect the airport to follow the Good Practice Guide in its management of the noise impacts.

Trains Arriving in Derry/Londonderry

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Regional Development when it is expected that trains will start to arrive in Derry/Londonderry before 9am. (AQO 1453/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: Plans are progressing to complete a full relay of the track between Coleraine and Derry and this will include the construction of a passing loop. This work is scheduled to be completed by 2013 and is planned to coincide with the introduction to passenger service of two additional trains on the Belfast to Derry line.

In the meantime a £12m project to extend the track life of the line between Ballymena and Coleraine has just started and is expected to be completed by 2010.

The completion of these projects should allow faster and more frequent train services between Belfast and Derry with a commuter service reaching Derry before 9am for the first time.

Major Infrastructure Projects

Mr Boylan asked the Minister for Regional Development for a progress report on the major infrastructure projects on the A5 and A8. (AQO 1451/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that significant progress has been made on the development of the A5 and A8 projects. On 7 November 2008, I was pleased to announce the preferred corridors for the proposed dual carriageway upgrades of the A5, running from Derry to Aughnacloy, and the A8, between Belfast and Larne.

This first key milestone for each project was achieved ahead of target. Work is continuing towards realisation of the second key milestone, to identify a preferred route option within the corridors, by mid-2009.

A public consultation event, for the A8 scheme, was held on 11 and 12 November 2008, and further consultation is planned, for the A5, early in 2009.

George Best Belfast City Airport

Mr Beggs asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of whether the proposed extension of the runway at George Best Belfast City airport will improve competitiveness in the all Ireland aviation market. (AQO 1459/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: I have made no such assessment. Civil aviation is a reserved matter. The extent of competitiveness within the aviation market is a matter for the competition authorities.

Railway Line between Ballymena and Ballymoney

Mr Storey asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on work to upgrade the railway line between Ballymena and Ballymoney. (AQO 1350/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: The work required to repair the wet spot problem on the line has been extended because additional wet spots have been identified. However, this element of the project will be completed before Christmas.

The contract for the main works has now been signed and work on site has commenced. The work will continue through 2009 and will involve the closure of the line between Ballymena and Coleraine from the end of March 2009 for 14 weeks. A replacement bus service will be provided during this period. The project is expected to be fully completed by mid 2010.

Central Procurement Directorate

Ms Anderson asked the Minister for Regional Development how he is implementing guidance published by the Central Procurement Directorate and the Equality Commission, on how to integrate equality into the delivery of Department policy and operational activity, as outlined in the Programme for Government. (AQO 1456/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: In line with the Public Procurement Policy that procurement should be directed through Centres of Procurement Expertise (COPEs), in excess of 95% of procurement by my Department and its Arms Length Bodies (ALBs) is channelled through the following established COPEs:-

- NIW (for all NIW procurement)
- Roads Service (for all Roads Service capital procurement)
- Translink (for all Translink procurement)
- CPD (for all procurement of goods and supplies by DRD Core Business Areas and Roads Service).

The joint CPD/Equality Commission guidance on “Equality of Opportunity and Sustainable Development in Public Sector Procurement” was circulated to the above COPEs and to procurement officers within the Department and its ALBs in June 2008. Officers responsible for procurement are aware of the equality and sustainability requirements set out in the Guidance.

In line with the joint guidance, the Department considers how equality of opportunity and all three pillars of sustainable development (encompassing social, economic and environmental goals) can be incorporated, as appropriate, into each stage of the procurement process.

My Department has worked in partnership with CPD in achieving its targets for sustainability through a range of supplies contracts.

In my Department’s 2008/09 annual procurement plan, contracts have been highlighted as providing opportunities for social gains. These include contracts for road schemes that will present road safety and better access to services and amenities. Additionally, contracts that are let by Roads Service, NIW and NITHC / Translink are required to include a declaration for contractors to comply with the application of fair employment, equality of treatment and anti-discrimination legislation.

In furtherance of the objective of complying with the CPD guidance, all COPEs are currently preparing Sustainable Procurement Action Plans. These Plans, which will underpin the CPD Sustainable Procurement Action Plan for NI, will assist in the delivery of the Programme for Government’s commitment to support equality of opportunity and sustainable development principles when procuring goods, services and supplies by the Department and its ALBs.

