
OFFICIAL REPORT

(HANSARD)

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NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Friday 15 May 2009

Written Answers to Questions

OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER

Strategy for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration

Dr S Farry asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the factors that are delaying the release of a draft strategy for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration. (AQW 5536/09)

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness): Improving relationships between and within communities and building a shared and better future remains a high priority for our Department and the Executive. We are continuing to develop and refine the programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration to examine how we can build on the achievements of previous initiatives and programmes.

Our work at Ministerial level in OFMDFM as well as throughout the Department at all levels, has demonstrated our commitment to building cohesive, inclusive communities. The fact that we have been delivering substantial additional funding secured in the Executive's budget is just one of our achievements. We have increased funding by a third for the period 2008-2011, from £21 million in the previous CSR period to almost £30 million in the current one. That means that vital work on the ground and with both existing and new communities is better resourced than ever. We also want to ensure that these resources are used in an effective way, so we have been assessing existing programmes and considering new approaches to ensure tangible outcomes from our funding and actions.

We have increased funding to minority ethnic groups by two-thirds and increased funding for youth and interface workers by one-quarter. Statistics show that the work that we fund and resource, is delivering real and meaningful outcomes. There has been a 13.2% reduction in sectarian motivated crimes and three out of five young people in 2007 reported that relationships between Protestants and Catholics were getting better.

However, we are not complacent – we are leading and driving change in our society and in our work – through the Department and the Executive to deliver a shared and better future for all our people.

We are still determined to bring the programme forward as soon as possible, but not before we are satisfied that we have got the detail right.

Northern Ireland Children's Commissioner

Mr D Simpson asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether it intends to place any ceiling on the amount of public money available to the Northern Ireland Children's Commissioner to initiate legal cases. (AQW 6884/09)

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Children and Young People's Unit (CYPU), Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) is the sponsoring body for the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland.

The Commissioner is independent of Government. Under the Commissioner for Children and Young People's (NI) Order 2003 the Commissioner has the power to bring, intervene in or assist in legal proceedings and

carry out a “General review of advocacy, complaint, inspection and whistle-blowing arrangements of relevant authorities”.

Relationships between the Commissioner, Ministers and OFMDFM are governed by the ‘arm’s length’ principle, wherein the primary role of Ministers is to set the Commissioner’s legal and financial framework and the structure of her funding and management. Within this framework it is the role of the Commissioner to determine her policy and activities in keeping with her statutory responsibilities and the requirements of Assembly policy.

When the Commissioner decides how she is going to allocate her funds against key targets and milestones for the year ahead she presents this information in advance to OFMDFM and DFP in her annual business plan for approval. The Commissioner receives a capped grant every year which she draws down monthly. CYPUP monitors actual against planned expenditure, and the Commissioner’s drawdown requests are accompanied by monthly profiles and explanations, which are scrutinised before approval of payment is given.

OFMDFM has regular contact meetings with the Commissioner. The work of the Commissioner’s office is discussed during these meetings, including any ongoing legal action initiated by the Commissioner and financial management. The Commissioner has advised OFMDFM that she is currently considering whether her legal challenge to the legislation on the physical punishment will proceed further at this time.

Northern Ireland Children’s Commissioner

Mr D Simpson asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister if it has had any discussions with the NI Children’s Commissioner about whether she intends to lodge an appeal in the House of Lords following the failure of her attempts to outlaw smacking. (AQW 6891/09)

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Children and Young People’s Unit (CYPUP), Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) is the sponsoring body for the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland.

The Commissioner is independent of Government. Under the Commissioner for Children and Young People’s (NI) Order 2003 the Commissioner has the power to bring, intervene in or assist in legal proceedings and carry out a “General review of advocacy, complaint, inspection and whistle-blowing arrangements of relevant authorities”.

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Northern Ireland Children’s Commissioner

Mr D Simpson asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister what contact it has had with the NI Children’s Commissioner about the attempts to criminalise smacking. (AQW 6892/09)

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Children and Young People’s Unit (CYPUP), Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) is the sponsoring body for the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland.

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Northern Ireland Children's Commissioner

Mr D Simpson asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister what control it has over whether any campaign on the part of the NI Children's Commissioner ought to be funded by public money.

(AQW 6893/09)

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Children and Young People's Unit (CYPUP), Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) is the sponsoring body for the Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland.

The Commissioner is independent of Government. Under the Commissioner for Children and Young People's (NI) Order 2003 the Commissioner has the power to bring, intervene in or assist in legal proceedings and carry out a "General review of advocacy, complaint, inspection and whistle-blowing arrangements of relevant authorities".

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Investment Strategy

Mr S Hamilton asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister what consideration he has given to improving communication of the Investment Strategy such as site signage at infrastructure projects, similar to that used by the National Development Plan in the Republic of Ireland.

(AQW 6957/09)

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister: We are currently considering the best way forward with a view to ensuring that the Investment Strategy and the almost £20bn worth of projects contained in it are highly visible to the public and are therefore seen to be making a difference.

Strategy for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration

Mrs D Kelly asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister when the strategy on Cohesion, Sharing and Integration be published. (AQW 7138/09)

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister: Improving relationships between and within communities and building a shared and better future remains a high priority for our Department and the Executive. We are continuing to develop and refine the programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration to examine how we can build on the achievements of previous initiatives and programmes.

Our work at Ministerial level in OFMDFM as well as throughout the Department at all levels, has demonstrated our commitment to building cohesive, inclusive communities. The fact that we have been delivering substantial additional funding secured in the Executive's budget is just one of our achievements. We have increased funding by a third for the period 2008-2011, from £21 million in the previous CSR period to almost £30 million in the current one. That means that vital work on the ground and with both existing and new communities is better resourced than ever. We also want to ensure that these resources are used in an effective way, so we have been assessing existing programmes and considering new approaches to ensure tangible outcomes from our funding and actions.

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However, we are not complacent – we are leading and driving change in our society and in our work – through the Department and the Executive to deliver a shared and better future for all our people.

We are still determined to bring the programme forward as soon as possible, but not before we are satisfied that we have got the detail right.

Gender Advisory Panel

Mr P Weir asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the terms of reference of the Gender Advisory Panel. (AQW 7178/09)

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister: The membership and terms of reference of the Gender Advisory Panel (April 2008 – June 2009) are as follows:

Background

In the Programme for Government 2008-2011, the Northern Ireland Executive commits to tackling remaining gender inequalities, implementing the cross departmental Gender Equality Strategy and working towards the total elimination of the gender pay gap.

To ensure continued engagement and a partnership approach to working with our stakeholders on these issues, this document sets out the role, membership and business of the gender advisory panel over the period April 2008 – June 2009.

Role of the Gender Advisory Panel

Working in partnership with the Gender Equality Unit, the panel will advise and assist in the development and monitoring of cross-departmental gender equality action plans for women and men, to deliver the Gender Equality Strategy for Northern Ireland 2006-2016 (“the Strategy”). In doing so, the Panel will take account of the provisions of the Programme for Government, including those regarding effective programmes and strategies aimed at achieving the eradication of all forms of violence against women; at combating the lack of women's representation in political and public life; and at ensuring access to affordable quality childcare.

In advising the Gender Equality Unit, members of the Panel will ensure that they reflect the views and opinions of their organisations and ensure that the multiple identities of their members are considered. The Gender Equality Unit will ensure that the views of the Panel are reflected in advice to the Ministers.

Members of the Panel will ensure that information is appropriately provided by them to other interested groups and stakeholders.

Membership

Invited as members to the Gender Advisory Panel are representatives of women's organisations, representatives of men's organisations, the ECNI, NIC/ICTU and CBI.

The Gender Equality Unit will ensure that membership is sufficiently broad to cover all issues relevant to the Strategy and action plans; and will also maintain contacts across the voluntary and community sector as required. For reasons of manageability, as a general rule there will be a limit of 25 on numbers attending regular Panel meetings (except for seminars etc which the Panel may convene).

The Panel will review its membership as work on the two action plans progresses.

Chair

A senior official from OFMDFM will chair the meetings with the Panel.

Meetings

Meetings will be held to facilitate progress on the development and completion of the cross departmental action plans for women and men. Members of the advisory panel will be given two optional dates 4 weeks in advance of a meeting. Discussion can also be completed by e-mail and post. Meetings with particular panel members may be held separately.

Support

The Gender Equality Unit will support meetings of the panel.

Review

These terms of reference will be kept under review as the work on the action plans progresses.

Current membership of the Gender Advisory Panel, which is chaired by a senior OFMDFM official, comprises representation from the following organisations:

- Coalition on Sexual Orientation
- Disability Action
- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
- Family Planning Association NI
- Women's Forum NI
- NIC/ICTU
- Lesbian Advocacy Services Initiative
- NI Rural Women's Network
- Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities
- Northern Ireland Women's European Platform
- Older Women's Network
- The Men's Project
- Women's Resource and Development Agency
- Women's Support Network
- Youth Action
- Men's Action Network
- CBI
- Women's National Commission
- Women's Aid Federation NI

Gender Advisory Panel

Mr P Weir asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the membership of the Gender Advisory Panel and the organisations they represent. (AQW 7179/09)

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister: The membership and terms of reference of the Gender Advisory Panel (April 2008 – June 2009) are as follows:

Background

In the Programme for Government 2008-2011, the Northern Ireland Executive commits to tackling remaining gender inequalities, implementing the cross departmental Gender Equality Strategy and working towards the total elimination of the gender pay gap.

To ensure continued engagement and a partnership approach to working with our stakeholders on these issues, this document sets out the role, membership and business of the gender advisory panel over the period April 2008 – June 2009.

Role of the Gender Advisory Panel

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In advising the Gender Equality Unit, members of the Panel will ensure that they reflect the views and opinions of their organisations and ensure that the multiple identities of their members are considered. The Gender Equality Unit will ensure that the views of the Panel are reflected in advice to the Ministers.

Members of the Panel will ensure that information is appropriately provided by them to other interested groups and stakeholders.

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Invited as members to the Gender Advisory Panel are representatives of women’s organisations, representatives of men’s organisations, the ECNI, NIC/ICTU and CBI.

The Gender Equality Unit will ensure that membership is sufficiently broad to cover all issues relevant to the Strategy and action plans; and will also maintain contacts across the voluntary and community sector as required. For reasons of manageability, as a general rule there will be a limit of 25 on numbers attending regular Panel meetings (except for seminars etc which the Panel may convene).

The Panel will review its membership as work on the two action plans progresses.

Chair

A senior official from OFMDFM will chair the meetings with the Panel.

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Meetings will be held to facilitate progress on the development and completion of the cross departmental action plans for women and men. Members of the advisory panel will be given two optional dates 4 weeks in advance of a meeting. Discussion can also be completed by e-mail and post. Meetings with particular panel members may be held separately.

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- Older Women's Network
- The Men's Project
- Women's Resource and Development Agency
- Women's Support Network
- Youth Action
- Men's Action Network
- CBI
- Women's National Commission
- Women's Aid Federation NI

Flags and Emblems

Mr P Butler asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister what progress has been made to date on developing a new flags and emblems protocol between her Department and other statutory agencies; and to give details as to when this protocol will be in place. (AQW 7266/09)

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister: The inter-agency Flags Protocol that was launched in 2005 is still current and operational. The draft Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration may have implications for flags protocol work and it is evident that future work and planning could be premature in advance of the public consultation on the Programme of Cohesion, Sharing and Integration. Therefore, the work on the review of the protocol shall resume after that consultation is complete and the outcome is known.

Quangos and Public Bodies

Ms M Anderson asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the Board members of all Quangos and Public Bodies that are currently operating. (AQW 7299/09)

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister: The names of all board members serving on public bodies sponsored by Northern Ireland departments can be found in the Public Appointments Annual Report. The most recent edition provides information at 31 March 2008.

Copies of the latest version of the Public Appointments Annual Report are available from the Assembly Library and can be found on the internet at www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/public-appointments.

The Public Appointments Annual Report for 2008/09 will be published later this year.

North/South Ministerial Council

Mrs D Kelly asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the issues that have been added to the work of the North/South Ministerial Council. (AQW 7311/09)

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister: Apart from Child Protection, which was discussed at the NSMC Plenary on 7 February 2008 and then referred for consideration within the NSMC Health Area for Co-operation, no additional issues have been added to the work plans of NSMC.

Strategic Investment Board

Mrs D Kelly asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister what progress has been made by the Strategic Investment Board to bring forward projects to boost employment. (AQW 7312/09)

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Strategic Investment Board works in support of departments in the delivery of the Investment Strategy, including the provision of expert assistance to departments on capital projects.

Since the approval of the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland in February 2008 departments have delivered record levels of Capital Investment in the region of £1.5 billion. Despite the current economic challenges, this investment is over double what it was only 5 years previously and 30% higher than in 2007/2008.

In the last financial year Capital investment related to the Investment Strategy accounted for some 31% of the total output of the Construction Industry and, on this basis, we estimate that public expenditure supported some 24,000 construction sector jobs.

Review of Public Administration

Ms M Anderson asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail if any Quango or Public Body is expected to be cut under the Review of Public Administration. (AQW 7313/09)

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister: Under the Review of Public Administration action has been taken to abolish/merge/transfer the functions of 17 public bodies.

The public bodies impacted are:

- Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency
- Driver & Vehicle Testing Agency
- Valuation & Lands Agency
- Rate Collection Agency
- Land Registers NI
- Ordnance Survey of NI
- Public Record Office NI
- Business Development Services
- Enterprise Ulster
- Pig Production Development Committee
- Advisory council in Infrastructure Investment
- NI Events Company
- Fisheries Conservancy Board
- Disability Living Allowance Board
- Central Services Agency
- Mental Health Commission for NI
- Health Estates Agency

Regeneration of the Maze/Long Kesh

Mrs D Kelly asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister when it will bring forward proposals for the regeneration of the Maze/Long Kesh. (AQW 7314/09)

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Maze/Long Kesh site is one of regional significance located in a strategic position at the junction of the main arterial routes north/south and east/west. It is essential to maximise the site's economic, historical and reconciliation potential. We will establish a Development Corporation which will take this project forward and will build on the work previously undertaken by OFMDFM and the All-Party Maze/Long Kesh Consultation Panel and which will have regard to all the

elements of the site, including any listed buildings. To this end, consideration of the issues are at an early stage. Proposals will be brought forward as soon as possible.

Public Procurement Contracts

Ms J McCann asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the companies that were successful in securing public procurement contracts in works, services and goods through the Department, in the last two years and the percentage of those that were from the SME or the Social Economy sectors.

(AQW 7435/09)

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister: The companies that were successful in securing public procurement contracts in works, services and goods through the Department, including through its sponsored bodies, in the last two years are as follows:

Media Market	Brian Morrison Photography Ltd
CRE8 Photography Ltd	Dogart Adams Ltd
Harrison Photography	Houston Green Photography
Michael Cooper Photography	Mooney Media Ltd
Pacemaker Press International	Parkway Photography
Peter Morrison Photography	Peter Muhly
Phil Smyth Photography	Photopress
Press Eye Ltd	Stanley Matchett Photography
Lyle Bailie	Belfast Welcome Centre
FGS McClure Watters	Deloitte MCS Ltd
ASM Horwarth	Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University
ARK	KPMG
Peter Shirlow / Brendan Murtagh	O'Reilly Stewart Solicitors
Partnerships UK	ED Vernon
BTW Shiells	Peter Coyne
Geronimo	AFBI
UUJ	Ciaran Cunningham
TMD Supply Chain Consultancy Ltd	Ballykeel Environmental
Primary Foundation	Groundworks
Arthur Cox	Bevan Brittan
L'Estrange & Brett	Scott Wilson
Comedia	Eversheds
bmf Business Services	ICLRD
Dilston Management	Addleshaw
Veredus	Penna PLC
BT	ESRI
Ernst & Young	VFM Consultancy
PriceWaterHouseCoopers	Gardiner & Theobald
Penna Recruitment	GVA Grimley
Derry City Council	City of Derry Airport

International Capital Partnerships	Eyeparks
West Belfast & Greater Shankill funding support	East Belfast Partnership funding support
Mosaic NI	West Belfast Partnership Board

Based on the information available to us we believe that 36% of the companies detailed above were from the SME or the Social Economy sectors.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Bovine Tuberculosis

Mr J McCallister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to provide details of the substantive and indisputable evidence that shows the transmission of tuberculosis from badgers to cattle. (AQW 7252/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (Ms M Gildernew): The two major recent scientific studies conducted in the south of Ireland and Britain (the Four Areas Trial and the Randomised Badger Culling Trial, respectively) have provided evidence of an association between bovine TB in badgers and bovine TB in cattle. The results of these studies have been published. Whilst this evidence indicates a link between bovine TB in both species, it is uncertain as to the direction of disease transmission i.e. whether the infection moves from badgers to cattle, from cattle to badgers, or in both directions.

The key question we are seeking to address in the north of Ireland in respect of badgers and TB in cattle is whether a badger intervention strategy would help to achieve a cost-effective reduction in bovine TB incidence in cattle.

Having assessed all the available information from work in Britain and in the South, my Department has concluded that it is not possible to extrapolate the information we need from the work that has been done in Britain and in the South. There are still key gaps in our scientific knowledge that need to be filled to inform what we do to deal effectively with the reservoir of infection in badgers, and to enable us to deal with TB comprehensively and conclusively.

In December, I announced a number of information gathering actions that will provide baseline information on disease and the costs of badger intervention, and inform where any intervention may be most effectively targeted. The additional expenditure that is needed for these actions will have to be supported by a robust business case and successful bids for the necessary resources. I will review the evidence these actions produce to inform my decision about what we do to reduce the transmission of TB between wildlife and cattle.

Bovine Tuberculosis

Mr J McCallister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if the culls in England or Ireland established substantive and indisputable evidence to show a badger to cattle transmission of bovine tuberculosis. (AQW 7254/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The two major recent scientific studies conducted in the south of Ireland and Britain (the Four Areas Trial and the Randomised Badger Culling Trial, respectively) have provided evidence of an association between bovine TB in badgers and bovine TB in cattle. The results of these studies have been published. Whilst this evidence indicates a link between bovine TB in both species, it is uncertain as to the direction of disease transmission i.e. whether the infection moves from badgers to cattle, from cattle to badgers, or in both directions.

The key question we are seeking to address in the north of Ireland in respect of badgers and TB in cattle is whether a badger intervention strategy would help to achieve a cost-effective reduction in bovine TB incidence in cattle.

Having assessed all the available information from work in Britain and in the South, my Department has concluded that it is not possible to extrapolate the information we need from the work that has been done in Britain and in the South. There are still key gaps in our scientific knowledge that need to be filled to inform

what we do to deal effectively with the reservoir of infection in badgers, and to enable us to deal with TB comprehensively and conclusively.

In December, I announced a number of information gathering actions that will provide baseline information on disease and the costs of badger intervention, and inform where any intervention may be most effectively targeted. The additional expenditure that is needed for these actions will have to be supported by a robust business case and successful bids for the necessary resources. I will review the evidence these actions produce to inform my decision about what we do to reduce the transmission of TB between wildlife and cattle.

Bovine Tuberculosis

Mr J McCallister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if she was aware that the NIAO report “The Control of Bovine Tuberculosis in Northern Ireland” published in March 2009, devotes an entire section (section 5) to the question of fraud in relation to bovine tuberculosis testing; and the enormous sum of public money (£86 million from 1997 to 2006) spent in compensating farmers with infected cattle. (AQW 7255/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: I welcome the NIAO Report and its recommendations regarding the control of bovine TB. I am aware that Section 5 of the Report deals with compensation, enforcement and fraud. My Department takes the risk of fraud very seriously and operates a “zero tolerance” policy. Where there are reasonable grounds for suspicion that a fraud has been committed the case is investigated vigorously. If, following an investigation, there is sufficient evidence to proceed with legal action; cases are referred to the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) for direction.

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) hearing to consider the NIAO report took place on Thursday 26 March following the publication of the report on 18 March. The next stage in the process is for the PAC to publish their report in due course. My Department will then consider the PAC report and a formal Memorandum of Reply will be laid before the Assembly within two months of receipt of the Report, giving our commitment to the recommendations that have been made.

My Department is continuing to work in partnership with our key stakeholders to develop the agreed industry/Government approach to TB that I announced in December.

My Department will take full account of the recommendations of the Report as we develop the detail of the strategy.

Bovine Tuberculosis

Mr J McCallister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if research has been carried out by, or on behalf of, her Department, on the issue of cattle to badger transmission of bovine tuberculosis; and if so, to detail the outcome of the research. (AQW 7258/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: There has been no research carried out specifically on the issue of cattle to badger transmission of bovine tuberculosis in the North.

There is ongoing research being conducted by the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) to determine the bovine TB strain types of both cattle and road kill badgers. This work provides indirect evidence of an association between bovine TB infections in cattle and badgers in the North. However, it does not provide evidence of the direction of the transmission of bovine TB between cattle and badgers. While this work is not yet complete a summary of the work is available on the Departments website at: www.dardni.gov.uk

Bovine Tuberculosis

Mr J McCallister asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if she is aware that the Northern Ireland Audit Office report quotes the 2002 Policy Review and concludes that bovine tuberculosis is spread by “the nature of farming in Northern Ireland, with small fragmented farms, strong dependency on rented pasture and a high level of animal movement between and within herds; and that the report lists (i) neighbouring cattle markets (i.e. nose-to-nose infection); (ii) vehicles; (iii) equipment; (iv) leased fields; (v) winter housing; (vi) slurry and; (vii) purchased cattle, as potential routes by which bovine tuberculosis may be spread. (AQW 7262/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: I am aware that Section 3 of the NIAO Report refers to the potential routes by which bovine TB may spread to or from the farm. There is a multitude of factors which can potentially affect the level of TB. TB is a complex disease and it is not clear what the relative significance is of the various risk factors involved including husbandry practices, the pattern of movement into and out of the herd, and the presence of wildlife. To eradicate TB, we will need to deal effectively with all factors. The current NI TB control programme is based largely on cattle control measures. The new strategic approach to TB that I announced in December is a phased and holistic approach based on addressing three key strands together – real partnership between government and industry, controlling the spread of TB between cattle, and addressing the wildlife factor.

MLA Representations

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many representations she has made to her Department as a constituency MLA, since she took up office. (AQW 7320/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: As Minister for the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development I have responded to 8 representations from my constituency office since the date of the restoration of Devolved Administration (8 May 2007).

Price of Fertilizers

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what her Department is doing to help to reduce the price of fertilizers for farmers. (AQW 7385/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Fertiliser prices are driven by the interaction of international demand and supply conditions and by energy prices. Therefore, it is not possible for me, or for government, to influence these drivers.

My Department is, however, working with farmers to help them minimise their requirements for fertiliser input. In the past year the College of Agriculture Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) delivered Nutrient Management Planning workshops to over 1000 farmers. These workshops focused on the interpretation of soil analysis, the value of slurry and manure, chemical fertiliser requirements to grow successful crops, understanding the Nitrates Directive and hands-on use of nutrient management decision support programmes.

These decision support programmes have been developed by the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) and CAFRE and are available to farmers through the RuralNI website.

Research at AFBI has shown that slurry application by a trailing-shoe system gave a 26% improvement in total Nitrogen utilisation compared to spreading by conventional splash plate method. The resulting improved grass yield is equivalent to applying chemical nitrogen fertiliser at a rate of 44 kg per hectare. During the summer of 2008 CAFRE organised Slurry Efficiency workshops for farmers which focused on trailing-shoe technology.

The Manure Efficiency and Technology Sub Programme (METS) of the Farm Modernisation Programme provides capital grant support for advanced slurry spreaders such as the trailing-shoe. These technologies will help farmers to achieve greater nutrient efficiency from manures and slurry. This will decrease chemical fertiliser requirements and reduce input costs for farmers.

A well managed grass / clover sward can produce the same output as a grass sward which has had a seasonal dressing of up to 200kg of nitrogen per hectare, potentially saving around £210 / hectare over the grazing season.

In 2008 my Department through the NI Red Meat Industry Task Force's Grass / Clover Initiative delivered nine grass / clover on-farm workshops across the north of Ireland which were attended by over 500 farmers. Also in 2008 AFBI held an Open Day on Grass / Clover at the NI Horticulture and Plant Breeding Station in Loughall. These activities, which were supported by articles in the farming press, aimed to demonstrate to farmers the benefits of clover in reducing the amount of fertiliser required and to explain to farmers how grass / clover swards should be managed.

My Department also recently participated in an NI Red Meat Industry Task Force best practice mission to New Zealand. A topic that featured during this mission was grassland management practices with particular reference to the establishment and management of clover-based systems. A recommendation made in respect of this topic was that the initial work by the Task Force on grass / clover should be developed through the establishment of

Grass / Clover Monitor farms and increased publicity via internet, publications, Balmoral Show and local shows in 2009.

As a result of this recommendation CAFRE will shortly be launching a Grass / Clover Monitor Farm technology project. This project will assist local groups of farmers who wish to work closely with a Technology Monitor farm in their area. The Technology Monitor farmer will be a grass clover enthusiast who will agree to develop and demonstrate clover based systems and be willing to illustrate the results to the local group. Details of this project have already featured in the farming press and further information will follow as the project gets underway. The benefits of using clover within grassland systems in the North will also feature in the DARD stand at Balmoral Show this month and at local agricultural shows throughout the summer.

Bovine Tuberculosis

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many cases of tuberculosis have been confirmed in the East Antrim constituency, in each month, in each of the last three years. (AQW 7389/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The number of confirmed cases of bovine tuberculosis by month.

Year	Month	Cases
2006	1	4
2006	3	1
2006	4	2
2006	5	1
2006	7	1
2006	8	2
2006	10	1
2006	12	1
2007	1	2
2007	2	1
2007	4	1
2007	5	1
2007	8	1
2007	10	2
2007	12	2
2008	4	1
2008	8	1
2008	9	1
2008	12	1
2009	1	1

This represents cases that have been detected, in the relevant patches of the Larne Division, at an official Tuberculosis test or meat inspection and had the disease confirmed by culture of the causal organism in the AFBI Laboratory. Months with no confirmed cases have been omitted from the table.

Farm Nutrient Scheme

Mr A Bresland asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many farm businesses, which are in receipt of the Farm Nutrient Scheme, were awaiting an inspection at 30th April. (AQW 7431/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: At the 30 April 2009 there were some 1,600 claimants still to be inspected under the Farm Nutrient Management Scheme (FNMS). My Department will be writing shortly to these farmers explaining when they can expect their inspection.

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, ARTS AND LEISURE

Capital Investment in Lagan Valley

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what are (i) the projects; and (ii) the amounts of capital investment planned for the Lagan Valley constituency, in the next three years. (AQW 6570/09)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (Mr G Campbell):

Ongoing and Planned Projects				
Name	Value of Investment	Start Date	2009/10 - Expenditure	2010/11 - Expenditure
Building Sport Dromara GFC	£245,000	02/09/08	£46,000	£0
Places for Sport Lisburn Racquets Club	£124,914	22/01/09	£3,123	£0

LAGAN VALLEY CONSTITUENCY

Funding for Festivals and Events

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail his Department's funding for festivals and events in the Upper Bann area, broken down by each event, since May 2007. (AQW 7248/09)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The information requested is set out at Annex A.

ANNEX A

ARTS COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY FESTIVALS FUNDING FOR FESTIVALS AND EVENTS IN THE UPPER BANN AREA

2007/08

Festival/Event	Funding
2007 Twelfth of July Festival	5,000
Total	5,000

2008/09

Festival/Event	Funding
Banbridge Performing Arts Festival	* 4,000
Banbridge show	* 2,000
International Ploughing Championships	* 3,000
Co Down Pipe Band Championships	* 4,500
Stagestruck Festival Showcase	* 3,000
Lurgan Show	6,000
Big Lough Sunday	5,105
Gaelic Week	2,475
Stonewall Jackson Anniversary Event	391

Festival/Event	Funding
Country Comes to Town	11, 000
Total	41, 471

*These figures include at least 50% match funding by the Local Council

NB. Donaghcloney Rural Needs Development Group received a grant of £36, 763 in 2008/09 from the Arts Council of which an element was for events/festivals, however, it is not possible to provide a breakdown of the precise allocation for events and festivals.

Public Procurement Contracts

Ms J McCann asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (i) which companies; and (ii) what percentage of companies from the SME or the Social Economy Sector were successful in securing public procurement contracts in works, services and goods through his Department, in the last two years. (AQW 7415/09)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The following list details, where it has been possible to identify companies as being from the SME or Social Economy Sector, those who were successful in securing public procurement contracts through my Department in the last two years.

Name of Company	Category (Works; Services; or Goods)
David Patton & Sons Ltd	Works
Hamilton Architects	Services
Glasgiven Contracts Ltd	Works
Beck Interiors Ltd	Works
Hydrosphere	Goods
LEICA Geosystems Ltd	Goods
International Marine Supplies	Goods
CMS	Services
Deloitte	Services
ESRI Ireland	Services
AV Browne	Services
Street Monkey	Services
ASM Howath	Services
Cadan Solutions	Services
Full Circle	Services
KPMG	Services
Goldblatt McGuigan	Services
Scottish Cultural Enterprise	Services
Aiken PR	Services
TDP Advertising	Services
John Edmund	Services
Arthur Cox	Services
Press Eye Ltd	Services
Chambre Public Affairs	Services
APEM	Services

Name of Company	Category (Works; Services; or Goods)
Grant Thornton	Services
Ipos Mori	Services
Neueda	Services
Fire IMC	Services
Farrell Products	Goods
Electronic Metering Equipment & Control (EMEC)	Goods
GP Security	Goods
Tracey Concrete	Goods
BJT Commercial	Goods
RTU Mortar	Goods
Refreshing Springs	Goods
David Christie & Son	Goods
Nightsearcher Ltd	Goods
Gilpin Farm machinery	Goods
P Clarke & Sons Ltd	Goods
McCullagh Ltd	Goods
Walter Campbell Builders	Works
Tricon Engineering	Works
Tom Woods Contracts	Works
Wallace Engineering	Works
Fitzroy Contracts	Works
Corramore	Works
Noel Hara	Works
Hanna Boats	Works
V&R Interior Design	Services
ITS Craigavon	Services

The Department does not hold a definitive list of the total number of SMEs, or other organisations engaged in the Social Economy Sector, and is therefore not in a position to express the total number of companies listed in this answer as an overall percentage figure.

Regional Minority Languages

Mr B McElduff asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the 3rd Periodical Report on the European Charter for Regional Minority Languages; and when his Department expects to submit its report to be included in the UK 3rd Periodical Report on the European Charter. (AQW 7502/09)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The European Charter is an international convention designed to protect and promote regional and minority languages as a threatened aspect of Europe's cultural heritage. The Charter does not establish any individual or collective rights for the speakers of regional or minority languages.

The Northern Ireland input to the UK's Third Periodical Report is a factual record of relevant actions implemented between July 2005 and July 2008 in relation to Ulster-Scots and Irish. Issues that were not taken forward and events that occurred outside the timeframe are beyond the scope of this report.

The Northern Ireland input is still being considered by the Deputy First Minister. I raised this issue at the Executive Meeting on Thursday 23 April but agreement has still not been achieved. At this stage I am unable to specify when the report might be finalised.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has advised my Department that the UK Report will issue to the Council of Europe in the near future, including input from the Northern Ireland Office, but without input from the Northern Ireland Executive.

Departmental Land

Dr A McDonnell asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure if in light of the current economic crisis, and with rising fuel and food prices, he has any plans to release departmental land for the use of local communities to grow affordable food and make local food more sustainable. (AQW 7617/09)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: DCAL does not retain the ownership of land which would be suitable for the purposes of growing food.

However the Department maintains a Public Angling Estate which gives the public access to very reasonably priced angling for fish species which are popular for eating.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Mobile Classrooms

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of Education how many mobile classrooms are used for teaching, broken down by school, in the Upper Bann Constituency. (AQW 6678/09)

Minister of Education (Ms C Ruane): Seo mar a leanas líon iomlán na seomraí ranga soghluaiste a mbíonn in úsáid fá choinne teagaisc i dtoghcheantar na Banna Uachtar, miondealaithe de réir na scoile.

The total number of mobile classrooms used for teaching broken down by school in the Upper Bann Constituency is as follows:

Lurgan Model Primary School	1
King's Park Primary School	2
Edenderry Primary School (Portadown)	3
Scarva Primary School	1
Edenderry Primary School (Banbridge)	3
Millington Primary School	1
Drumgor Primary School	2
Ballyoran Primary School	3
Tannaghmore Primary School	9
St Teresa's Primary School (Lurgan)	8
St Mary's Primary School (Magherry)	1
St Patrick's Primary School (Aghacommon)	3
St Anthony's Primary School	1
St Mary's Primary School (Derrymore)	2
St Mary's Primary School (Banbridge)	5
St Brendan's Primary School	2

St Francis' Primary School (Aghaderg)	1
Seago Primary School	2
Banbridge Primary School	5
Lurgan Junior High School	1
St Patrick's College (Banbridge)	4
St Paul's Junior High School (Lurgan)	4
Lismore Comprehensive School	4
New-Bridge Integrated College	6
St Michael's Grammar School	9
Total	83

My department's capital budget for the next 2 years is £488M. Within this allocation work will be carried out to improve temporary accommodation in the school's estate. It is however, necessary to have modular accommodation to meet unmet demand and offset other deficiencies in accommodation. The new improved modular accommodation should go some way to addressing the issues associated with this type of accommodation.

Mobile Classrooms

Mr S Moutray asked the Minister of Education how many mobile classrooms are being used in schools in each constituency. (AQW 6740/09)

Minister of Education: Seo mar a leanas líon iomlán na seomraí ranga soghluaiste a mbíonn in úsáid ag scoileanna i ngach toghcheantar parlaiminte.

The total number of mobile classrooms being used in schools in each parliamentary constituency is as follows:

Belfast East	11
Belfast North	40
Belfast South	38
Belfast West	76
East Antrim	92
East Derry	97
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	131
Foyle	98
Lagan Valley	74
Mid Ulster	131
Newry and Armagh	151
North Antrim	122
North Down	46
South Antrim	108
South Down	166
Strangford	77
Upper Bann	83
West Tyrone	130
Total	1671

My department's capital budget for the next 2 years is £488M. Within this allocation work will be carried out to improve temporary accommodation in the school's estate. It is however, necessary to have modular accommodation to meet unmet demand and offset other deficiencies in accommodation. The new improved modular accommodation should go some way to addressing the issues associated with this type of accommodation.

Asbestos

Mr G Savage asked the Minister of Education what the criteria is for the selection of companies to (i) investigate; (ii) detect; and (iii) remove asbestos from schools in each Education and Library Boards.