Bus Stops

Mr Attwood asked the Minister for Regional Development what steps he is taking to upgrade bus stops to ensure the safety of passengers and other road users. (AQO 1458/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department’s Road Service is aware of the need to ensure safety at bus stops and is continually seeking to improve this aspect of the public transport infrastructure.

In October 2005, Roads Service and Translink published the "Bus Stop Design Guide" which sets out best practice in relation to accessibility at bus stops. This guidance is intended for use by all types of professionals involved in the planning, design and provision of bus stop infrastructure, so that good practice can be applied consistently across the North.

A number of measures have been taken to date, including: -

- the provision of almost 1200 bus shelters, which include seating and lighting for waiting passengers;
- an on-going programme of highlighting the bus stops on all main arterial routes, which will clearly prohibit parking in the vicinity. This will enable buses to stop closer to the kerb, ensuring that passengers do not have to walk on the carriageway, whilst boarding a bus; and
- hard stands at bus stops, where there is no footway, to allow passengers to wait off the carriageway.

In addition to these measures, Roads Service and the PSNI advise Translink on any road safety issues associated with all proposed new bus stop locations.

Flooding in East Belfast

Mrs Long asked the Minister for Regional Development what action he has taken following the flooding in East Belfast last year. (AQO 1442/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: Firstly, it is important to highlight that the flooding which occurred in June 2007 and August 2008, in East Belfast, resulted from the abnormal rainfall which occurred within a short timeframe. The road gullies, storm and foul drains, and watercourses, were simply overwhelmed by the deluge of water, and the consequent flooding was not caused by the failure to maintain the operational effectiveness of the road gullies or other infrastructure.

Roads Service already has a robust regime in place for the maintenance of road gullies and aims to inspect, and clean where necessary, all gullies in urban areas twice each year. This policy ensures that a reasonable level of maintenance is carried out to the drainage system, whilst taking account of the Department's finite funding and staff resource levels. There have been no underlying reasons identified within Roads Service's scheduled maintenance operation, which would have contributed to the flooding incident last year.

Following the flooding on 12 June 2007, all reported locations within East Belfast were investigated by Roads Service and specific remedial works undertaken, such as the cleaning of drains, replacing gullies, raising kerbs and the reshaping of footways.

During the year, Roads Service has also been liaising with the other relevant Agencies, in order to examine flooding issues in East Belfast.

Rivers Agency is currently taking forward the Loop River Flood Alleviation Scheme, which will reduce the risk of flooding from watercourses.

NIW's Drainage Area Study for the East Belfast region, is due to be completed by April 2009. The needs and options from this study will be assessed and any schemes arising from the study will be incorporated into NIW's Capital Works Programme. As with all proposed works, the delivery of any schemes will be subject to available finances and competing priorities.

NIW has advised that it has been possible to accelerate parts of the East Belfast Drainage Area Study, including work required in the Cregagh Road and Castlereagh Road sub catchment. This work is scheduled for completion by December 2008. Some remedial work has also commenced which will improve the operation of the sewerage system in the Montgomery, Alanbrook and Merok areas of East Belfast.

In addition, NIW has upgraded the sewers in Burren Way and this will reduce the risk of future out-of-sewer flooding in this area.

Ports Policy Review

Mr W Clarke asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the ports policy review. (AQO 1452/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: On 29 February 2008 I announced my intention to develop legislation that would have the effect of taking the trust ports out of the public expenditure system and giving them greater commercial freedom.

Draft legislation has been prepared. However, a final decision whether to consult is dependent on assurances, ultimately from the Office for National Statistics, that the proposed legislative changes will have the required effect of removing the trust ports from public corporation status. This is still awaited.

Varney Report

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister for Regional Development what consideration he has given to the recommendation in the Varney Report that ports should be privatised; and to outline his policy in relation to this recommendation. (AQO 1460/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: I refer the Member to my answer to AQO 3737/08 on 2 June 2008.

Safety Features on School Buses

Mr Burns asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the revised plans in place to allocate £3.4 million to Translink to enhance safety features on school buses. (AQO 1462/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: My Department was allocated £3.4m to enable Translink to introduce signage and lighting on school buses in 2007/08 on the understanding that new legislation for signage and lighting on buses would be in place. However, the regulations, which fall within the remit of the Department of Environment, have not yet been introduced. In accordance with guidelines the money was surrendered to DFP for reallocation. My Department has rebid for the funds required in 2009/10 when the regulations are expected to come into effect.