(AQW 6994/09)

Minister of Education: Seo a leanas na freagraí a thug na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne:

The Education and Library Boards have provided the following responses:

	Criteria for the selection of companies to:
Belfast Education & Library Board	<p>(i) investigate asbestos in schools</p> <p>After a publicly-advertised tendering process, and in accordance with Board procurement procedures, six qualified and suitably experienced surveyors were appointed to carry out Type 2 asbestos surveys on the entire board estate. All surveyors were required to hold a P402 asbestos surveying qualification or should work for an accredited organisation as an Inspection Body to ISO 17020, or hold personnel certification for asbestos surveying from a Certification Body accredited to ISO 17024. They must adhere to Methods for the Determination of Hazardous Substances (MDHS) 100 Surveying, Sampling & Assessment of Asbestos Containing Materials guidance produced by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).</p>
	<p>(ii) detect asbestos in schools</p> <p>As a quality control measure and due to the large number of surveyors, all samples taken as part of the survey process were analysed in accordance with MDHS 77 within the same laboratory, holding accreditation to ISO 17025, which offered a 24 hour/same day return of results in the event of an emergency situation. Site specific reports were required to detail all analytical and risk and material assessment data.</p>
	<p>(iii) remove asbestos from schools</p> <p>Due to the urgent need for asbestos removal and management works, suitably qualified and licensed asbestos removal contractors were co-opted from the publicly advertised & tendered lists compiled by other Education & Library Boards.</p>
Western Education & Library Board	<p>(i) investigate asbestos in schools</p> <p>Suitably qualified and experienced surveyors, drawn from Constructionline, were appointed by WELB to carry out Type 2 asbestos surveys of all its premises in accordance with MDHS 100 "Surveying, sampling and assessment of asbestos containing materials".</p> <p>As part of the Board's Asbestos Management Plan asbestos is managed in-house by qualified Board Officers.</p>
	<p>(ii) detect asbestos in schools</p> <p>Samples of suspected asbestos containing materials were taken as part of the surveying process. These samples were analysed in accordance with the method given (MDHS 77) at a laboratory holding accreditation to ISO 17025. The subsequent reports provided a clear statement of whether asbestos was found and the type of asbestos identified.</p> <p>As part of the Board's Asbestos Management Plan asbestos is managed in-house by qualified Board Officers.</p>

<p>Western Education & Library Board</p>	<p>(iii) remove asbestos from schools</p> <p>After a publicly advertised tendering process where asbestos removal contractors licensed by the Health and Safety Executive were invited to tender, eight suitably experienced contractors were appointed to carry out all asbestos removal in WELB premises in accordance with HSG 2007 (Health and Safety Guidance) 247 “Asbestos Removal”.</p>
<p>North Eastern Education & Library Board</p>	<p>Selection of all contractors is in compliance with NEELB’s Standing Orders. Contractors must be registered with Constructionline.</p> <p>(i) investigate asbestos in schools</p> <p>Suitably qualified and experienced surveyors were appointed as a result of public tender by NEELB to carry out Type 2 asbestos surveys of all its premises in accordance with MDHS 100 “Surveying, sampling and assessment of asbestos containing materials”. Contractors must hold appropriate public liability insurance cover of £10m.</p> <p>(ii) detect asbestos in schools</p> <p>Samples of suspected asbestos containing materials were taken as part of the surveying process. These samples were analysed in accordance with the method given (MDHS 77) at a laboratory holding accreditation to ISO 17025. The subsequent reports provided a clear statement of whether asbestos was found and the type of asbestos identified.</p> <p>(iii) remove asbestos from schools</p> <p>Asbestos removal contractors must be licensed and be on the list approved by the Health and Safety Executive.</p>
<p>South Eastern Education & Library Board</p>	<p>(i) investigate asbestos in schools</p> <p>Suitably qualified and experienced surveyors, drawn from Constructionline, were appointed by SEELB to carry out Type 2 asbestos surveys of all its premises in accordance with MDHS 100 “Surveying, sampling and assessment of asbestos containing materials”</p> <p>(ii) detect asbestos in schools</p> <p>Samples of suspected asbestos containing materials were taken as part of the surveying process. These samples were analysed in accordance with the method given (MDHS 77) at a laboratory holding accreditation to ISO 17025. The subsequent reports provided a clear statement of whether asbestos was found and the type of asbestos identified.</p> <p>(iii) remove asbestos from schools</p> <p>After a publicly advertised tendering process where the Health and Safety Executive licensed asbestos removal contractors were invited to tender, eight suitably experienced contractors were appointed to carry out all asbestos removal in SEELB premises in accordance with HSG 2007 (Health and Safety Guidance) 247 “Asbestos removal”.</p>

Southern Education & Library Board	<p>(i) investigate asbestos in schools</p> <p>After a publicly advertised tendering process which included a technical assessment and interview, suitably qualified and experienced surveyors were appointed by SELB to carry out Type 2 asbestos surveys of all its premises in accordance with MDHS 100 "Surveying, sampling and assessment of asbestos containing materials".</p>
	<p>(ii) detect asbestos in schools</p> <p>Samples of suspected asbestos containing materials were taken as part of the surveying process. These samples were analysed in accordance with the method given (MDHS 77) at a laboratory holding accreditation to ISO 17025. The subsequent reports provided a clear statement of whether asbestos was found and the type of asbestos identified.</p>
	<p>(iii) remove asbestos from schools</p> <p>After a publicly advertised tendering process where the Health and Safety Executive licensed asbestos removal contractors were invited to tender, two suitably experienced contractors were appointed to carry out all asbestos removal in SELB premises in accordance with HSG 2007 (Health and Safety Guidance) 247 "Asbestos removal".</p>

Teaching Vacancies in East Belfast

Mr R Newton asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the number of teaching vacancies in each school in east Belfast; and (ii) the number of temporary appointments that have been made to fill the vacancies.

(AQW 7067/09)

Minister of Education: Bíonn an Roinn ar lorg eolais maidir le folúntais múinteora ó gach scoil dheontas-chúnta ar bhonn bhliantúil. Tugann an t-eolas léiriú ar na folúntais ar dháta ar leith gach bliain. Sonraítear sa tábla thíos eolas a bhaineann leis an toghcheantar parlaiminteach Bhéal Feirste Thoir don bhliain acadúil 2008/2009

The Department seeks information on teacher vacancies from all grant-aided schools on an annual basis. The information provides a "snapshot" of vacancies at a specific date each year. Details relating to the academic year 2008/2009 for the Belfast East parliamentary constituency are set out in the table below.

- (1) The total number of vacancies is given in the first column. It includes all vacancies for permanent and temporary teaching posts for the 08/09 academic year reported by the school. The remaining columns detail whether or not those vacancies were filled, or still to be filled, as at 3 November 2008.
- (2) Although the Department does collect information on the number of permanent and temporary posts that were filled, it does not collect details of how schools filled these posts (i.e. whether a permanent post was filled by a permanent or temporary appointment).

Number of vacancies filled by 3rd November 2008 and number of vacancies still to be filled at 3rd November 2008 in schools in the Belfast East parliamentary constituency					
School Name	Total vacancies reported for 08/09	Permanent posts		Temporary posts	
		Number of unfilled vacancies	Number of filled vacancies	Number of unfilled vacancies	Number of filled vacancies
Ashfield Boys' High School	1	0	0	1	0
Ashfield Girls' High School	2	0	0	0	2
Avoniel Ps	0	0	0	0	0
Beechfield Ps	2	0	0	0	2
Belmont Ps	0	0	0	0	0
Bloomfield Collegiate	3	0	3	0	0
Bloomfield Collegiate Prep. Dept.	0	0	0	0	0

Number of vacancies filled by 3rd November 2008 and number of vacancies still to be filled at 3rd November 2008 in schools in the Belfast East parliamentary constituency					
School Name	Total vacancies reported for 08/09	Permanent posts		Temporary posts	
		Number of unfilled vacancies	Number of filled vacancies	Number of unfilled vacancies	Number of filled vacancies
Braniel Ps	6	0	2	0	4
Cabin Hill School	0	0	0	0	0
Campbell College	9	0	5	0	4
Castlereagh Nursery School	0	0	0	0	0
Clarawood Special School	0	0	0	0	0
Cregagh Ps	0	0	0	0	0
Dundela Infants School	1	0	1	0	0
Elmgrove Ps	1	0	0	0	1
Euston Street Ps	1	1	0	0	0
Gilnahirk Ps	1	0	1	0	0
Glendhu Nursery School	0	0	0	0	0
Greenwood House Assessment Centre	1	1	0	0	0
Greenwood Ps	1	1	0	0	0
Grosvenor Gs	12	1	9	0	2
King's Road Nursery School	0	0	0	0	0
Knockbreda Nursery School	0	0	0	0	0
Knockbreda High School	3	0	0	1	2
Knockbreda Ps	0	0	0	0	0
Knocknagoney Ps	0	0	0	0	0
Lead Hill Ps	0	0	0	0	0
Lisnasharragh Ps	0	0	0	0	0
Loughview Integrated Ps	5	0	2	0	3
Mcarthur Nursery School	0	0	0	0	0
Mitchell House Special School	1	0	1	0	0
Orangefield High School	4	0	4	0	0
Orangefield Ps	0	0	0	0	0
Our Lady And St Patrick's College	0	0	0	0	0
Ravenscroft Nursery School	0	0	0	0	0
Sandbrook Nursery School	0	0	0	0	0
St Bernard's Ps	1	0	0	0	1
St Joseph's Ps	1	0	0	0	1
St Matthew's Ps	0	0	0	0	0
Strandtown Ps	1	0	1	0	0
Strathearn School	0	0	0	0	0
Strathearn School Prep. Dept.	0	0	0	0	0

Number of vacancies filled by 3rd November 2008 and number of vacancies still to be filled at 3rd November 2008 in schools in the Belfast East parliamentary constituency					
School Name	Total vacancies reported for 08/09	Permanent posts		Temporary posts	
		Number of unfilled vacancies	Number of filled vacancies	Number of unfilled vacancies	Number of filled vacancies
Tullycarnet Ps	0	0	0	0	0

1 Includes both full-time and part-time teaching posts.

Teaching Posts

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Education how many teaching posts there are in primary schools in the Mid Ulster constituency. (AQW 7124/09)

Minister of Education: Ní bhailíonn an Roinn eolas ar líon na bpost do mhúinteoirí i dTuaisceart na hÉireann, ach bailíonn sí eolas maidir le líon na múinteoirí.

The Department does not collect data on the number of teaching posts, but does collect the numbers of teachers. The number of teachers in each school in the Mid Ulster parliamentary constituency in the academic year 2007-2008 is given in the table below.

TEACHERS¹ IN SCHOOLS IN MID ULSTER PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY, 2007-2008

School Name	Town	Teachers filling or temporarily filling posts in 2007-2008
Primary Schools		
Altayeskey Ps	Draperstown	2
Ampertaine Ps	Upperlands	5
Anahorish Ps	Toomebridge	11
Aughamullan Ps	Dungannon	4
Ballylifford Ps	Cookstown	4
Ballynease Ps	Portglenone	4
Ballytra Ps	Stewartstown	6
Bellaghy Ps	Bellaghy	3
Bush Ps	Dungannon	9
Castledawson Ps	Castledawson	7
Churchtown Ps	Cookstown	4
Coagh Ps	Cookstown	4
Cookstown Ps	Cookstown	25
Crievagh Ps	Cookstown	3
Crossroads Ps	Kilrea	6
Culnady Ps	Upperlands	3
Derrychrin Ps	Coagh	6
Desertmartin Ps	Desertmartin	3
Donaghey Ps	Dungannon	7
Donaghmore Ps	Donaghmore	4
Drumard Ps	Upperlands	4

School Name	Town	Teachers filling or temporarily filling posts in 2007-2008
Edendork Ps	Dungannon	11
Gaelscoil Na Spéiríní	Draperstown	2
Gaelscoil Ui Neill	Coalisland	8
Greenlough Ps (St Mary's)	Clady	7
Holy Family Ps	Magherafelt	23
Holy Trinity Ps	Cookstown	31
Kilross Ps	Tobermore	5
Knockloughrim Ps	Knockloughrim	4
Knocknagin Ps	Desertmartin	5
Lissan Ps	Cookstown	6
Maghera Ps	Maghera	6
Magherafelt Controlled Ps	Magherafelt	14
Moneymore Ps	Moneymore	8
New Row Ps	Castledawson	8
Newmills Ps	Dungannon	4
Orritor Ps	Cookstown	10
Phoenix Integrated Primary School	Cookstown	5
Primate Dixon Ps	Coalisland	25
Queen Elizabeth Ii Ps	Pomeroy	3
Sacred Heart Ps, Rock	Dungannon	5
Spires Integrated Ps	Magherafelt	9
St Brigid's Ps	Knockloughrim	10
St Brigid's Ps	Coalisland	7
St Brigid's Ps Tirkane	Maghera	10
St Columba's Ps	Draperstown	6
St Columb's Ps (Cullion)	Desertmartin	4
St Eoghan's Ps	Draperstown	4
St John's Ps	Swatragh	8
St John's Ps	Coalisland	3
St Joseph's Ps	Galbally	11
St Joseph's Ps	Cookstown	4
St Malachy's Ps	Magherafelt	2
St Mary's Ps	Draperstown	10
St Mary's Ps	Bellaghy	10
St Mary's Ps	Dungannon	5
St Mary's Ps	Stewartstown	7
St Mary's Ps	Cookstown	7
St Mary's Ps	Pomeroy	9
St Mary's Ps (Glenview)	Maghera	16

School Name	Town	Teachers filling or temporarily filling posts in 2007-2008
St Patrick's P.S. Loup	Magherafelt	6
St Patrick's Ps	Dungannon	7
St Patrick's Ps	Dungannon	8
St Patrick's Ps	Coalisland	10
St Patrick's Ps	Moneymore	4
St Patrick's Ps (Glen)	Maghera	8
St Peter's Ps	Moortown	9
St Trea's Ps	Ballyronan	4
Stewartstown Ps	Stewartstown	2
Tobermore Ps	Tobermore	5
Woods Ps	Magherafelt	7
Mid Ulster Primary Total		526
Secondary And Grammar Schools		
Cookstown High School	Cookstown	64
Holy Trinity College	Coalisland	51
Maghera High School	Maghera	18
Magherafelt High School	Magherafelt	35
Rainey Endowed School	Magherafelt	52
Sperrin Integrated College	Magherafelt	32
St Colm's High School	Draperstown	27
St Joseph's Convent Gs	Donaghmore	35
St Joseph's High School	Dungannon	38
St Mary's College	Portglenone	24
St Mary's Gs	Magherafelt	68
St Patrick's Co-Ed Comp College	Maghera	89
St Pius X College	Magherafelt	63
Mid Ulster Secondary And Grammar Total		596

1 This table contains the total number of teachers in full-time or part-time permanent positions, teachers employed on a daily (1/365th) basis, and teachers temporarily covering vacancies (either full- or part-time). It does not include information on unfilled vacancies, or information on posts shared by teachers.

Teaching Posts

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Education how many teaching posts there are in secondary schools in the Mid Ulster constituency. (AQW 7125/09)

Minister of Education: Ní bhailíonn an Roinn eolas ar líon na bpost do mhúinteoirí i dTuaisceart na hÉireann, ach bailíonn sí eolas maidir le líon na múinteoirí.

The Department does not collect data on the number of teaching posts, but does collect the numbers of teachers. The number of teachers in each school in the Mid Ulster parliamentary constituency in the academic year 2007-2008 is given in the table below.

TEACHERS1 IN SCHOOLS IN MID ULSTER PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY, 2007-2008

School Name	Town	Teachers filling or temporarily filling posts in 2007-2008
Primary Schools		
Altayeskey Ps	Draperstown	2
Ampertaine Ps	Upperlands	5
Anahorish Ps	Toomebridge	11
Aughamullan Ps	Dungannon	4
Ballylifford Ps	Cookstown	4
Ballynease Ps	Portglenone	4
Ballytrea Ps	Stewartstown	6
Bellaghy Ps	Bellaghy	3
Bush Ps	Dungannon	9
Castledawson Ps	Castledawson	7
Churchtown Ps	Cookstown	4
Coagh Ps	Cookstown	4
Cookstown Ps	Cookstown	25
Crievagh Ps	Cookstown	3
Crossroads Ps	Kilrea	6
Culnady Ps	Upperlands	3
Derrychrin Ps	Coagh	6
Desertmartin Ps	Desertmartin	3
Donaghey Ps	Dungannon	7
Donaghmore Ps	Donaghmore	4
Drumard Ps	Upperlands	4
Edendork Ps	Dungannon	11
Gaelscoil Na Spéiríní	Draperstown	2
Gaelscoil Ui Neill	Coalisland	8
Greenlough Ps (St Mary's)	Clady	7
Holy Family Ps	Magherafelt	23
Holy Trinity Ps	Cookstown	31
Kilross Ps	Tobermore	5
Knockloughrim Ps	Knockloughrim	4
Knocknagin Ps	Desertmartin	5
Lissan Ps	Cookstown	6
Maghera Ps	Maghera	6
Magherafelt Controlled Ps	Magherafelt	14
Moneymore Ps	Moneymore	8
New Row Ps	Castledawson	8
Newmills Ps	Dungannon	4
Orritor Ps	Cookstown	10

School Name	Town	Teachers filling or temporarily filling posts in 2007-2008
Phoenix Integrated Primary School	Cookstown	5
Primate Dixon Ps	Coalisland	25
Queen Elizabeth Ii Ps	Pomeroy	3
Sacred Heart Ps, Rock	Dungannon	5
Spires Integrated Ps	Magherafelt	9
St Brigid's Ps	Knockloughrim	10
St Brigid's Ps	Coalisland	7
St Brigid's Ps Tirkane	Maghera	10
St Columba's Ps	Draperstown	6
St Columb's Ps (Cullion)	Desertmartin	4
St Eoghan's Ps	Draperstown	4
St John's Ps	Swatragh	8
St John's Ps	Coalisland	3
St Joseph's Ps	Galbally	11
St Joseph's Ps	Cookstown	4
St Malachy's Ps	Magherafelt	2
St Mary's Ps	Draperstown	10
St Mary's Ps	Bellaghy	10
St Mary's Ps	Dungannon	5
St Mary's Ps	Stewartstown	7
St Mary's Ps	Cookstown	7
St Mary's Ps	Pomeroy	9
St Mary's Ps (Glenview)	Maghera	16
St Patrick's P.S. Loup	Magherafelt	6
St Patrick's Ps	Dungannon	7
St Patrick's Ps	Dungannon	8
St Patrick's Ps	Coalisland	10
St Patrick's Ps	Moneymore	4
St Patrick's Ps (Glen)	Maghera	8
St Peter's Ps	Moortown	9
St Trea's Ps	Ballyronan	4
Stewartstown Ps	Stewartstown	2
Tobermore Ps	Tobermore	5
Woods Ps	Magherafelt	7
Mid Ulster Primary Total		526
Secondary And Grammar Schools		
Cookstown High School	Cookstown	64
Holy Trinity College	Coalisland	51
Maghera High School	Maghera	18

School Name	Town	Teachers filling or temporarily filling posts in 2007-2008
Magherafelt High School	Magherafelt	35
Rainey Endowed School	Magherafelt	52
Sperrin Integrated College	Magherafelt	32
St Colm's High School	Draperstown	27
St Joseph's Convent Gs	Donaghmore	35
St Joseph's High School	Dungannon	38
St Mary's College	Portglenone	24
St Mary's Gs	Magherafelt	68
St Patrick's Co-Ed Comp College	Maghera	89
St Pius X College	Magherafelt	63
Mid Ulster Secondary And Grammar Total		596

1 This table contains the total number of teachers in full-time or part-time permanent positions, teachers employed on a daily (1/365th) basis, and teachers temporarily covering vacancies (either full- or part-time). It does not include information on unfilled vacancies, or information on posts shared by teachers.

Departmental Land

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of Education to detail all the land that is owned by her Department, its agencies, and the Education and Library Boards. (AQW 7209/09)

Minister of Education: Tá sé socraithe agam go gcuirfear an t-eolas a iarradh i leabharlann an Tionóil.

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

Voluntary Fees

Mr J O'Dowd asked the Minister of Education what legislation governs the practice of schools placing 'Voluntary Fees' on pupils. (AQW 7247/09)

Minister of Education: Tá an reachtaíocht a chuimsíonn ranniocáíochtaí saorálacha a iarrtar ó dhaltáí cuimsithe in Airteagal 137 den Education Reform Order 1989.

The legislation covering the request for voluntary contributions on pupils is covered by Article 137 of the Education Reform Order 1989.

Department of Education Circular No 1991/21 "Education Reform Order 1989 – Charges in Grant-Aided Schools from 1 April 1992" provides further guidance regarding charges levied on parents of registered pupils in grant-aided schools.