Ballyquinton and Quarter Roads, Ards Peninsula

Mr Shannon asked the Minister for Regional Development what monies have been spent on the Ballyquinton and Quarter Roads, Ards peninsula, over the last three years. (AQO 1388/09)

The Minister for Regional Development: I should explain that my Department's Roads Service does not record expenditure against individual roads or classes of roads. However, local officials have been able to provide estimated expenditure figures for these two roads, based on a range of maintenance measures, including bitmac patching, surface dressing, drainage, grass cutting, gully emptying, sweeping and other routine maintenance.

Approximately £13,000 has been spent on the Ballyquinton Road, and approximately £9,000 on the Quarter Road, Ards Peninsula, over the past three years.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Community Centres

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what funding is available for community centres. (AQW 2592/09)

The Minister for Social Development (Ms M Ritchie): Under the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 Chapter 9 the responsibility for the provision of council community centres rests with District Councils, not the Department for Social Development. However my Department does play a supporting role to Councils through the Community Support Programme. In addition to District Council provision, there is a range of community owned and/or managed facilities, some of which have attracted modest support through my Department's Local Community Fund. The Neighbourhood Renewal Investment Fund (NR) has provided funding for community houses in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas. This includes the capital costs of providing the

facility and associated running costs. NR can be used for part funding for refurbishment of community centres and support costs for projects delivered in Community Centres. Where possible, NR funding is made through the District Council as part of their community development remit.

Sports Strategy

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development to outline (i) the contribution from her Department; and (ii) the planned contribution, to the implementation of a sports strategy. (AQW 2617/09)

The Minister for Social Development: My Department has (i) contributed to the formulation of a sports strategy by participating in a Ministerial led Steering Group set up in 2005, by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL), to oversee the development of a planned new sports strategy. In addition, DSD participated in a DCAL led focus group with Government Departments on the development of the strategy. DSD also provided comments on early drafts of a new sports strategy that were submitted to it for consideration. It is envisaged that DSD will (ii) contribute to the implementation of a sports strategy through representation on the Ministerial led Monitoring Group set up to oversee its implementation.

My Department makes a significant ongoing contribution to the promotion of sports by supporting facilities and programmes in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas and voluntary and community associations whose services include sport related activities.

Homeless People

Mr Bresland asked the Minister for Social Development how many homeless people there are in the (i) Omagh; and (ii) Strabane District Council areas. (AQW 2719/09)

The Minister for Social Development: At 30 September 2008 there were 31 and 45 homeless applicants on the social housing waiting list for Omagh and Strabane District Council area respectively.

Capital Building Programmes

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to outline her Department's major capital building programmes, for the next three years. (AQW 2741/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Department is implementing a major capital building programme to complete the rollout of the final ten Jobs & Benefits offices representing investment potentially in excess of £60m. It is, however, anticipated that the programme will extend beyond 2011.

Environmental Improvement Scheme

Mr A Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development what recommendations were made by the Housing Executive Board in relation to the proposed Environmental Improvement Scheme Phase III for the Markets area, South Belfast. (AQW 2766/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Northern Ireland Housing Executive has identified that the Markets Area of South Belfast should be the focus of a Programme of Environmental Improvements, to be implemented in 4 separate phases over a number of years.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive commissioned an Economic Appraisal to identify the various options for delivering Phase 3. In their Economic Appraisal the consultants recommended that in their opinion an option to deliver a programme of Environmental Improvements should include selected demolition.

This Economic Appraisal was subsequently endorsed by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and submitted to the Department for approval.

Environmental Improvement Scheme

Mr A Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development what advice her Department received which resulted in 8 housing units not being demolished as part of Environmental Improvement Scheme Phase III in the Markets area, South Belfast. (AQW 2767/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Northern Ireland Housing Executive commissioned an Economic Appraisal to identify the various options for delivering Phase 3 of these Environmental Improvements. This was subsequently submitted to the Department for approval.

Whilst the Economic Appraisal recommended that Phase 3 Environmental Improvements should be delivered following selected demolition of 8 flats, the Department on detailed consideration of the Economic Appraisal could find no justification in demolishing these units in an area of high housing need and did not support that course of action.