Educational Psychology Service

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Education to outline how Educational Psychology Service time is allocated to schools; and what is the time-per-pupil ratio, in each Education and Library Board area. (AQW 7369/09)

Minister of Education: Chuir Príomhfheidhmeannaigh na mBord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne (ELBanna) an t-eolas seo a leanas in iúl dom:-

I have been advised by the Chief Executives of the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) as follows:-

1. Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB)

The BELB Educational Psychology Service allocates time to schools in a manner which:-

- (i) facilitates early intervention - more time is given to primary schools than to post primary schools and sufficient time is allocated to allow all children under compulsory school age to be assessed in a timely manner;
- (ii) takes account of school size - schools with more pupils get more time;
- (iii) takes account of the level of attainment in each school - schools where fewer pupils get Transfer grades A to C2 get more time.

Whenever possible flexibility is exercised and schools may get more time than the minimum allocated.

2. North – Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB)

The NEELB Educational Psychology Service provides a service based on a minimum time allocation of one visit per 100 pupils per year.

Whenever possible flexibility is exercised and schools may get more time than the minimum allocated.

3. South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB)

The SEELB does not operate a time allocation model of service delivery. Referrals will normally be seen in the order in which they are referred although provision is made for exceptional circumstances.

4. Southern and Western Education and Library Boards (SELB and WELB)

The SELB and WELB allocate time to each school based on the school's enrolment plus additional time related to its free school meals (FSM) entitlement. The minimum time allocation is 2% of the school population multiplied by 4 hours of educational psychologist (EP) time plus the additional FSM element. This formula is flexible in accordance with EP staffing levels.

There is no set time-per-pupil ratio in each ELB. Time spent with individual pupils varies greatly depending on the complexity of the pupil's special educational needs. EPs ensure that they spend sufficient time with every pupil to ensure that her/his needs are comprehensively assessed and that all those involved with the pupil are fully informed of their findings.

Youth Workers

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Education how many youth workers are planned for the East Antrim constituency, in each of the next three years. (AQW 7391/09)

Minister of Education: The Department of Education currently provides funding to the North Eastern Education and Library Board and the Bytes Project which employ youth workers in the East Antrim Constituency.

The Chief Executive of the NEELB has provided the following information on the number of youth workers currently employed by the Board in the East Antrim Constituency:

Full Time Youth Workers	Part Time Youth Workers
8	85

In addition, the NEELB contributes 70% salary costs for 5 youth tutors employed by schools in the constituency. It also provides funding to voluntary youth clubs in the constituency which employ a further 23 part-time youth workers.

The Director of Bytes Project has advised that the Rathcoole Bytes Centre is allocated 2 youth worker posts which are currently vacant but temporarily covered by other youth workers.

Is féidir go bhfuil oibrithe ógra eile ag obair sa toghcheantar atá fostaithe ag eagraíochtaí nach bhfaigheann cistiú ón Bhord ná ón Roinn Oideachais.

There may be other youth workers who operate in the constituency area who are employed by organisations which are not in receipt of Board or DE funding.

The Chief Executive of the NEELB has also advised that he has no plans to change the current level of youth workers in the area over the next three years. The Director of the Bytes Project has also advised that it is not possible at this time to forecast the number of youth workers who may be employed at its Bytes Centre in the

constituency over the next three years. However, it will be the responsibility of the new Education and Skills Authority to determine how it deploys resources for the Youth Service from January 2010.

Rental Money

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education (i) how much rental money is owed by her Department to Gaelscoil Eanna; and (ii) when this money will be paid. (AQW 7408/09)

Minister of Education: The position of rental payments has been under discussion with InaG and is being considered positively as part of the wider examination with the sector on how best to address the accommodation deficiencies in existing schools.

The schools in question have submitted a number of claims for rental charges. These claims are in respect of accommodation purchased by InaG and two other Irish medium support groups for the schools. Under the Common Funding formula arrangements approved rents and other costs associated with the provision of approved accommodation will be met from Board's centre funds. There have been some rental agreements in place for sites in the Irish medium sector but there has not to date been a similar arrangement for accommodation.

Tá mo roinn ag déanamh dul chun cinn, i gcomhairle le InaG, le díriú ar an cheist seo. Tá critéir á bhforbairt faoi láthair le haghaidh íocaíochtaí dá leithéid a bhreithniú agus táthar ag dréim leis go gcuirfear an chéim seo i gcrích ar ball.

My department is now moving forward, in consultation with InaG, to address this issue. Criteria for the consideration of such payments are currently being developed and is expected to be completed shortly.

Rental Money

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education (i) how much rental money is owed by her Department to Gaelscoil Ghleann Darach; and (ii) when this money will be paid. (AQW 7409/09)

Minister of Education: The position of rental payments has been under discussion with InaG and is being considered positively as part of the wider examination with the sector on how best to address the accommodation deficiencies in existing schools.

The schools in question have submitted a number of claims for rental charges. These claims are in respect of accommodation purchased by InaG and two other Irish medium support groups for the schools. Under the Common Funding formula arrangements approved rents and other costs associated with the provision of approved accommodation will be met from Board's centre funds. There have been some rental agreements in place for sites in the Irish medium sector but there has not to date been a similar arrangement for accommodation.

Tá mo roinn ag déanamh dul chun cinn, i gcomhairle le InaG, le díriú ar an cheist seo. Tá critéir á bhforbairt faoi láthair le haghaidh íocaíochtaí dá leithéid a bhreithniú agus táthar ag dréim leis go gcuirfear an chéim seo i gcrích ar ball.

My department is now moving forward, in consultation with InaG, to address this issue. Criteria for the consideration of such payments are currently being developed and is expected to be completed shortly.

Rental Money

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education (i) how much rental money is owed by her Department to An Drochead Ltd in respect of Scoil an Drochid; and (ii) when this money will be paid. (AQW 7410/09)

Minister of Education: The position of rental payments has been under discussion with InaG and is being considered positively as part of the wider examination with the sector on how best to address the accommodation deficiencies in existing schools.

The schools in question have submitted a number of claims for rental charges. These claims are in respect of accommodation purchased by InaG and two other Irish medium support groups for the schools. Under the Common Funding formula arrangements approved rents and other costs associated with the provision of approved accommodation will be met from Board's centre funds. There have been some rental agreements in place for sites in the Irish medium sector but there has not to date been a similar arrangement for accommodation.

Tá mo roinn ag déanamh dul chun cinn, i gcomhairle le InaG, le díriú ar an cheist seo. Tá critéir á bhforbairt faoi láthair le haghaidh íocaíochtaí dá leithéid a bhreithniú agus táthar ag dréim leis go gcuirfear an chéim seo i gcrích ar ball.

My department is now moving forward, in consultation with InaG, to address this issue. Criteria for the consideration of such payments are currently being developed and is expected to be completed shortly.

Rental Money

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education (i) how much rental money is owed by her Department to Pobal an Chaistil in respect of Gaelscoil an Chaistil; and (ii) when this money will be paid. (AQW 7411/09)

Minister of Education: The position of rental payments has been under discussion with InaG and is being considered positively as part of the wider examination with the sector on how best to address the accommodation deficiencies in existing schools.

The schools in question have submitted a number of claims for rental charges. These claims are in respect of accommodation purchased by InaG and two other Irish medium support groups for the schools. Under the Common Funding formula arrangements approved rents and other costs associated with the provision of approved accommodation will be met from Board's centre funds. There have been some rental agreements in place for sites in the Irish medium sector but there has not to date been a similar arrangement for accommodation.

Tá mo roinn ag déanamh dul chun cinn, i gcomhairle le InaG, le díriú ar an cheist seo. Tá critéir á bhforbairt faoi láthair le haghaidh íocaíochtaí dá leithéid a bhreithniú agus táthar ag dréim leis go gcuirfear an chéim seo i gcrích ar ball.

My department is now moving forward, in consultation with InaG, to address this issue. Criteria for the consideration of such payments are currently being developed and is expected to be completed shortly.

Rental Money

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education (i) how much rent in total is owed to other Irish Medium schools; and (ii) to list the Irish Medium Schools owed rent; and the amount owed to each school. (AQW 7412/09)

Minister of Education: The position of rental payments has been under discussion with InaG and is being considered positively as part of the wider examination with the sector on how best to address the accommodation deficiencies in existing schools.

The schools in question have submitted a number of claims for rental charges. These claims are in respect of accommodation purchased by InaG and two other Irish medium support groups for the schools. Under the Common Funding formula arrangements approved rents and other costs associated with the provision of approved accommodation will be met from Board's centre funds. There have been some rental agreements in place for sites in the Irish medium sector but there has not to date been a similar arrangement for accommodation.

Tá mo roinn ag déanamh dul chun cinn, i gcomhairle le InaG, le díriú ar an cheist seo. Tá critéir á bhforbairt faoi láthair le haghaidh íocaíochtaí dá leithéid a bhreithniú agus táthar ag dréim leis go gcuirfear an chéim seo i gcrích ar ball.

My department is now moving forward, in consultation with InaG, to address this issue. Criteria for the consideration of such payments are currently being developed and is expected to be completed shortly.

Public Procurement Contracts

Ms J McCann asked the Minister of Education (i) which companies; and (ii) what percentage of companies from the SME or the Social Economy Sector were successful in securing public procurement contracts in works, services, and goods through her Department, in the last two years. (AQW 7416/09)

Minister of Education: Ní fhaigheann an Roinn Oideachais obair, seirbhísí ná earraí go díreach ó chuideachtaí.

The Department of Education does not directly procure works, services and goods from companies. These are procured from Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) and Properties Division in the Department of Finance and Personnel.

Youth Workers

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Education how many youth workers are employed in the East Antrim constituency. (AQW 7419/09)

Minister of Education: The Department of Education currently provides funding to the North Eastern Education and Library Board and the Bytes Project which employ youth workers in the East Antrim Constituency.

The Chief Executive of the NEELB has provided the following information on the number of youth workers currently employed by the Board in the East Antrim Constituency:

Full Time Youth Workers	Part Time Youth Workers
8	85

In addition, the NEELB contributes 70% salary costs for 5 youth tutors employed by schools in the constituency. It also provides funding to voluntary youth clubs in the constituency which employ a further 23 part-time youth workers.

The Director of Bytes Project has advised that the Rathcoole Bytes Centre is allocated 2 youth worker posts which are currently vacant but temporarily covered by other youth workers.

Is féidir go bhfuil oibrítithe ógra eile ag obair sa toghcheantar atá fostaithe ag eagraíochtaí nach bhfaigheann cistiú ón Bhord ná ón Roinn Oideachais.

There may be other youth workers who operate in the constituency area who are employed by organisations which are not in receipt of Board or DE funding.

The Chief Executive of the NEELB has also advised that he has no plans to change the current level of youth workers in the area over the next three years. The Director of the Bytes Project has also advised that it is not possible at this time to forecast the number of youth workers who may be employed at its Bytes Centre in the constituency over the next three years. However, it will be the responsibility of the new Education and Skills Authority to determine how it deploys resources for the Youth Service from January 2010.

Special Educational Needs

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Education to outline (i) the criteria for carrying out a stage three statutory assessment of special educational needs; (ii) how assessment slots are allocated to various schools; and (iii) what is the assessment per pupil ratio in each of the Education Board areas. (AQW 7448/09)

Minister of Education: At the outset I should explain that assessments of children's special educational needs (SEN) at Stage 3 of the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs (COP) are not statutory. At Stage 3, which is a school-based stage, teachers and the SEN co-ordinator are supported by specialists from outside the school, but it is at Stage 4 of the COP when the Education and Library Board (ELB) considers the need for a statutory assessment.

The Chief Executives of the ELBs have advised me that the criteria for carrying out a Stage 3 non-statutory assessment are that following detailed discussion of a pupil's needs a completed referral form, signed by the school and the pupil's parents, is sent to the appropriate ELB. Two education plans, which should clearly indicate that the school has implemented all appropriate strategies to deal with the pupil's needs and confirm the need for referral to an educational psychologist, should be attached to the referral form.

Assessment slots are allocated to schools using the time allocation model in all ELBs except the South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB) as outlined in my response to your recently asked AQW 7369/09. In the SEELB referrals will normally be seen in the order in which they are referred although provision is made for exceptional circumstances.

Níl cóimheas ar leith leagtha síos maidir le measúnachtaí in aghaidh an dalta. Freagraíonn gach ELB na hiarrtais a dhéanann scoileanna sna ceantair ábhartha dóibh.

There is no set ratio of assessments per pupil. Each ELB responds to the requests made by schools in their area.

Special Educational Needs

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Education to detail the number and percentage of children who have received a statutory assessment of special educational needs in each of the Board areas, in each of the last 5 years, broken down by the key stage at which the statutory assessment was carried out. (AQW 7449/09)

Minister of Education: Seo a leanas líon agus céatadán na bpáistí a fuair measúnú reachtúil ar riachtanais speisialta oideachais i ngach ceann de limistéir na mBord, i ngach bliain acadúil le 5 bliana acadúla anuas, miondealaithe de réir na heochairchéime ag a ndearnadh an measúnú reachtúil orthu:-

The number and percentage of children who have received a statutory assessment of special educational needs in each of the Board areas, in each of the last 5 academic years, broken down by the key stage at which the statutory assessment was carried out is as follows:-

BELFAST EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD

	KS1	%	KS2	%	KS3	%	KS4	%
2003/04	41	0.55	54	0.46	39	0.25	3	0.01
2004/05	72	0.95	43	0.38	53	0.35	6	0.06
2005/06	96	1.34	89	0.79	65	0.44	8	0.08
2006/07	80	1.16	61	0.55	60	0.42	13	0.13
2007/08	116	1.75	74	0.67	53	0.38	20	0.20

NORTH - EASTERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD

	KS1	%	KS2	%	KS3	%	KS4	%
2003/04	145	1.35	87	0.54	47	0.27	14	0.12
2004/05	134	1.24	81	0.50	54	0.32	6	0.05
2005/06	160	1.51	53	0.32	34	0.20	9	0.08
2006/07	111	1.06	51	0.32	30	0.18	0	0
2007/08	113	1.11	54	0.33	38	0.23	7	0.06

SOUTH - EASTERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD

	KS1	%	KS2	%	KS3	%	KS4	%
2003/04	4*	0.04	6*	0.04	8*	0.06	0*	0
2004/05	65*	0.63	37*	0.24	20*	0.20	0*	0
2005/06	246	2.43	136	0.89	4	0.32	2	0.02
2006/07	165	1.68	89	0.58	23	0.18	3	0.03
2007/08	128	1.37	69	0.45	23	0.18	3	0.03

* Figures may be lower than actual in these years due to discrepancy in Board's IT records.

SOUTHERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD

	KS1	%	KS2	%	KS3	%	KS4	%
2003/04	*		*		*		*	

	KS1	%	KS2	%	KS3	%	KS4	%
2004/05	138	1.28	56	0.35	23	0.14	1	0.01
2005/06	241	2.26	83	0.51	41	0.24	4	0.03
2006/07	364	3.47	99	0.61	47	0.28	6	0.05
2007/08	236	2.31	71	0.43	40	0.25	7	0.06

* Not available in Key Stages – total children who received a statutory assessment in 2003/04 is 383 which is 0.69% of the total school population.

WESTERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD

	KS1 & KS2**	%	KS3 & KS4**	%
2004*	175	0.79	72	0.30
2005*	150	0.68	46	0.20
2006*	166	0.77	55	0.24
2007*	135	0.64	55	0.25
2008*	125	0.60	57	0.26

* calendar years

** differentiation of Key Stages not recorded on IT database.

KS1 = Key Stage 1

KS2 = Key Stage 2

KS3 = Key Stage 3

KS4 = Key Stage 4

% = above numbers as a percentage of total school population in that key stage in that Board area.

Rental Money

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education (i) how much rental money is owed by her Department in relation to Gaelscoil Eadain Mhoir; and (ii) when this money will be paid. (AQW 7481/09)

Minister of Education: The position of rental payments has been under discussion with InaG and is being considered positively as part of the wider examination with the sector on how best to address the accommodation deficiencies in existing schools.

The schools in question have submitted a number of claims for rental charges. These claims are in respect of accommodation purchased by InaG and two other Irish medium support groups for the schools. Under the Common Funding formula arrangements approved rents and other costs associated with the provision of approved accommodation will be met from Board's centre funds. There have been some rental agreements in place for sites in the Irish medium sector but there has not to date been a similar arrangement for accommodation.

Tá mo roinn ag déanamh dul chun cinn, i gcomhairle le InaG, le díriú ar an cheist seo. Tá critéir á bhforbairt faoi láthair le haghaidh íocaíochtaí dá leithéid a bhreithniú agus táthar ag dréim leis go gcuirfear an chéim seo i gcrích ar ball.

My department is now moving forward, in consultation with InaG, to address this issue. Criteria for the consideration of such payments are currently being developed and is expected to be completed shortly.

Rental Money

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education (i) how much rental money is owed by her Department in relation to Gaelscoil na Mona; and (ii) when this money will be paid. (AQW 7483/09)

Minister of Education: The position of rental payments has been under discussion with InaG and is being considered positively as part of the wider examination with the sector on how best to address the accommodation deficiencies in existing schools.

The schools in question have submitted a number of claims for rental charges. These claims are in respect of accommodation purchased by InaG and two other Irish medium support groups for the schools. Under the Common Funding formula arrangements approved rents and other costs associated with the provision of approved accommodation will be met from Board's centre funds. There have been some rental agreements in place for sites in the Irish medium sector but there has not to date been a similar arrangement for accommodation.

Tá mo roinn ag déanamh dul chun cinn, i gcomhairle le InaG, le díriú ar an cheist seo. Tá critéir á bhforbairt faoi láthair le haghaidh íocaíochtaí dá leithéid a bhreithniú agus táthar ag dréim leis go gcuirfear an chéim seo i gcrích ar ball.

My department is now moving forward, in consultation with InaG, to address this issue. Criteria for the consideration of such payments are currently being developed and is expected to be completed shortly.

Rental Money

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education (i) how much rental money is owed by her Department in relation to Bunscoil an Traonaigh; and (ii) when this money will be paid. (AQW 7486/09)

Minister of Education: The position of rental payments has been under discussion with InaG and is being considered positively as part of the wider examination with the sector on how best to address the accommodation deficiencies in existing schools.

The schools in question have submitted a number of claims for rental charges. These claims are in respect of accommodation purchased by InaG and two other Irish medium support groups for the schools. Under the Common Funding formula arrangements approved rents and other costs associated with the provision of approved accommodation will be met from Board's centre funds. There have been some rental agreements in place for sites in the Irish medium sector but there has not to date been a similar arrangement for accommodation.

Tá mo roinn ag déanamh dul chun cinn, i gcomhairle le InaG, le díriú ar an cheist seo. Tá critéir á bhforbairt faoi láthair le haghaidh íocaíochtaí dá leithéid a bhreithniú agus táthar ag dréim leis go gcuirfear an chéim seo i gcrích ar ball.