The Economic Appraisal identified little difference in the 'weighting' between options to deliver these improvements with or without demolition. Given the high demand for housing in the area, the Department was of the view that demolition of 8 units in good structural repair could not be justified and recommended that the option to pursue Environmental Improvements without demolition be pursued.

Houses of Multiple Occupancy

Mr A Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the status of the Houses of Multiple Occupancy registration process. (AQW 2768/09)

The Minister for Social Development: At the end of November 2008 the Northern Ireland Housing Executive had registered 1775 Houses In Multiple Occupation.

Social Housing

Mr McKay asked the Minister for Social Development to list all the schemes her Department plans to put in place to provide new social housing in the North Antrim constituency, over the next three years. (AQW 2791/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Social Housing Development Programme published by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive includes the following schemes for North Antrim Constituency over the next three years:-

2009/10

Scheme Name	Dwellings
Tobar Park, Cullybackey	18
24 Main Street, Ahoghill	5
Ramoan Road, Ballycastle	10
Shields Court, Ballymoney	10
Church Road, Rasharkin	10
Tower House, Warden Street, Ballymena	13

2010/2011

Scheme Name	Dwellings
Adair/Demense 1	25
Bendooragh, Ballymoney	8
Broughshane	25
Cushendall 1	15

Scheme Name	Dwellings
Harryville, Ballymena	15
Martinstown/Glenravel	6
Station Road, Phase 1, Dunloy	6
Clooney Road, Ahoghill	6
Leyland Road, Phase 1, Ballycastle	10
Leyland Road, Phase 2, Ballycastle	10

2011/2012

Scheme Name	Dwellings
Charles Street, Ballymoney	6
Milltown Avenue, Ballymoney	13
Adair/Demense 2, Ballymena	25
Ahoghill	8
Ballycastle Town 1	10
Ballyconnelly, Portglenone	6
Broughshane 2	26
Cloughmills	6
Cushendall 2	10
Cushendun	10
Dunaghy, Ballymoney	6
Church Road Phase 2, Rasharkin	9
Garvaghy Avenue Portglenone, Ph 2	13
Seymour Drive, Gate End, Ballymoney	10
Station Road, Phase 2, Dunloy	6
Ballymena Learning Disabilities	6
Ballymoney Physical Disabilities	4
Market Street Phase 2, Ballymoney	3

Public Sector Homes

Mr Newton asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of housing units purchased from the private sector and allocated as public sector homes, by her Department for the years (i) 2005-6; (ii) 2006-7; (iii) 2007-8; and (iv) 2008-9 to date. (AQW 2797/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The table below details the number of social housing units purchased from 2005/2006 to 31 October 2008.

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09 (to 31/10/08)
Housing Units Purchased	228	229	613	174

Population Growth

Mr McLaughlin asked the Minister for Social Development if she is aware of the population growth in Crumlin; and, if so, does she have any plans to invest in its social infrastructure. (AQW 2804/09)

The Minister for Social Development: I am aware of the growth of population in Crumlin. However, it is not currently defined as urban by DFP's NI Statistics and Research Agency and therefore cannot avail of the urban programmes of my Department. However, it does benefit from a range of my Department's community development programmes – most notably the Community Support Programme delivered in partnership with the local council.

Social Housing

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the areas of North Down in which her Department plans to build the 148 dwellings for social housing, over the next three years. (AQW 2807/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Social Housing Development Programme, which is managed by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, sets out plans for 148 dwellings for social housing in North Down over the next 3 years as follows:-

NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL - SOCIAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

2009/2010

Location	Dwellings
267-271 Old Belfast Road, Bangor	40
South Circular Road, Bangor	25
34-36 Bangor Road, Holywood	8
Gibson's Lane, Bangor	19
Strand Avenue, Millisle	6
Strand Avenue, Holywood	23
Total	121

2010/2011

Location	Dwellings
Chester Avenue, Bangor	7
Clandeboyne Road, Bangor	20
Total	27

Urban Renewal Schemes

Ms Ní Chuilín asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the status of urban renewal schemes awaiting decision for North Belfast. (AQW 2848/09)

The Minister for Social Development: There are 3 economic appraisals with the Department currently under consideration.

They are:

- Urban Renewal Area status for Fortwilliam/Queen Victoria Gardens
- Urban Renewal Area status for the Parkside area; and
- Redevelopment status for the Upper New Lodge.