My department is now moving forward, in consultation with InaG, to address this issue. Criteria for the consideration of such payments are currently being developed and is expected to be completed shortly.

Rental Money

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education (i) how much rental money is owed by her Department in relation to Gaelscoil na gCrann; and (ii) when this money will be paid. (AQW 7487/09)

Minister of Education: The position of rental payments has been under discussion with InaG and is being considered positively as part of the wider examination with the sector on how best to address the accommodation deficiencies in existing schools.

The schools in question have submitted a number of claims for rental charges. These claims are in respect of accommodation purchased by InaG and two other Irish medium support groups for the schools. Under the Common Funding formula arrangements approved rents and other costs associated with the provision of approved accommodation will be met from Board's centre funds. There have been some rental agreements in place for sites in the Irish medium sector but there has not to date been a similar arrangement for accommodation.

Tá mo roinn ag déanamh dul chun cinn, i gcomhairle le InaG, le díriú ar an cheist seo. Tá critéir á bhforbairt faoi láthair le haghaidh íocaíochtaí dá leithéid a bhreithniú agus táthar ag dréim leis go gcuirfear an chéim seo i gcrích ar ball.

My department is now moving forward, in consultation with InaG, to address this issue. Criteria for the consideration of such payments are currently being developed and is expected to be completed shortly.

Rental Money

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education (ii) how much rental money is owed by her Department in relation to Gaelscoil an Damba; and (ii) when this money will be paid. (AQW 7488/09)

Minister of Education: The position of rental payments has been under discussion with InaG and is being considered positively as part of the wider examination with the sector on how best to address the accommodation deficiencies in existing schools.

The schools in question have submitted a number of claims for rental charges. These claims are in respect of accommodation purchased by InaG and two other Irish medium support groups for the schools. Under the Common Funding formula arrangements approved rents and other costs associated with the provision of approved accommodation will be met from Board's centre funds. There have been some rental agreements in place for sites in the Irish medium sector but there has not to date been a similar arrangement for accommodation.

Tá mo roinn ag déanamh dul chun cinn, i gcomhairle le InaG, le díriú ar an cheist seo. Tá critéir á bhforbairt faoi láthair le haghaidh íocaíochtaí dá leithéid a bhreithniú agus táthar ag dréim leis go gcuirfear an chéim seo i gcrích ar ball.

My department is now moving forward, in consultation with InaG, to address this issue. Criteria for the consideration of such payments are currently being developed and is expected to be completed shortly.

Economic Appraisal

Ms C Ní Chuilín asked the Minister of Education what is the average time between an economic appraisal being submitted to her Department and a decision being made on it. (AQW 7529/09)

Minister of Education: All Economic Appraisals (EA) for major capital schemes submitted to the Department progress through a number of stages of scrutiny, comment and approval by the Department's Building and Economic Advisors. If total costs for the scheme exceed £5m, there is a further stage of approval by the Department of Finance and Personnel.

Bíonn dul chun cinn ar aon Bhreithmheas Eacnamaíochta ag brath ar roinnt mhaith athróg mar shampla, méid na leasuithe a bhíonn de dhíth lena chinntiú go gcloítear leis an treoir a fhoilsíonn an Roinn Airgeadais agus Pearsanra.

Progress of an EA is dependent on a significant number of variables for example, the volume of revisions required to ensure compliance with guidance produced by the Department of Finance and Personnel. It is not possible, therefore, to give an average timescale between submission of an Economic Appraisal and a decision being made on it.

Free School Meals

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) how many pupils receive free school meals and; (ii) what percentage of the school age population does this represent, in the North Down constituency. (AQW 7542/09)

Minister of Education: The number of children taking school meals varies from week to week. However, information collected annually from the School Meals Census provides a snapshot of the numbers taking meals on the day on which census information is gathered.

Ar an lá a rinneadh an t-áireamh is deireanaí maidir le béilí scoile, 10ú Deireadh Fómhair 2008, fuair 751 dalta béile scoile saor in aisce i dtoghcheantar parlaiminte Dhún Thuaidh. B'ionann é seo agus 6% de dhaonra aoise scoile Dhún Thuaidh.

On the date of the most recent School Meals Census, 10th October 2008, 751 pupils in the North Down parliamentary constituency received free school meals. This represented 6% of the school age population in North Down.

Enrolment to Pre-School

Mr D Hilditch asked the Minister of Education if she has any plans to review the admission criteria used for enrolment to pre-school. (AQW 7548/09)

Minister of Education: Níl aon phleananna faoi láthair athruithe a dhéanamh ar Rialacháin um Oideachas Réamhscoile sna Scoileanna (Critéir Iontrála) 1999.

There are currently no plans for changes to be made to the Pre-School Education in Schools (Admissions Criteria) Regulations 1999.

School Buildings Design Guide

Mrs N Long asked the Minister of Education in relation to the review of the school buildings design guide, (i) when she anticipates the review will be completed and new guidance issued; and (ii) if the review included the different spacial needs of the extended schools programme in its remit. (AQW 7553/09)

Minister of Education: I can confirm that on 23 April 2009 my Department published an updated handbook which sets out the specification and design standards for new primary schools. This document has been circulated to the Education and Library Boards and Project Managers involved in the design of schools. It is also available to download from the Department's website.

Cuirtear san áireamh leis na Sceidil Athbhreithnithe um Chóiríocht seomraí ilchuspóireacha sa bhreis a bhfuil freastail ar réimse leathan feidhmíochta, ina n-áirítear seirbhísí agus gníomhachtaí a bhaineann le Clár na Scoileanna Seirbhísí Breise, mar aidhm acu.

The revised Schedules of Accommodation include additional multi-purpose rooms which are intended to serve a wide range of functions including the services and activities of the Extended Schools programme.

Nursery Places in East Belfast

Mr R Newton asked the Minister of Education what action she intends taking to address the shortfall in nursery places within the East Belfast constituency. (AQW 7564/09)

Minister of Education: Ní raibh eolas maidir le spriocasnamh áiteanna réamhscoile i dtoghcheantar Oirthear Bhéal Feirste curtha in iúl chuig mo Roinn ag na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne, a fheidhmíonn an próiseas iontrála.

The Education and Library Boards, who operate the admissions process, have not indicated to my Department a shortfall in pre-school places within the East Belfast constituency.

The Early Years Branch in the Department liaises closely with Education and Library Board officers to ensure that any shortfall is identified and appropriate action taken as soon as possible.

Statements of Educational Needs

Mr C Boylan asked the Minister of Education for a breakdown of the number of children and young people in receipt of statements of educational needs across the Belfast Education and Library Board area. (AQW 7580/09)

Minister of Education: Tá an t-eolas a iarradh mionsonraithe sa tábla seo thíos.

The information requested is detailed in the table below.

NUMBER OF PUPILS IN RECEIPT OF A STATEMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN THE BELFAST EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD – 2008/09

School type	BELB
Voluntary and private pre-school centres and nursery schools	5
Primary	473
Post primary	496
Special	1,120
Total	2,094

Source: School census.

Note:

- Figure for primary schools includes children in nursery, reception and year 1 – 7 classes.
- Figures for voluntary and private pre-school centres relate to children in funded places.

South Eastern Education and Library Board

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Education whether the South Eastern Education and Library Board is adhering to RPA guidelines in relation to secondments within RPA affected agencies and bodies. (AQW 7593/09)

Minister of Education: The SEELB follows the recommendations outlined in the Guiding Principles established by the Public Service Commission, including all necessary steps to safeguard the interests of staff and to ensure their smooth transfer to the Education and Skills Authority.

The provision for the interchange of staff with the RPA affected bodies, including secondment and the free flow of staff between and within public services is supported by the Board where it does not significantly compromise its business continuity and delivery of service.

Bhí an Bord ábalta deiseanna iasachta a éascú le haghaidh 24 foireann le 5 bliana anuas, le formhór na deiseanna siúd laistigh den earnáil Oideachais.

The Board has been able to facilitate secondment opportunities to 24 staff over the last 5 years, the majority of which have been within the Education sector.

Departmental Land

Dr A McDonnell asked the Minister of Education if in light of the current economic crisis, and with rising fuel and food prices, she has any plans to release departmental land for the use of local communities to grow affordable food and make local food more sustainable. (AQW 7619/09)

Minister of Education: Níl talamh ar bith faoi úinéireacht mo Roinne. Bíonn talamh a úsáidtear faoi choinne cúrsaí oideachais faoi úinéireacht na mBord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne nó faoi úinéireacht Iontaobhaithe scoileanna aonair. I gcás talaimh ar bith nach bhfuil de dhíth faoi choinne cúrsaí oideachais níos mó, caithfear é a dhiúscairt de réir threoir an Land and Property Service (LPS).

My Department does not own any land. Land used for educational purposes is owned by Education and Library Boards or by individual school Trustees. Any land no longer required for educational purposes is subject to disposal in accordance with Land and Property Service (LPS) guidance.

DEPARTMENT FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING

Visteon Workers

Mr P Butler asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline what his Department has done to date to investigate the claims made by trade unions representing Visteon workers in relation to the redundancy and pensions rights of the workers. (AQW 7269/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning (Sir Reg Empey):

Redundancy

While I am very encouraged to learn that Visteon workers have since voted to accept a deal to end the dispute over the closure of the west Belfast factory, I offer the following in answer to your original question.

Employment Rights legislation allowed redundant workers of Visteon and their representatives the right to seek redress whenever they believed that there had been any breach of their redundancy payments and pension entitlements. This could ultimately have had to be resolved at an Industrial Tribunal when all other avenues had failed.

Clearly it is a matter of regret that the Visteon workers found themselves in a situation where they believed they have been working under contracts which would have entitled them to more redundancy pay than would be payable under the statutory scheme, which is the only one that the Administrator could apply once the companies was legally insolvent. In these circumstances my Department had to agree with the Administrator what those redundancy entitlements should be and make the payments to the redundant workers. I have no powers to investigate the contractual issues with previous employers or Visteon. Indeed, if we did so it could be seen to

prejudice subsequent legal options which the workers may have felt obliged to take. On that basis, it would be improper for me to investigate the contractual claims of workers in such circumstances.

As at 27th April 2009, one application from a former Visteon employee had been received by my Department for statutory redundancy and insolvency payments under the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996. With the ongoing dispute, other employees had been reluctant to complete a claim form for payment from the statutory scheme therefore my Department was not in a position to consider such claims until they had been received. Payments of eligible claims, once received, would have been made within the normal timescales.

Pensions

With regard to pensions, as a result of allegations put to me by representatives of the Visteon workforce I instructed officers of my Department to pass on those concerns to colleagues in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and this has been done. I have also raised these concerns with my Ministerial counterpart in DWP. In relation to statutory payments, my Department may have a limited liability under the Pension Schemes (N. Ireland) Act 1993 for meeting a portion of pension contributions which remain unpaid at the date the company in question became legally insolvent.

In the case of Visteon, it is the responsibility of the Administrator, in consultation with the pension fund trustees, to establish the company's liability to the pension fund. In turn, the Administrator may apply to my Department for any portion of contributions remaining unpaid.

Student Enrolment Figures

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for a breakdown of (i) Protestant; and (ii) Roman Catholic student enrolment figures for universities, in each of the last three years. (AQW 7297/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Information on religion is only collected for Northern Ireland (NI) domiciled students studying at NI Higher Education Institutions.

The number of NI domiciled students enrolled in courses at NI Higher Education Institutions, broken down by religious background (where this data is available), in each of the last three years is detailed in the table below:

	Protestant	Catholic
2005/06	16,305	21,475
2006/07	14,590	20,055
2007/08	14,200	19,820

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Notes:

- (1) Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5 and due to rounding the sum of figures in each row may not match the total.
- (2) The latest available data are for 2007/08.
- (3) Religious affiliation is not a mandatory question and has a high non-response rate.

St Mary's College

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what contact has he or his Department had, officially or unofficially, with St Mary's College about the college's future. (AQW 7302/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: There have been no unofficial meetings with St. Mary's College about its future. Over the past year, I have had a number of meetings with senior management and Governing Body representatives of the College in relation to a range of issues, including funding and the development of strategic options. Departmental officials have also been involved in a range of meetings on similar issues.

University of Ulster

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many confirmed redundancies have been made in the University of Ulster, Jordanstown campus. (AQW 7316/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The University of Ulster is carrying out restructuring exercises in two areas of its Jordanstown campus – Residential Services and the Faculty of Computing and Engineering. Fourteen support staff roles within Residential Services will be discontinued. Thirteen of the support staff have asked for and have been granted voluntary redundancy effective from 5 June 2009. The remaining member of staff has asked to be considered for redeployment.

Within the Faculty of Computing and Engineering, there have been ten voluntary redundancies. Three of these have been academic staff, two are academic related and five are support staff.

The restructuring process is likely to be completed by 30 June 2009 by which time further voluntary redundancies or early retirements will have been explored with support staff as well as the opportunity to consider redeployment. At present the number to be made redundant or granted early retirement cannot be known until the process nears completion.

In total there have been twenty-three redundancies to date at Jordanstown.

One further support post at Jordanstown will be discontinued in the Faculty of Life & Health Sciences in September 2009. The post holder is currently being interviewed for another post under redeployment procedures.

The university is handling these matters in line with its normal processes and procedures to minimise the potential for redundancies.

Public Procurement Contracts

Ms J McCann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the companies that were successful in securing public procurement contracts in works, services and goods through his Department, in the last two years and the percentage of these that were from the SME or the Social Economy sectors. (AQW 7482/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The following companies were successful in securing public procurement contracts with this Department for works, services and goods through Central Procurement Directorate in DFP in the past two years. A total of 102 organisations were awarded contracts in the last two years. Based on local knowledge only, it is considered that 74% of these organisations are from the SME or Social Economy sectors; Departmental records contain insufficient information to be able to make a definitive judgement on this classification.

- A4c
- Austins Quality Training Services
- Actors Ireland
- Antrim Electrical
- ASM Howarth
- BCW Training Ltd
- Belfast Central Training Ltd
- Belfast College of Training & Education Ltd
- Belfast Metropolitan
- Blackwater House
- Bolton Community College
- CAFRE (DARD)
- Carter & Carter Group plc
- Coalisland Training Services Ltd
- Conservation Volunteers
- Cookstown Training
- Craft Recruitment & Training

- Creative Events
- Customized Training Services
- Dairy Farm Training (People 1st)
- Dairy Farm Training & Premier Care Homes (NI) Ltd
- Deloitte
- Derry Youth & Community Workshop Ltd
- Dowling Contracts
- EG Information Consulting
- Electrical Training Trust
- Engineering Training Council
- Farrens
- FGS/McClure Watters
- Food & Drink Training Council
- FPM Chartered Accountants
- Fujitsu Services
- Geronimo / Kindred PR
- Graham Training
- Graham Training & Premier Care Homes
- Grant Thornton
- Happening
- H & J Martin Ltd
- Hugh J O'Boyle Training Ltd
- Impact Training (NI) Limited
- Institute for Conflict Research
- Ipsos MORI
- Jennymount Training Services (The Hair Academy)
- Kennedy Fitzgerald Associates
- Knox & Clayton
- KPMG
- Larne Skills Development Ltd
- Loughview Training Services
- Mascott Construction
- Millar & Matchet
- Millward Brown Ulster Ltd
- Morrow Communications
- Napier University Edinburgh
- Network Personnel
- New Deal West
- NFRC (National Federation of Roofing Contractors)
- NIE
- North City Training
- North Down Training
- North Down Training & Datalink Reprographics Ltd
- North West Centre for Learning & Development (NI) Ltd
- North West Regional College
- Northern Regional College

- Opportunity Youth
- O'Hare & McGovern
- Oriel Training Services
- Oxford Economics
- Paragon Training (NI) Ltd
- Plumbing & Mechanical Services Training (NI) Ltd
- PMST
- Portview Fit Out
- Proteus NI Ltd
- Protocol
- QCG
- RT Resources
- Rutledge Joblink
- Seven Towers Training Ltd
- Shorts Bombardier
- SMR
- South Eastern Regional College
- South West College
- Southern Regional College
- Springvale Learning Ltd
- STEP
- Stothers
- Strabane Community Work Programme
- Strabane Training Services Ltd
- Swann Training Services Ltd
- The Link Works
- Tracey Brothers
- Transport Training Services
- TWL
- Ulster Supported Employment Ltd
- VT Training
- Wade Training Ltd
- Western Health & Social Care Trust
- Williamson Consulting
- Workforce Training Services
- Youth Action NI

North West Regional College

Mrs C McGill asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 7081/09, in relation to enrolment of students from the Strabane catchment area in the North West Regional College, Derry Campus, how many students are (i) full time; (ii) part time; and (iii) evening, broken down by courses. (AQW 7512/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Course title level information is very detailed and therefore the information is presented in the context of subject area. On that basis, the table below shows the number of enrolments at the Derry campus of North West Regional College from the Strabane catchment area by Subject Area and Mode of Attendance in 2007/08 (latest available data).

Subject Area	Full time	Part time	Evening	Total
Health, Public Services & Care	88	111	74	273
Science & Mathematics	9	38	3	50
Agriculture, Horticulture & Animal Care	0	2	1	3
Engineering & Manufacturing Technologies	15	53	4	72
Construction, Planning & the Built Environment	29	61	2	92
Information & Communication Technology	19	139	22	180
Retail & Commercial Enterprise	25	167	43	235
Leisure, Travel & Tourism	34	6	162	202
Arts, Media & Publishing	29	10	182	221
Social Sciences	2	0	18	20
Languages, Literature & Culture	0	63	28	91
Education & Training	3	157	3	163
Business, Administration & Law	20	91	2	113
Total	273	898	544	1,715

Source: Further Education Statistical Record.

Senior Civil Servant Bonuses

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how much was paid in bonuses to senior Civil Servants in his Department in (i) 2003/04; (ii) 2004/05; (iii) 2005/06; (iv) 2006/07; and (v) 2007/08.

(AQW 7519/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The total amount paid in non-consolidated bonus payments to Senior Civil Servants in the Department for Employment and Learning in respect of performance years 2003/2004 through to 2007/2008 is as shown in the table below. The table also includes the number of payments made.

Department for Employment and Learning					
Performance Year	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Total number of Bonuses	5	6	8	7	8
Total Value of Bonuses	£21,500	£26,500	£42,000	£47,500	£63,500

Welders

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many companies are currently seeking welders.

(AQW 7578/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: On Friday 8th May, 4 employers were seeking to recruit welders through the Department's Employment Service.

It is important to note that this number only reflects those employers that have placed a vacancy with the Department. This does not represent the total number of employers in Northern Ireland that are currently seeking to recruit welders.

Welders

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Employment and Learning where unemployed welders can attain their 'coding' if they have been out of work for six months or more. (AQW 7579/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: I have asked Senta (the Sector Skills Council for Engineering and Manufacturing), and the Engineering Training Council (ETC) to advise me on this matter. They intend to engage with local employers and recruitment agencies to establish the demand for and supply of coded welders, and the training provision in this discipline available in Northern Ireland. Once their findings are available, I should be content to let you know what action I propose.

DEPARTMENT OF ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Enterprise Finance Guarantee

Ms D Purvis asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment in relation to the switch from Small Firms Loan Guarantee to the Enterprise Finance Guarantee has there been (i) any change in the number of applications and uptake; or (ii) any indications that complications with the new programme are inhibiting potential applicants. (AQW 7348/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Mrs A Foster): The Enterprise Finance Guarantee (EFG) is designed to be accessible to more businesses as it provides loans up to £1 million compared to an upper limit of £250,000 for the now dormant Small Firms Loan Guarantee (SFLG); supports businesses with a turnover of up to £25 million compared to £5.6 million under SFLG; and EFG loans can be used to convert an overdraft into a loan. Northern Ireland had the lowest uptake of SFLG of any UK region and early indications show a similar pattern for EFG. However it is too early to make direct comparisons between SFLG and EFG.

I am not aware of any complications that applicants are having with the administrative process for EFG. However, as with SFLG, there is a perceived reluctance among lenders in Northern Ireland to promote the scheme to customers. Together with other Ministers I have been encouraging senior management in the Northern Ireland banks to utilise the EFG when discussing lending opportunities with business customers. I will pursue this further with the banks.

Energy from Waste Grant Funding

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how much of the £18million Energy from Waste grant funding remains unspent; and how it will be distributed. (AQW 7433/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Offers totalling £14.771 million have been made to five projects, one of which is a public sector project. No funding has yet been distributed but as all the promoters are confident that the projects will proceed, the budget remains allocated and committed to the five successful projects.

Of the remaining £3.229 million, £0.43 million was returned to the Northern Ireland Block in the 07/08 financial year and £2.8 million was redirected to the Reconnect programme to increase its budget to £10.8 million during the 08/09 financial year.

Ulster American Folk Park, Omagh

Mr T Buchanan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what work the Northern Ireland Tourist Board has done and is currently doing to promote the Ulster American Folk Park, Omagh. (AQW 7500/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: NITB works to promote Northern Ireland as a short break destination to residents of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and as such recently launched a major marketing campaign in both markets. The campaign featured attractions right across Northern Ireland, including

the Ulster American Folk Park. NITB also includes the Ulster American Folk Park within other promotional materials including brochures and the consumer website www.discovernorthernireland.com.

The Ulster American Folk Park received funding of up to £75,000 under the Tourism Development Scheme 2006-08 towards the construction of an American log cabin that was the home of Richard McCallister, an emigrant from Co. Antrim to West Virginia.

NITB is currently appraising another application from the Ulster American Folk Park under the Tourism Development Scheme 2008-11 seeking assistance of £150,000 to support the development of a new exhibit comprising the re-building and furnishing of a Tennessee Plantation House originally built on the American frontier in the early 1800s by a Tyrone emigrant.

NITB will continue to work to develop, promote and market Ulster American Folk Park as a key part of the Northern Ireland tourism offering.

Unemployment Figures

Mr D McClarty asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many people in (i) Coleraine and; (ii) Limavady Council areas were registered as unemployed in April, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 7555/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The number of claimant count unemployed persons, together with the associated unemployment rate#, for Coleraine and Limavady District Council areas, for April in each of the last five years are given in the table below:

Date	Coleraine		Limavady		Northern Ireland	
	Number	Rate	Number	Rate	Number	Rate
April 2005	1,233	3.6	642	2.9	28,609	2.7
April 2006	1,049	3.1	625	2.9	28,204	2.6
April 2007	813	2.4	592	2.7	25,183	2.3
April 2008	846	2.5	631	2.9	24,768	2.3
April 2009	1,540	4.5	1,341	6.1	46,857	4.3

The number of claimants expressed as a percentage of the resident working age population.

Project Kelvin

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment in relation to Project Kelvin, what information her Department has on specific applications for planning approval by Hibernia Atlantic.

(AQW 7563/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Hibernia Atlantic has informed the Department that it has submitted an application for planning approval in relation to the cable landing station. The application relates to a site at Dundooan Road in Coleraine. The siting of the cable landing station is a commercial decision taken by Hibernia Atlantic.

Welders

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many welders are currently unemployed in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 7577/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: It is not possible to give an exact figure of the number of welders currently unemployed in Northern Ireland. However, there were 480 unemployed claimants in April 2009 whose usual occupation was in the metal welding trades, corresponding to the Standard Occupational Classification 2000 code 5215.

Government Investment

Dr A McDonnell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the amount of Government investment received over the last ten years by (i) Vesteon; (ii) Nortel; (iii) FG Wilson; and (iv) Shorts and its parent company Bombardier. (AQW 7620/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The following information has been provided on the basis of financial assistance offered by Invest NI and its legacy agencies to the various Client Companies referenced.

During the period in question, Invest NI and its legacy agencies offered almost £24 million of grant support for FG Wilson in support of a number of significant investments in additional plant, machinery and manufacturing facilities, research and development and high calibre training. As a result, F G Wilson employment grew from approximately 2,000 in 1999, to a peak of 3,500 in 2008, falling recently to approximately 2,400 as a result of global economic conditions.

Support for FG Wilson also enabled Invest NI to develop a strong relationship with Caterpillar (its parent company) across a number of business areas. By leveraging this relationship, Invest NI has been able to attract and establish a number of Caterpillar shared service centres to Northern Ireland and has offered £0.56 million in support of these investments.

In the same period, Invest NI and its legacy agencies offered approximately £45 million of assistance (excluding assistance agreed for the new C Series Programme) towards investments by Bombardier in new mobile projects, which were integral to major aircraft programmes undertaken by the company. These projects generated new investment in Northern Ireland, jobs and extensive wider economic benefits through knowledge transfer and supply chain business. In addition to the projects supported by Invest NI, Bombardier has undertaken significantly more total investment than that which received direct Invest NI assistance. The company continues to perform strongly, allowing for the effect of the international economic recession. Earlier this year, Bombardier undertook a review of all current aircraft programmes and is now implementing programme rate changes in line with international market demand. This will result in a reduction in employment at the company's Northern Ireland sites of 1,275, leaving a core workforce of circa 5,000.

Between 1999 and 2009, a total of £138,172 of assistance was offered to Visteon in support of training, market development and research and development projects. £88,606.78 of the £109,305 of R& D support is now subject to clawback due to non-compliance with the offer.

Approximately £24 million of grant support was offered to Nortel Networks UK Ltd in support of a number of significant investments at its Monkstown site. Following the dotcom downturn of 2001-03, Nortel commenced a number of rationalisation initiatives to increase its competitiveness, including the outsourcing / sale of parts of its operations. As a result, in 2005, Invest NI commenced a review of its potential claw-back position in respect of funding provided to Nortel. A total liability on the part of Nortel of £17.4 million was subsequently agreed and, of this, the company had, by March 2009, repaid or earned-out a total of £15.07 million.

On foot of Nortel entering Administration in January 2009, Invest NI determined that Nortel had breached a June 2006 Financial Assistance Agreement. As a consequence, the earn-out facility was no longer made available and a further invoice for £7.4 million for restitution in cash in place of the earn-out provision was issued to the company in February 2009.

Wind Turbines

Mr P Doherty asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what level of grant aid is available for (i) domestic wind turbines; and (ii) commercial wind turbines; and whether such funding is available only for new builds. (AQW 7626/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The UK Low Carbon Buildings Programme offers grant aid for domestic wind turbines of £1000 per kW of installed capacity, subject to an overall maximum of £2,500 or 30% of relevant eligible costs, whichever is lower. The programme is set to remain open until 2010 and is available to individual home owners (both existing homes and new builds), including those in Northern Ireland.

No grants are currently available for commercial wind turbines however the Carbon Trust's interest free loan scheme can assist with the installation of wind turbines for the supply of electricity for a company's own use. The loan can be between £5,000 and £400,000 and is repayable over 4 years. The interest free loan is available for

retrofit on existing sites and commercial new builds are eligible to apply providing a company has been trading for a particular period of time.

In addition all generators of electricity from eligible renewable sources, including wind, can avail of the support provided by the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation (NIRO). In the case of micro-generators (installed capacity of 50kW or less), this support has been doubled since 1 April 2009 with the introduction of banding arrangements to the NIRO.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Ards and Down Area Plan

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment if there is flexibility within the Ards and Down Area Plan to provide housing and/or Council Development that at this stage is excluded from the plan. (AQW 7243/09)

Minister of the Environment (Mr S Wilson): The Ards and Down Area Plan was adopted on 30 March 2009, following a lengthy Public Inquiry into the objections to the draft Plan. The Department accepted the majority of the recommendations made by the Planning Appeals Commission in their report produced following the Public Inquiry. As a result additional land was allocated to many towns and villages throughout the Plan area.

If a planning application were to be submitted, it would be considered on its own merits and within the context of prevailing plans, regional policy including planning policy statements, and other relevant material considerations. This would of course include the recently adopted Plan.

Road Safety Council

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what is the timescale for the removal of funding for the Road Safety Council. (AQW 7294/09)

Minister of the Environment: Following a critical review of its performance, I wrote to the Road Safety Council (RSC) on 9 December 2008 to inform it of my decision to channel funding, not into central administration but direct to local committees from 1 April 2009. However, some elements of core funding will continue until 30 June 2009 with a view to allowing the Council to complete the required end-year financial reporting.

Cycling Proficiency Initiatives

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how many schools have participated in cycling proficiency initiatives, in each of the last five years, (AQW 7296/09)

Minister of the Environment: Each year, my Department's cycling proficiency scheme is offered to all primary schools in Northern Ireland. The number of schools participating in each of the last five years is as follows:

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
510	559	544	569	568

Cycling Proficiency Initiatives

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how many pupils have received training in road safety cycling proficiency initiatives, in the last five years. (AQW 7301/09)

Minister of the Environment: Each year, my Department's cycling proficiency scheme is offered to all primary schools in Northern Ireland. It targets children mainly in primary 7, and in the last five years 44,293 children have been trained. This is broken down as follows:

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
8,849	8,563	8,663	8,735	9,483

Road Safety

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what level of additional funding can be made available to local groups for road safety following the proposed removal of funding from the Road Safety Council.

(AQW 7303/09)

Minister of the Environment: Last year local road safety committees spent approximately £25,000 on local activities or events. However, the Department currently has a budget of £160,000 for grants to the voluntary sector, and this amount is now available to local road safety committees, subject to completion of the normal bidding and evaluation procedures.

Vehicle Testing Centres

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of the Environment to (i) detail the percentage of unsuccessful vehicle tests carried out on motor vehicles and heavy goods vehicles at the Newtownards Testing Centre; and (ii) compare this to other Vehicle Testing Centres in Northern Ireland, in the last five years. (AQW 7315/09)

Minister of the Environment: The tables below detail the percentage of vehicles that failed the full test and the re-test for all vehicle categories, private cars and heavy good vehicles in Newtownards test centre in the years 2004/05, 2005/06, 2006/07, 2007/08, 2008/09 and includes the figures for the same periods for the other 14 test centres.

VEHICLE FULL TESTS 1 APRIL 2004 TO 31 MARCH 2005

Centre	All vehicle categories % fail rate	Private cars % fail rate	Heavy goods vehicles % fail rate
Newtownards	27	22	43
Armagh	26	23	44
Ballymena	22	22	30
Belfast	22	22	29
Coleraine	21	20	37
Cookstown	29	27	47
Craigavon	30	31	35
Downpatrick	23	22	33
Enniskillen	20	20	34
Larne	15	15	20
Lisburn	24	22	37
Londonderry	24	23	41
Mallusk	23	23	25
Newry	23	21	36
Omagh	26	24	43

VEHICLE RE-TESTS 1 APRIL 2004 TO 31 MARCH 2005

Centre	All vehicle categories % fail rate	Private cars % fail rate	Heavy goods vehicles % fail rate
Newtownards	7	6	13
Armagh	9	7	11
Ballymena	7	6	13
Belfast	8	7	11
Coleraine	9	8	14
Cookstown	10	9	17
Craigavon	9	8	14
Downpatrick	7	6	12
Enniskillen	9	9	18
Larne	6	5	7
Lisburn	7	6	10
Londonderry	7	6	14
Mallusk	8	7	13
Newry	7	6	10
Omagh	10	9	16

VEHICLE FULL TESTS 1 APRIL 2005 TO 31 MARCH 2006

Centre	All vehicle categories % fail rate	Private cars % fail rate	Heavy goods vehicles % fail rate
Newtownards	25	24	46
Armagh	27	24	42
Ballymena	22	22	33
Belfast	26	25	32
Coleraine	24	23	45
Cookstown	33	31	55
Craigavon	31	30	45
Downpatrick	25	24	28
Enniskillen	23	23	33
Larne	17	17	21
Lisburn	26	25	35
Londonderry	26	25	42
Mallusk	28	28	31
Newry	25	23	42
Omagh	31	29	45

VEHICLE RE-TESTS 1 APRIL 2005 TO 31 MARCH 2006

Centre	All vehicle categories % fail rate	Private cars % fail rate	Heavy goods vehicles % fail rate
Newtownards	7	6	14
Armagh	8	7	12
Ballymena	6	6	11
Belfast	7	7	10
Coleraine	8	8	13
Cookstown	10	9	17
Craigavon	8	8	12
Downpatrick	6	5	12
Enniskillen	8	7	13
Larne	5	5	8
Lisburn	7	6	13
Londonderry	7	7	11
Mallusk	9	8	12
Newry	7	6	13
Omagh	9	8	18

VEHICLE FULL TESTS 1 APRIL 2006 TO 31 MARCH 2007

Centre	All vehicle categories % fail rate	Private cars % fail rate	Heavy goods vehicles % fail rate
Newtownards	26	25	45
Armagh	26	23	40
Ballymena	23	22	37
Belfast	21	20	26
Coleraine	22	21	35
Cookstown	30	28	50
Craigavon	28	27	38
Downpatrick	23	22	30
Enniskillen	22	22	32
Larne	17	18	20
Lisburn	21	20	36
Londonderry	25	25	41
Mallusk	27	25	29
Newry	23	21	39
Omagh	25	23	42

VEHICLE RE-TESTS 1 APRIL 2006 TO 31 MARCH 2007

Centre	All vehicle categories % fail rate	Private cars % fail rate	Heavy goods vehicles % fail rate
Newtownards	7	6	17
Armagh	8	7	11
Ballymena	7	6	11
Belfast	6	5	12
Coleraine	8	7	14
Cookstown	9	8	15
Craigavon	8	8	13
Downpatrick	5	5	9
Enniskillen	9	8	17
Larne	6	5	12
Lisburn	6	5	12
Londonderry	7	7	15
Mallusk	8	7	11
Newry	7	5	12
Omagh	9	8	13

VEHICLE FULL TESTS 1 APRIL 2007 TO 31 MARCH 2008

Centre	All vehicle categories % fail rate	Private cars % fail rate	Heavy goods vehicles % fail rate
Newtownards	26	25	47
Armagh	24	22	37
Ballymena	22	21	37
Belfast	20	19	26
Coleraine	22	21	38
Cookstown	28	26	49
Craigavon	29	29	41
Downpatrick	22	20	36
Enniskillen	23	23	41
Larne	21	21	28
Lisburn	19	18	32
Londonderry	25	24	39
Mallusk	23	23	27
Newry	21	19	33
Omagh	24	23	42

VEHICLE RE-TESTS 1 APRIL 2007 TO 31 MARCH 2008

Centre	All vehicle categories % fail rate	Private cars % fail rate	Heavy goods vehicles % fail rate
Newtownards	7	6	15
Armagh	7	6	11
Ballymena	7	6	8
Belfast	6	6	12
Coleraine	7	6	11
Cookstown	9	8	15
Craigavon	9	9	12
Downpatrick	6	5	9
Enniskillen	8	7	13
Larne	7	6	13
Lisburn	5	4	10
Londonderry	6	5	13
Mallusk	7	6	8
Newry	6	5	11
Omagh	8	7	14

VEHICLE FULL TESTS 1 APRIL 2008 TO 31 MARCH 2009

Centre	All vehicle categories % fail rate	Private cars % fail rate	Heavy goods vehicles % fail rate
Newtownards	25	25	47
Armagh	23	21	34
Ballymena	21	20	35
Belfast	18	17	22
Coleraine	21	20	35
Cookstown	24	23	41
Craigavon	25	25	33
Downpatrick	19	18	28
Enniskillen	22	21	40
Larne	21	21	28
Lisburn	18	18	28
Londonderry	24	23	39
Mallusk	22	22	26
Newry	20	19	30
Omagh	23	22	38

VEHICLE RE-TESTS 1 APRIL 2008 TO 31 MARCH 2009

Centre	All vehicle categories % fail rate	Private cars % fail rate	Heavy goods vehicles % fail rate
Newtownards	7	6	18
Armagh	7	7	8
Ballymena	6	6	9
Belfast	6	6	10
Coleraine	7	7	10
Cookstown	8	7	12
Craigavon	8	8	12
Downpatrick	5	4	10
Enniskillen	8	8	11
Larne	7	6	10
Lisburn	5	4	10
Londonderry	5	5	10
Mallusk	7	7	7
Newry	6	5	9
Omagh	8	8	12

Draft Planning Policy Statement 21

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the number of planning applications in each Divisional Planning Office that are determined under the Draft Planning Policy Statement 21 in the categories of (i) farm dwellings; (ii) replacement dwellings; and (iii) farm or other conversions to a dwelling; and to include whether Planning Service refused or approved these applications. (AQW 7317/09)

Minister of the Environment: Following the publication of draft PPS21 on 25 November 2008, my Department determined 10 planning applications for single rural dwellings in the rural area between this date and 31 December 2008. These are broken down as follows (i) 7 new rural dwellings; and (ii) 3 replacement dwellings.

These figures are extracted from my Department's published Development Management Statistics for 2008/09 Third Quarterly Statistical Bulletin which provides data up to 31 December 2008.

Due to the new statistical code of practice it is not possible to provide information on any applications which have not been through the quality assurance process prior to the publication of official statistics

The next Development Management quarterly statistics are due for publication in June 2009. These figures will include considerably more applications reassessed under draft PPS21 as my Department has given a commitment to complete reassessment of all 2277 deferred applications by June 2009.