Each of these was returned to the Department from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive within the last week and are all being urgently processed.

Mortgage Rescue Scheme

Ms Ní Chuilín asked the Minister for Social Development to confirm when the not-for-profit mortgage-rescue scheme will be presented to the Assembly. (AQW 2849/09)

The Minister for Social Development: An eight week consultation on my proposals for a not-for-profit Mortgage Rescue Scheme for Northern Ireland closed on 21 November 2008. My officials are currently analysing consultee responses. It is my intention to make known the outcome of the consultation early in the New Year, with a view to introducing the scheme by the end of March 2009.

Neighbourhood Renewal

Ms Ní Chuilín asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the parts of her budget that she intends to transfer to local councils to fund Neighbourhood Renewal projects and action plans. (AQW 2850/09)

The Minister for Social Development: Operational responsibility for Neighbourhood Renewal will transfer to local councils in 2011 as part of the Review of Public Administration. In principle the related Department for Social Development budget should transfer with this function. The model for achieving this is still under consideration by the Department of Finance and Personnel.

Monitoring Rounds

Ms Ní Chuilín asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the internal re-organisation to her budget in the (i) September; and (ii) December monitoring rounds; and where the re-allocation occurs. (AQW 2851/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The information requested is in the table below regarding the September re-allocations. Pending the official announcement to the Assembly expected later this month, information in respect of any December monitoring re-allocations is not yet available.

Amount £m	Expenditure Type	Movement	
0.080	Capital	From Social Security Agency	To Child Maintenance & Enforcement Division
15.499	Capital / Capital Grant	From Urban Regeneration & Community Development Group	To Housing
0.032	Resource/Capital Grant	From Urban Regeneration & Community Development Group	To Housing

Craigavon Industrial Development Organisation

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Social Development (i) to detail the events leading up to the closure of the unit at Craigavon Industrial Development Organisation (CIDO); (ii) if the equipment bought can be used for the development of the young people of Lurgan; and (iii) to detail the location of this equipment. (AQW 2924/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Shankill and Wakehurst community base at the Craigavon Industrial Development Organisation was closed following a number of resignations within the community group which left it in a position that it no longer had the capacity to operate the facility effectively: The portable equipment bought has been recovered by the Department and following completion of the necessary Portable Appliance Testing is being held in the Department's premises in Banbridge for future distribution to any group within a neighbourhood renewal area that can demonstrate a need for such equipment.

Community Workers

Mr Easton asked the Minister for Social Development if her Department will continue to fund community workers in the Rathgill Estate, Bangor, under the Small Pockets of Deprivation scheme, for the 2009-10 period. (AQW 2937/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The SPOD programme was established for a period of three years and is currently due to end at the end of March 2009. An evaluation of the programme is due to be carried out before any decision is made regarding any future funding including that relating to the costs of community workers in the Rathgill Estate.

Rainbow Project

Ms Ní Chuilín asked the Minister for Social Development to outline what funding her Department has given to (i) the Rainbow Project; and (ii) the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community, and how much funding is allocated for future work. (AQW 2962/09)

The Minister for Social Development: My Department has funded five projects between 2003 and 2008, totaling £148,672 in relation to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community, two of which relate specifically to the Rainbow Project. These relate to small grants in respect of the Community Volunteering Scheme and the Community Support Programme and a more substantial grant awarded to the Rainbow Project under the Community Volunteering Scheme in respect of The Gay and Bisexual Men's Empowerment Programme. There are currently no schemes or further funding allocated to this area of work..

Social Security Administration Staff

Mr Brady asked the Minister for Social Development how much she has spent on overtime for Social Security Administration staff since the rise in unemployment figures. (AQW 2963/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Social Security Agency uses overtime for a variety of reasons to support its business and deliver services to its customers. This includes planned exercises, the implementation of new initiatives and systems (such as the introduction of Employment and Support Allowance, Pensions Transformation, etc) and to cover staff vacancies. As such, the Agency does not directly link its overtime expenditure to increasing benefit registers however; from April 08 to October 08 the Agency spent a total of £1.93m on overtime.

The rise in unemployment has been ongoing over a number of months and is expected to continue and the Agency will continue to monitor the impact of this on its business.

Unemployment Figures

Ms Ní Chuilín asked the Minister for Social Development what contingencies the Department has in place to deal with perceived risks in relation to unemployment figures, broken down by parliamentary constituency. (AQW 2968/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The information cannot be provided in the form requested. As a result of the increase in claims to Jobseekers Allowance in recent months, the Social Security Agency has introduced a range of measures within the network of Jobs & Benefits Offices/Social Security Offices to meet this demand. This includes the temporary use of overtime working, reprioritisation of staff resources within offices and movement of work between offices. The Agency is also liaising closely with the Department for Employment and Learning to ensure that the overall service to individuals who become unemployed is maintained.

Girdwood Army Base Site

Mr Newton asked the Minister for Social Development to detail her Department's plans for the former Girdwood Army Base site and the former Crumlin Road jail. (AQW 3008/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The Girdwood Army base and Crumlin Road Gaol will be developed as a site of international significance bringing maximum economic and social benefits to the local and wider communities throughout the region.

The site is located in one of our most difficult interface areas but has the potential to address some of our community relations problems and connect North Belfast to the rest of the city to become part of our growing tourism product.

A draft masterplan has been developed outlining some of the potential uses for the site including tourist facilities, education, leisure, retail, business units and hotel accommodation. There has been considerable debate about the potential of the site to accommodate social housing to address the levels of housing stress that exists in that part of Belfast. We must also address the need to improve community relations in the area and I am conscious of government's commitment to a shared future. It is my hope that within that strategic context this site will be developed to benefit all our communities.

A draft Equality Impact Assessment is currently out for consultation and I would encourage all interested parties to examine this and provide feedback to my officials.

Social Security Agency

Mr Doherty asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of Social Security Agency staff employed at each Jobs and Benefits Office and Social Security Office, broken down by grade. (AQW 3024/09)

The Minister for Social Development: The tables below detail the Social Security Agency staff employed by district, grade and office.

Belfast West & Lisburn	Andersonstown	Falls Road	Lisburn	Shaftesbury Square
G7	0	1	0	0
DP	0	1	0	0
SO	1	3	1	1
EO1	3	7	3	2
EO2/SSO1	44	19	16	18
AO/SSO2	62	32	21	42
AA	5	2	1	2
TAA	3	3	1	0
SGB2	3	4	2	2
CSGB2	4	0	1	0
Typist	0	1	0	0
Total	125	73	46	67

Belfast North & East Antrim	Carrickfergus	Corporation Street	Larne	Newtownabbey	Shankill
DP	0	1	0	0	0
SO	1	4	1	1	0
EO1	1	9	2	2	3
EO2/SSO1	6	54	8	13	11
AO/SSO2	11	66	17	19	22
AA	2	12	4	3	2
TAA	1	10	1	2	1
SGB2	1	3	3	1	1

Belfast North & East Antrim	Carrickfergus	Corporation Street	Larne	Newtownabbey	Shankill
CSGB2	1	2	0	2	2
Typist	0	1	0	0	0
Total	24	162	36	43	42

East Down	Ballynahinch	Bangor	Downpatrick	Holywood	Kilkeel	Knockbreda	Newcastle	Newtownards
DP	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
SO	0	1	1	2	0	2	1	0
EO1	1	1	1	3	1	6	1	2
EO2/SSO1	5	14	15	26	4	17	4	15
AO/SSO2	6	23	14	39	9	18	11	17
AA	0	2	1	6	2	2	1	3
TAA	3	1	3	2	1	2	1	0
SGB2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2
CSGB2	0	1	0	2	0	2	1	0
Typist	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	17	45	38	82	19	51	21	40

North	Antrim	Ballymena	Ballymoney	Coleraine	Cookstown	Limavady	Magherafelt
G7	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
DP	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
SO	2	1	1	2	1	1	1
EO1	4	2	1	8	0	1	0
EO2/SSO1	20	15	8	13	8	6	12
AO/SSO2	39	22	15	23	16	13	15
AA	5	2	2	2	3	2	1
TAA	4	1	1	2	0	1	1
SGB2	3	1	1	2	0	3	1
CSGB2	1	1	2	1	1	0	2
Total	78	45	31	55	29	27	33