Driver and Vehicle Agency

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the reasons for the delay in the recruitment of Driver and Vehicle Agency inspectors, in each of the last two years. (AQW 7361/09)

Minister of the Environment: Two recruitment competitions for vehicle examiners were held in the last two years. In the 2008/09 year there was no delay with the recruitment of vehicle examiners, with the recruitment process being completed in 20 weeks from the date the process commenced to the date the first new recruits took up post. In the 2007/08 year the recruitment process took approximately 36 weeks from commencement to the date the first new recruits took up post. The timing of this competition coincided with the introduction of a NICS wide revised recruitment policy which suffered some inevitable delays in the early days. My Department

took measures to address certain aspects of the recruitment process which resulted in a quicker and acceptable turnaround for the recruitment competition held in the 2008/09 year.

Driver and Vehicle Agency

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of the Environment how much money was allocated for the recruitment of additional inspectors for the Driver and Vehicle Agency, in each of the last two years. (AQW 7362/09)

Minister of the Environment: The amount of money allocated by the Driver & Vehicle Agency for the recruitment of additional inspectors for each of the last two years for vehicle and driving tests was:

2007/08	2008/09
216,000	355,000

Driver and Vehicle Agency

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of the Environment what percentage of monies allocated for the recruitment of new inspectors for the Driver and Vehicle Agency has not been spent, in each of the last two years. (AQW 7363/09)

Minister of the Environment: The percentage of allocated budget not spent by the Driver & Vehicle Agency (previously the Driver & Vehicle Testing Agency) for the recruitment of new inspectors was NIL for both years. In order to ensure that waiting times for both vehicle and driving tests were achieved, the Agency used the available resource to conduct both driver and vehicle tests by means of overtime. In 2008/09 the Agency actually recruited more staff than it had originally planned in order to meet additional growth in demand.

Driver and Vehicle Agency

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of the Environment how many inspectors have been recruited for the Driver and Vehicle Agency in each of the last two years. (AQW 7364/09)

Minister of the Environment: The Driver & Vehicle Agency has recruited 65 vehicle examiners in the last two years, 18 in the 2007/08 year and 47 in the 2008/09 year.

Driver and Vehicle Agency

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of the Environment how many vehicle and taxi inspectors are employed by the Driver and Vehicle Agency. (AQW 7365/09)

Minister of the Environment: Vehicle testing staff are trained to inspect all categories of vehicles including taxis. DVA currently employs 290 vehicle examiners.

Death Threats to Belfast City Council Staff

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of the Environment what guidance and direction is given by his Department to Councils about dealing with threats, such as the recent death threats to Council workers in Belfast City Council, to protect workers and staff. (AQW 7392/09)

Minister of the Environment: My Department has not issued any guidance and direction to councils about dealing with threats and the protection of council workers and staff. My Department does not have the power to issue such guidance and direction.

Death Threats to Belfast City Council Staff

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of (i) Belfast City Council's actions to protect its staff over and above the police investigation of death threats; and (ii) the disparity between this and the case of a death threat received by the Chief Executive of Craigavon Borough Council in 2006, where that Council took no action. (AQW 7393/09)

Minister of the Environment: Dealing with threats to council workers and staff is a human resources matter for each individual council. I have no power to intervene in human resources issues within district councils and it would not be appropriate for me to provide an assessment of the actions of any council in respect of the protection of staff following death threats.

Audit Functions for Local Government

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of the Environment (i) for his assessment of the Internal Audit and External Audit functions for local government being fit for purpose; (ii) what proposals is his Department making to the DFP and/or the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General, for a review of functions that will meet the increased requirement when the Review of Public Administration is implemented; and (iii) if he will consider this a priority, given the number of instances of fraud being uncovered in the public sector. (AQW 7394/09)

Minister of the Environment: I have no authority to assess or challenge the role that local government auditors undertake in relation to the external audit of local government as they are independent of my Department. The internal audit of a council's business is a matter for individual councils to determine.

In the context of the decisions on the future shape of local government, one of the Policy Development Panels established last year is tasked with bringing forward proposals in relation to service delivery improvement.

These proposals that will include the identification and specification of an enhanced role for local government auditors will inform the preparation of legislative proposals to be brought before the Assembly in early 2010.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

Dr A McDonnell asked the Minister of the Environment to detail, in respect of Houses in Multiple Occupation in each electoral ward, (i) the total number; (ii) the percentage; (iii) the cap implemented; and (iii) how his Department arrived at the individual percentage limits. (AQW 7400/09)

Minister of the Environment: The Department does not maintain information on Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) on the basis of electoral wards. However, provisional data has been assembled on this basis in Table A below.

The information requested, is also provided by HMO Policy Areas. See Table B below. Policy Areas are more meaningful than wards in this instance as the number HMOs are capped on the basis of the former rather than latter.

Approximately 8% of the dwelling stock in Belfast is in the form of HMOs. The HMO Subject Plan, which was adopted in December 2008, identified and designated 22 HMO Policy Areas. These are areas where HMOs are concentrated and are outlined on the relevant maps in the HMO Subject Plan.

The Subject Plan capped HMO development at 30% in HMO Policy Areas and 10% in all other streets.

The number of HMOs exceeds 30% of all the dwelling units in 20 of the 22 HMO Policy Areas. Consequently, no further HMO development will be permitted within these areas until such times as the proportion of HMOs falls below 30%. This restriction will help protect area amenity and maintain community balance.

During the public consultation process, many local residents voiced concern at the concentration of HMOs in certain locations and the impact that such properties were having on these areas. However, many also acknowledged the positive impact HMOs could bring to an area in terms of regeneration, not only for the physical housing stock but also in consolidating the viability of local businesses and services such as shopping.

All agreed there was a need to achieve a balance between HMOs and traditional residential accommodation. The general consensus was that the upper limit for conversion to multiple occupation should be 30%. This level

of multiple occupation could potentially assist regeneration but at the same time would not necessarily result in the local community becoming imbalanced.

Planning Appeals Commission undertook an Independent Examination of representations made in respect of the HMO Draft Subject Plan in October 2007. Their subsequent report endorsed the 30% cap as reasonable and acceptable.

TABLE A: HMOS BY WARD

Ward	Dwelling Units	HMOs	% HMO
Andersonstown	1,896	18	1
Ardoyne	2,575	69	3
Ballyhackamore	2,716	95	3
Ballymacarret	2,306	54	2
Ballynafeigh	2,752	719	26
Ballysillan	2,449	0	0
Beechmount	2,510	77	3
Bellevue	1,994	11	1
Belmont	2,496	5	0
Blackstaff	2,592	165	6
Bloomfield	2,668	79	3
Botanic	4,138	2,922	71
Castleview	2,221	25	1
Cavehill	1,825	11	1
Cherryvalley	2,398	50	2
Chichester Park	2,135	271	13
Cliftonville	1,970	38	2
Clonard	1,848	45	2
Crumlin	2,306	21	1
Duncairn	2,134	35	2
Falls	2,099	41	2
Falls Park	2,285	3	0
Finaghy	1,920	17	1
Fortwilliam	1,978	58	3
Glen Road	2,086	4	0
Glencairn	1,607	1	0
Glencolin	2,463	2	0
Highfield	2,180	6	0
Island	2,326	24	1
Knock	2,098	30	1
Ladybrook	2,337	3	0
Legoniel	2,253	2	0
Malone	2,299	239	10
Musgrave	1,888	6	0

Ward	Dwelling Units	HMOs	% HMO
New Lodge	2,301	55	2
Orangefield	2,415	6	0
Ravenhill	2,655	98	4
Rosetta	2,394	288	12
Shaftesbury	3,523	232	7
Shankill	2,082	0	0
Stormont	2,268	25	1
Stranmillis	2,582	473	18
Sydenham	2,208	92	4
The Mount	2,444	193	8
Upper Malone	2,103	5	0
Upper Springfiel	1,871	1	0
Water Works	2,896	702	24
Whiterock	1,729	12	1
Windsor	3,576	1,966	55
Woodstock	2,723	72	3
Woodvale	2,382	8	0
Total	119,900	9,374	8

Source: OSNI Pointer Address Data and NIHE HMO database

ANNEX B HMOS BY POLICY AREA

Designation	HMO Policy Area	Dwelling Units	HMOs	% HMO
HMO 2/01	Adelaide	378	145	38
HMO 2/02	Atlantic	145	68	47
HMO 2/03	Ballynafeigh	1,655	521	31
HMO 2/04	Castleton	118	50	42
HMO 2/05	Cavehill	277	101	36
HMO 2/06	Cliftonville	441	222	50
HMO 2/07	Donegall Road	410	157	38
HMO 2/08	Edinburgh Street	690	391	57
HMO 2/09	Eglantine	1,343	779	58
HMO 2/10	Fitzwilliam	627	259	41
HMO 2/11	Harleston	126	49	39
HMO 2/12	Jameson	136	40	29
HMO 2/13	Lower Ormeau	389	120	31
HMO 2/14	Malone	331	139	42
HMO 2/15	Meadowbank	722	283	39
HMO 2/16	Mount Charles	222	63	28
HMO 2/17	Sandymount	202	127	63
HMO 2/18	South Parade	265	102	38

Designation	HMO Policy Area	Dwelling Units	HMOs	% HMO
HMO 2/19	Stranmillis	790	480	61
HMO 2/20	Thorndale	108	48	44
HMO 2/21	Ulsterville	1,089	553	51
HMO 2/22	Botanic, Holylands, Rugby	2,491	1,586	64
Total		12,955	6,530	

Source: OSNI Pointer Address Data and NIHE HMO database

Planning Service

Mrs N Long asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the protocol to be followed by Planning Service when it is presented with photographic and/or actuarial evidence of repeated out-of-sewer or other flooding by objectors and public representatives in relation to the site of a planning application, which has not been raised in the statutory consultation process by NI Water. (AQW 7406/09)

Minister of the Environment: If my Department is presented with evidence of repeated out of sewer or other flooding in relation to a planning application, this information will be taken into account in the assessment of that application. Depending on the scale and nature of the planning application and evidence presented, my Department may decide to consult Rivers Agency and/or Northern Ireland Water for expert advice. However, each application will be dealt with on its own individual merits.

Planning Service

Mrs N Long asked the Minister of the Environment if Planning Service has the power to consider the impact upon residential amenity of issues, such as parking or flooding, where the technical expertise for assessing policy compliance and technical issues such as safety lies with a statutory consultee; and where that consultee has not raised a technical objection, but where amenity may be affected. (AQW 7407/09)

Minister of the Environment: There are many material considerations that may be relevant in the determination of a planning application and these will vary depending on the specific circumstances of each case. Residential amenity is a material planning consideration and impact on residential amenity is a matter for my Department to consider as part of the assessment and determination of a planning application. The comments of consultees such as Roads Service and Rivers Agency are also a key part of the development management process as they provide expert advice on road and flood risk matters where the circumstances are appropriate. As part of the determination of a planning application my Department will consider all factors and make a balanced planning judgement based on the individual material considerations of the case.

Programme for Government: Environment Targets

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the targets for the environment in the Programme for Government. (AQW 7413/09)

Minister of the Environment: The targets for the environment set out in the Programme for Government reflect the Executive's priority to protect and enhance our environment and natural resources. They are part of a cross-cutting framework of agreed objectives and are a valuable resource in steering the work of government over the coming two years as the Executive seeks to improve the quality of life of people in Northern Ireland. My Department is working with other departments to achieve all those targets for which it has responsibility and is liaising closely with officials in DFP who are undertaking ongoing monitoring arrangements.

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Mr A Bresland asked the Minister of the Environment what plans the Northern Ireland Environment Agency has to implement ASSIs in the West Tyrone constituency in 2009. (AQW 7425/09)

Minister of the Environment: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency intends to designate a further 25 sites across Northern Ireland during the 2009/10 financial year in line with its commitments under the current Programme for Government (2008 to 2011). Due to the sensitive nature of ASSI designations, and the courtesy which must be afforded to individual landowners, the Agency is unable to provide a detailed list of proposed sites prior to the official notification of each designation at the consultation stage of the process.

The Agency is however proposing to declare possibly 2 sites within the West Tyrone constituency during 2009/10.

Areas of Special Scientific Interest

Mr A Bresland asked the Minister of the Environment how much funding has been paid to landowners in Areas of Special Scientific Interest, in each constituency, in each of the last three years. (AQW 7427/09)

Minister of the Environment: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency is unable to provide funding details for payments to landowners within ASSIs along constituency boundaries.

Detailed below however is the total funding paid to landowners in respect of management agreements within ASSIs across Northern Ireland in each of the last three years.

Year	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Amount Paid	489,338.35	282,275.57	529,623.74

Areas of Special Scientific Interest

Mr A Bresland asked the Minister of the Environment what support is available to landowners who, as the result of being an Area of Special Scientific Interest, have had their property damaged. (AQW 7429/09)

Minister of the Environment: Article 28 of the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 requires the Department to designate Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs) to ensure that identified features are specially protected. Whilst support is available to secure the appropriate management of these ASSI features, this does not extend to activities which may be considered damaging by the landowner but which are not having an adverse impact upon the aforementioned features.

Planning Service

Mrs N Long asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the impact that Planning Circular PC 0307 has had on the outcome of the determination of applications by Planning Service. (AQW 7454/09)

Minister of the Environment: In recognition of public concern on this issue, Planning Service staff were reminded of the need to consider fully the impact on the established residential character when processing applications for new residential development. To this end, Planning Circular (PC 03/07), 'Assessing Planning Applications for Residential Development in Urban Areas, Villages and Other Small Settlements' issued in August 2007 has positively assisted Planning Service staff in processing planning applications for residential development.

It reiterates the key policy objections of PPS 7: 'Quality Residential Environments' and the need to fully consider the existing character of the surrounding area when assessing individual proposals. It also provides a full list of all other relevant policies.

Mass Launching of Balloons

Dr S Farry asked the Minister of the Environment to detail his Department's powers and responsibilities in relation to the mass launching of balloons, under litter or other legislation, in light of the potential impact on wildlife. (AQW 7458/09)

Minister of the Environment: My Department does not have any specific powers in legislation in relation to the mass launching of balloons and has not issued any guidance on this matter. It is accepted that a proportion of the balloons released at mass launches of helium filled balloons fall back down to earth and, for example, become a source of litter and may also pose a risk to wildlife. However, my Department does not have any scientific evidence that the release of balloons has any detrimental affect on wildlife or that balloon-related litter is a significant problem for Councils or one that is causing particular difficulties for them.

Protection of Mature Trees

Mrs N Long asked the Minister of the Environment if mature trees are protected from felling, and removal during nesting season, and for his assessment of the adequacy of the protection. (AQW 7463/09)

Minister of the Environment: Under the terms of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 it is an offence to 'take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built or to 'take or destroy an egg of any wild bird'.

DoE and DARD both advise that tree cutting and hedge trimming should not be undertaken during the period March to 31 August in order to minimise the potential effects of disturbance to nesting birds.

As such, there may be incidental protection of mature trees during the nesting season if they harbour nesting birds, but this protection would not extend beyond the rearing and fledgling period of the chicks. Planning Service may however decide to issue a permanent Tree Protection Order on a particular tree (or trees) on the basis of their amenity value.

The Department of the Environment recently undertook a consultation exercise on the ongoing review of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 and received only one response urging that the level of legislative protection for trees in Northern Ireland be increased.

The Department considers that the present system is effective for protecting birds using trees during the nesting season.

River Pollution

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister of the Environment (i) to detail the number of successful prosecutions against polluters of rivers in the last five years; (ii) the level of the fines and; (iii) have these fines been collected from the polluters. (AQW 7492/09)

Minister of the Environment: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) is responsible for investigating reports of pollution and for instigating enforcement action where appropriate.

In the last 5 years, January 2004 to December 2008, NIEA has successfully prosecuted 179 offenders, in relation to offences under the Water (NI) Order 1999, in Courts throughout Northern Ireland.

Table A below details the number of successful prosecutions in each of the last 5 years together with the level and range of fines imposed.

Table A

Year	No of Prosecutions	Level of Fines	Range of Fines
2004	63	£88,575	£75 - £10,000
2005	39	£42,700	£100 - £6,000
2006	29	£74,100	£200 - £15,000
2007	35	£48,700	£100 - £5,000
2008	13	£17,050	£200 - £5,000
Totals	179	£271,125	£75 - £15,000

The fines imposed totalled £271,125, representing an average fine of £1515, ranging from the highest at £15,000 to the lowest at £75.

The collection of fines imposed by the Courts is a matter for the Northern Ireland Office through the Northern Ireland Court Service.

Tree Preservation Orders

Mrs N Long asked the Minister of the Environment to outline in what circumstances it would be preferable to protect trees on a site subject to a development proposal by way of a planning condition attached to an outline application rather than by either a temporary or permanent Tree Preservation Order. (AQW 7550/09)

Minister of the Environment: In August 2005 my Department published a consultation document and questionnaire seeking information on the scale and geographical spread of problems with nuisance high hedges in Northern Ireland. The consultation document was issued to a wide range of individuals and organisations including other Departments and public bodies.

The consultation exercise confirmed that the high hedge problem in Northern Ireland is at least on a par with that in England and Wales and it was accepted that legislation was necessary to deal with the problem. This assessment of the nuisance high hedges problem has not changed.

Any new scheme to deal with the issue of high hedges will be operated by local government and I would not underestimate the amount of additional work the introduction of such a scheme would have on district councils, particularly during the early stages of the scheme's operation when the existing problems affecting many householders would need to be dealt with. It is with this in mind together with the competing priorities and resource constraints I am facing that I have decided not to progress the development of policy and legislation related to this matter until after the eleven new Councils have been elected in May 2011. This also allows staff resources in the Department's Planning and Environment Policy Group to focus on higher priority environmental issues over the coming years.

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

Senior Civil Servant Bonuses

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to his answer to AQW 6505/09, to detail the grades of senior Civil Servants receiving bonuses, in each Department in (i) 2003/04; (ii) 2004/05; (iii) 2005/06; (iv) 2006/07; (v) 2007/08; and 2008/09. (AQW 7049/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel (Mr N Dodds): Senior Civil Servants at Grade 3, Grade 5 and Permanent Secretary level in NICS Departments received non-consolidated bonuses in respect of performance years 2003/04 through to 2007/08. Information is not yet available with regard to the 2008/09 performance year.

Civil Service

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what arrangements exist to allow the direct transfer of staff from the Northern Ireland Civil Service to the Home Service Departments. (AQW 7288/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The Northern Ireland Civil Service and the Home Civil Service are separate legal employers. In order to move from the NICS to the Home Civil Service, a person is required to resign from the NICS in order to take up a position in a Home Civil Service Department. Should a NICS employee wish to move to the HCS, the onus is on the individual to identify a suitable position and initiate contact with that department.