South	Dungannon	Newry	Armagh	Banbridge	Lurgan	Portadown
G7	1	0	0	0	0	0
DP	1	0	0	0	0	0
SO	2	1	1	1	1	1
EO1	7	4	1	3	1	3
EO2/SSO1	13	19	26	7	14	10
AO/SSO2	29	34	35	14	25	26
AA	3	4	6	4	3	1
TAA	1	3	6	0	2	1

South	Dungannon	Newry	Armagh	Banbridge	Lurgan	Portadown
SGB2	1	2	3	0	1	0
CSGB2	1	3	1	3	1	2
Typist	1	1	0	0	0	0
Total	60	71	79	32	48	44

WEST	Lisnagelvin	Strabane	Foyle	Omagh	Enniskillen
DP	0	0	1	0	0
SO	0	2	3	1	1
EO1	2	1	15	2	0
EO2/SSO1	15	15	43	13	15
AO/SSO2	29	20	78	20	25
AA	1	1	7	6	3
TAA	3	2	10	5	1
SGB2	2	1	8	2	3
CSGB2	1	1	2	1	0
SEC GUARD	0	0	2	0	0
Typist	0	0	1	0	0
Total	53	43	170	50	48

Strategic Business Review

Mr Doherty asked the Minister for Social Development what account is being taken of the considerable section of the adult population that have literacy difficulties, particularly when it comes to form filling, in the proposed organisational changes arising from the Strategic Business Review. (AQW 3032/09)

The Minister for Social Development: We are aware that a number of our customers have literacy and other difficulties. Under the proposed changes arising from the Strategic Business Review a face-to-face service, including assistance with form-filling, will continue to be available to those customers who need this. The Strategic Business Review is about enhancing accessibility options for customers and, as set out in the consultation documents, proposes a multi-channel package of additional measures which will complement the existing face-to-face service. The Agency will take account of and respond to any issues raised as part of its public consultation and subsequent Equality Impact Assessment.

ASSEMBLY COMMISSION

Assembly Committees

Mr McKay asked the Assembly Commission if live audio internet streaming of Assembly Committees is currently available; and, if not, what consideration it has given to making this available. (AQW 2533/09)

The Representative of the Assembly Commission (Rev Dr R Coulter): All public Committee meetings held in the Senate Chamber are currently streamed live (audio and video). Live audio internet streaming of Committee meetings is also possible, however as the Assembly only has access to a single live stream; it is only possible to stream Committee meetings when a plenary session is not taking place, as plenary business takes precedence. As part of the project to replace the existing website, the specification will include the requirement to stream

multiple channels (audio and video) and also to provide an archive of previous meetings. This project is scheduled for completion in June 2010.

Turning Circle

Mr Shannon asked the Assembly Commission what consideration it has given to providing a turning circle to make access easier for taxis at the gate and security hut leading up to Parliament Buildings. (AQW 2628/09)

The Representative of the Assembly Commission (Rev Dr R Coulter): In order to fulfill one of the recommendations of the review of security, the Assembly Commission agreed to introduce a facility for searching visitors to Parliament Buildings externally.

Planning permission was sought for a temporary facility to be located at the Glen East entrance to Parliament Buildings.

Consideration was given to traffic management at the design stage and it was agreed to provide a 'drop off' point for visitors at the mini-roundabout in order to try to avoid traffic congestion.

Alternatively, after dropping passengers at the East Search Facility, cars are allowed to drive to the upper car parks either to turn or to exit via Glen West.

It would not be possible to create a turning circle outside the vehicular gate due to the lack of available space and health and safety risks associated with the movement of pedestrians from the Lower East Car Park through the External Search facility.

For the reasons outlined above, the Assembly Commission currently has no plans to provide a turning circle at the gate/security hut.

CORRIGENDUM

Written Answer Booklet of 28 November 2008

(Volume 35, No WA3)

In page WA230, replace the answer to question (AQW 2486/09) with;

My Department's Roads Service's policy for the operation and maintenance of illuminated traffic signs, including directional signs, comprises of a programme of night-time inspections to identify faulty or defective lights. These inspections are carried out once a fortnight during the winter, and every four weeks during the summer.

Reports of outages and defects may also be received from other members of Roads Service staff, or from members of the public or public representatives. In all cases, the reports are programmed into the next planned maintenance operation for repair, which normally takes place 5 working days after the inspection, unless the nature of the report indicates that an urgent repair is necessary.

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