Civil Service

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what arrangements exist to allow the direct transfer of staff from the Home Service Departments to the Northern Ireland Civil Service. (AQW 7289/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: As the NICS and the HCS are two legally separate employers, staff cannot normally move directly between the two. However, in exceptional circumstances, my department may allow requests from HCS staff to move to the NICS to be considered by NI Departments in the context of the business needs of the NICS. Such transfers occur only in very exceptional cases and where it is not reasonably practical to make the appointment in accordance with the merit principle.

Recorded Births

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of recorded births where the father is listed as ‘unknown,’ in each of the last 10 years. (AQW 7340/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Over the last decade no birth registrations took place where the father’s details were recorded as ‘Unknown’. However, in cases where the parents are not married to each other, both parents are currently required to attend the registrar in order for the father’s details to be recorded on the birth record. The table below gives the number of births registered where father’s details were not recorded at the time of first registration.

Registration Year	Number of Births Registered Without Father’s Details Recorded
1999	2,470
2000	2,265
2001	2,199
2002	2,196
2003	2,071
2004	2,106
2005	1,982
2006	2,128
2007	2,019
2008 ^P	2,087

P Provisional data

Around 700 births are re-registered each year with the most common reason for re-registration being to add the father’s name to the birth record. Proposals in the Civil Registration Bill currently being progressed through the Assembly will make it easier to add an unmarried father’s details to a birth record by allowing the father to register separately without the mother present, albeit with safeguards to ensure the mother is in agreement.

Lower Carbon Emission Vehicles

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what measures are being taken to use lower carbon emission vehicles as part of the government/ministerial fleet. (AQW 7352/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: When last tendering for the Ministerial fleet the Department set an emissions limit of 170 g(CO₂)/km to ensure that emissions were restricted whilst meeting the necessary performance requirements.

Additionally, two Toyota Prius hybrid vehicles are included in the Central Car Pool.

It is expected that the policy of purchasing vehicles that meet specific emissions targets will be continued in future procurements.

Civil Service

Mr D Kennedy asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) what is the situation with the Civil Service claim for equal back pay ; (ii) when he expects this matter to be resolved; and (iii) if the recent budget has had any impact on this situation. (AQW 7424/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: My officials are currently in discussions with NIPSA about the equal pay issue facing the Northern Ireland Civil Service in order to establish whether a framework can be agreed within which a negotiated settlement could be reached.

As the discussions with NIPSA are on-going and the equal pay claims lodged with the Industrial Tribunal are now the subject of legal processes, I am unable to provide any further specific details at present. The equal pay issues in the Civil Service are of a very significant scale and complexity and therefore it may yet take some time before I can confirm how they will be finally resolved.

The recent Budget has no impact on this situation.

Public Sector Investment

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the possible implications for Northern Ireland's Block Grant following the Budget projection that public sector investment will fall from 3.1 per cent of GDP this year to 1.3 per cent by 2013-14. (AQW 7562/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The Northern Ireland Executive Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) for the period 2011-12 to 2013-14 will only be confirmed by HM Treasury at the conclusion of the next UK-wide Spending Review.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Doctor Training

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what level of cooperation his Department has with universities on doctor training. (AQW 7237/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Mr M McGimpsey): Queen's University Belfast is the sole provider of undergraduate medical training in Northern Ireland. The Department provides significant investment in the training of medical students and has a range of formal mechanisms in place for both undergraduate and postgraduate training. These include strategic, accountability and management meetings. In relation to Higher Education Institutes throughout the UK, my Department meets the cost of student fees for 5th year students.

Downe Hospital New Coronary Care Unit

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the Downe Hospital will open the new coronary care unit. (AQW 7239/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The new Downe Hospital which is due to open on 28 June 2009 will include a 9-bed coronary care facility.

Paralateral Cyst Surgery

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people in the Strangford constituency are waiting for paralateral cyst surgery. (AQW 7240/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: It is assumed that this question relates to the number of people in the Strangford constituency that are waiting for paralateral cyst surgery.

The number of people in the Strangford constituency that are waiting for paralabral cyst surgery is not available.

Paralateral Cyst Surgery

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are waiting for paralateral cyst with paralateral tear surgery. (AQW 7242/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: It is assumed that this question relates to the number of people waiting for paralabral cyst with paralabral tear surgery.

Information on the number of people waiting for paralabral cyst with paralabral tear surgery is not available.

Renal Unit at Causeway Hospital

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to confirm the timescale for the confirmation and construction of the renal unit at Causeway Hospital. (AQW 7244/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Funding for this scheme has been identified within the 10 year Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (ISNI) period. My Department are working closely with the Northern Health and Social Care Trust to agree the timescale for delivery and production of the business case for the renal unit at Causeway Hospital. Only following approval of the business case can the timescale for construction be confirmed.

Child Protection

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many social workers in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust are trained in child protection. (AQW 7260/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust has advised that there are 576 (493.67 Whole-Time Equivalent) Social Workers employed in their Trust area. All of these Social Workers (and all Social Work students undertaking practice learning within the Trust) receive the Childcare Protection Awareness Programme as part of the Corporate Induction Programme. Additionally all Social workers will have received Child Protection training as part of their Social Work course. In addition to this basic Child Protection training, 444 Social Workers have received further Child Protection training relevant to their role as set out in the Safeguarding Training Framework.

Health Centre

Mr B McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the obligations on a GP based in a health centre to respond to an emergency road traffic accident and to a patient who has been seriously injured. (AQW 7263/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Health and Personal Social Services (General Medical Services (GMS) Contracts) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004, directs that, as part of essential services, a GP (GMS contractor) must provide primary medical services required during core hours for the immediately necessary treatment of any person to whom the contractor has been requested to provide treatment, owing to an accident or emergency at any place in his practice area. Outside core hours the Out of Hours Services provides essential services.

The definition of an emergency includes any medical emergency whether or not related to services provided under the contract.

Core Hours are 8.00 am-6.30pm, Monday to Friday with the exception of a public holiday and a local holiday agreed with the Health and Social Care Board.

Swine Flu

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what measures his Department has in place following the swine flu outbreak in Mexico and the US. (AQW 7278/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I refer the Member to the information that has been published on my Department's website: www.dhsspsni.gov.uk. This information is updated frequently.

Family Support Workers

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to his answer to AQW 6458/09, (i) why are only two of the ten family support workers in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust, on contract, considering the other eight have been requesting contracts for over three years; and (ii) why all family support workers do not get contracts at the start of their employment. (AQW 7284/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: As per the subsequent amendment to my answer to AQW 6458/09, there are in fact three family support workers in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust on contract.

The issues regarding contracts relate to the legacy Trust of Armagh and Dungannon and the process and management systems which were in place at the time. This is an issue which the Southern Trust fully acknowledges as an anomaly and is focused on addressing by ensuring all staff employed by the Trust are issued with contracts. As a consequence of the Review of Public Administration, it was not possible to progress this until the senior management structures were resolved and clarity obtained regarding the role and remit of each team and the various grades of staff. The Trust has been involved in this process with the Family Support Workers in the Armagh & Dungannon locality over the past 2 months. The ongoing consultation and engagement with the staff concerned and their union representatives is aimed at ensuring there is an equitable service spread across the Trust, and that staff are provided with formal contracts.

Adoption Applications

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many adoption applications are currently being processed (AQW 7290/09)

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

Termination

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if it is legal for a mother to terminate a pregnancy on the basis that her in vitro fertilised foetus has been diagnosed with Down's Syndrome. (AQW 7304/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Fetal abnormality is not, in itself, grounds for termination of pregnancy. In Northern Ireland, the only grounds for a lawful termination of pregnancy are where the continuance of the pregnancy threatens the life of the mother, or would adversely affect her physical or mental health.

A pregnancy established through in vitro fertilisation would be treated in the same way as a natural pregnancy.

Termination

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the legal position for General Practitioners with regards to referring mothers to abortion facilities in Great Britain for terminations because they could not be carried out legally in Northern Ireland. (AQW 7305/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Any health professional, including General Practitioners, may only refer women to abortion facilities in Great Britain for a termination of pregnancy where the woman meets the legal framework and there is a lack of capacity in Northern Ireland.

Under Article 4 of the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972 the Department has the duty to provide an integrated health service for Northern Ireland. However, that duty does not extend to referring people to places outside Northern Ireland to have procedures that would not be legal in Northern Ireland.

Abattoirs

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) what the hygiene practices and requirements are in abattoirs; and (ii) how often inspections are carried out. (AQW 7326/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:

- (i) Hygiene practices and requirements for abattoirs are laid down in EU Regulations and National Legislation. The legislation clearly places primary responsibility for food safety with the abattoir operator and a system of official controls is in place to ensure compliance with EU and National Legislation. Abattoir operators must have in place procedures based on hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) to ensure hygienic production and safety of their products.
- (ii) In abattoirs, official controls in the form of ante-mortem and post mortem inspection of carcasses and carcass parts are carried out on a daily basis. In addition, official verification of abattoir procedures is subject to audit at a risk based frequency.

E.Coli Cases

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many cases of E.Coli have occurred in hospitals, in the last three years, broken down by hospital. (AQW 7327/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information on the number of cases of E.Coli that have occurred in hospitals, in the last three years, broken down by hospital is not available.

Health and Social Care Trust Properties

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many times pest control experts have been called out to Health and Social Care Trust properties in (i) Lisburn; and (ii) Dromore, in each of the last three years. (AQW 7334/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: This information is not held centrally.

Adoption Law

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail what consideration he has given to introducing legislation in light of the decision in P and others (2008) UKHL 38. (AQW 7336/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My Department is engaged in an ongoing programme of reform in adoption, which includes plans to introduce new legislation to improve processes, services and the structures for service delivery. The implications of the decision in 'Re P and Others' will be considered in relation to any relevant provisions. As there are aspects of adoption law which impact on the responsibilities of other Departments, I intend to approach the Executive in the coming months on the proposed way ahead.

Health Service Bank

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) if any hospitals have borrowed money from the Health Service bank (ii) how much money was borrowed; and (iii) what interest rate was charged by the Health Service bank, in each of the last 3 years. (AQW 7342/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The NHS Bank was an arms length body of the Department of Health, Whitehall, which only operated in England. It no longer functions and did not lend funds to any hospital or Health and Social Care Trust in Northern Ireland.

Tuberculosis Vaccinations Programme

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the tuberculosis vaccinations programme. (AQW 7346/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) reviewed all available scientific and epidemiological data and recommended in 2005 that the national schools-based programme should be stopped. Instead, those at high risk are identified in a selective programme. Those now recommended to be offered BCG vaccination are:

- infants living in areas where the incidence of TB is 40 per 100,000 population or greater;
- infants and previously unvaccinated children whose parents or grandparents were born in a country with a TB incidence of 40 per 100,000 or higher;
- previously unvaccinated new immigrants under 16 years of age from high prevalence countries for TB, and
- people in jobs where there is high risk of contact with infected patients, animals or clinical materials e.g. health care workers, care home staff.

Respite Care Facilities

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what respite care facilities are available for adults with autism, in each of the Health and Social Care Board Areas. (AQW 7386/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Health and Social Care services are provided on the basis of individually assessed need and not on the basis of a particular disability. Whilst all Trusts may not have dedicated services specifically for people affected by autism spectrum disorder, they can and do accommodate many service users who are affected by autism. Health and Social Care Trusts also contract with voluntary organisations to provide respite to those affected by autism spectrum disorder.

Following the work of Lord Maginnis with the Independent Review of Autism Services and public consultation on the ASD Strategic Action Plan, the newly established Regional ASD Group, chaired by Dr Stephen Bergin, will oversee the implementation of the ASD Strategic Action Plan. This has been developed to identify, quantify and address any deficiencies in services to individuals of all ages affected by ASD.

Fragility Fractures

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, following the findings of the National Audit of the Organisation of Services for Falls and Bone Health of Older People, which were published by the Royal College of Physicians on 25th March, what steps he is taking to ensure that recurring fragility fractures are prevented. (AQW 7395/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: A report on 'The Prevention and Management of Fragility Fractures in Northern Ireland' will be finalised in the coming weeks. In developing the Report account has been taken of the findings of the National Audit of the Organisation of Services for Falls and Bone Health of Older People. The Report will make recommendations for further improving falls prevention and fracture services in Northern Ireland.

Diabetes Service Framework

Mrs C Hanna asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in relation to the increase in diabetes, (i) what plans he has to ensure early diagnosis, considering that 50% of people with a positive diagnosis have complications that could have been prevented; and (ii) if he would consider introducing a Diabetes Service Framework, to address this problem and bring Northern Ireland in line with England, Scotland and Wales.

(AQW 7417/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My Department has various strategies in place to address the key elements in preventing diabetes and in slowing down the onset of some of the complications which may arise from diabetes – good nutrition, exercise and smoking cessation.

A service framework for cardiovascular health and well-being will be launched within the next few weeks. The framework contains 3 standards relating to diabetes which will have a positive impact on the prompt diagnosis of the condition and on the treatment and management of people with diabetes to prevent the onset of complications. It is anticipated that further areas for service framework development will be taken forward next year. These will be selected from the remaining priority areas identified and evaluated by the Department. Diabetes is one of the priority areas for consideration.

Family Support Workers

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many children in East Antrim are receiving assistance from family support workers.

(AQW 7420/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: As at 6 May 2009, 44 children in East Antrim (includes the Council Districts of Larne, Carrickfergus and Newtownabbey) were receiving assistance from a family support worker.

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how often he meets with representatives of NICE in relation to new medication.

(AQW 7421/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My Department established links with NICE (the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence) from 1 July 2006. All guidance published by the Institute is reviewed locally for its applicability to Northern Ireland and, as appropriate, is endorsed by my Department for implementation in Northern Ireland.

Senior officials in my Department liaise with NICE on a continuous basis as part of this arrangement.

Facial Vascular Malformation

Mr T Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what consideration his Department has given to the business case for the funding of treatment for Facial Vascular Malformation.

(AQW 7497/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: It is assumed that this question refers to Facial Vascular Malformation. Vascular malformations are usually congenital and affect the vascular system including arteries, veins, capillaries and lymphatic channels.

A regional multi-disciplinary vascular anomalies clinic is held at least four or five times a year at the Royal Victoria Hospital (RVH) and is attended by health professionals from a range of medical disciplines, principally plastics and dermatology, with an interest in vascular cases. The clinic sees patients with all types of vascular anomalies including facial vascular malformation. Patients are referred to the RVH for radiology treatment and surgery and the Ulster Hospital for laser treatment and surgery.

The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust submitted a service development proposal in November 2008 for a sclerotherapy service at the RVH Imaging Centre. Sclerotherapy is an interventional radiology procedure less

invasive than surgery which is used in the treatment of facial vascular malformation. The proposal is currently being considered by the Health and Social Care Board.

Medical Professionals

Mr T Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many medical professionals are employed by Health and Social Care Trusts on (i) national contracts; and (ii) Health and Social Care Trust only contracts. (AQW 7501/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Trusts have all advised that all of their Medical staff are employed on National Contracts. As at 31st March, there was a total of 3,607 (3,381.3 Whole-Time Equivalent) Medics employed by Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland.

Grades of Doctors

Mr T Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the different grades of doctors currently employed, broken down by Health and Social Care Trusts. (AQW 7547/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is given in the table below.

TABLE 1: MEDICAL STAFF EMPLOYED BY GRADE & HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE TRUST AS AT MARCH 2009 (HEADCOUNT).

Grade	Belfast	Northern	South Eastern	Southern	Western	Total
Consultant	568	183	177	173	184	1,285
Associate Specialist	30	23	-	15	16	89
Staff Grade	106	36	46	69	47	304
Specialty / Specialist Registrar	618	160	166	151	141	1,236
Foundation/ Senior House Officer	202	89	73	66	65	495
General / Hospital Practitioner	42	14	38	60	27	181
Medical Officer / Other	-	8	-	-	-	17
Total	1,567	513	506	536	485	3,607

Source: Human Resource Management System

Notes:

1. Figures include all grades of Medical Staff and exclude Dental Staff.
2. Figures include Medical Staff employed within Trusts and exclude Medical Staff employed within Board Headquarters / Regional Services
3. “-“ represents a headcount between 1 and 5 inclusive in order to avoid issues of personal disclosure.

TABLE 2: MEDICAL STAFF EMPLOYED BY GRADE & HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE TRUST AS AT MARCH 2009 (WHOLE-TIME EQUIVALENT).

Grade	Belfast	Northern	South Eastern	Southern	Western	Total
Consultant	540.8	170.0	168.0	166.0	178.5	1,223.3
Associate Specialist	24.6	21.0	-	13.9	13.3	76.6

Grade	Belfast	Northern	South Eastern	Southern	Western	Total
Staff Grade	79.6	33.3	41.2	61.1	42.4	257.5
Specialty / Specialist Registrar	610.5	159.5	164.0	149.7	139.7	1,223.4
Foundation/ Senior House Officer	200.9	88.8	73.0	65.5	65.0	493.2
General / Hospital Practitioner	27.3	4.8	9.9	48.4	8.0	98.3
Medical Officer / Other	-	3.2	-	-	-	9.0
Total	1,483.8	480.7	460.8	506.0	450.0	3,381.3

Source: Human Resource Management System

Notes:

1. Figures include all grades of Medical Staff and exclude Dental Staff.
2. Figures include Medical Staff employed within Trusts and exclude Medical Staff employed within Board Headquarters / Regional Services
3. “-“ represents a headcount between 1 and 5 inclusive in order to avoid issues of personal disclosure.

Swine Flu

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if there is a policy that GPs do not see patients who have been tested for Swine Flu for a month and, if so, why this is the case. (AQW 7632/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: There is no policy to preclude a GP from seeing or treating within a month a patient who has been tested for swine flu. All GPs have a duty of care to their patients irrespective of what illness they have. When attending patients with any infectious disease, all healthcare staff should follow relevant infection control guidance.

At this stage, any patients who think they may have swine influenza are encouraged to telephone their GP in the first instance to prevent spread of the virus. An assessment will then be carried out if required.

Air Ambulance Service: Omagh

Mr B McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to clarify his Department's position on the location of air ambulance provision in Omagh. (AQO 2657/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I have been advised that there has been no formal request from any voluntary or private sector organisation to make use of any healthcare facility in Omagh as a permanent base for an air ambulance service.

Our priority must be to invest in modernising ground ambulance services to enable the Ambulance Service to improve its response to emergency calls. That is why I am investing nearly £100 million over the next ten years to enable the Ambulance Service to modernise its fleet and equipment on a regular basis. This includes £17.4 million over the current CSR period which will purchase 150 new vehicles. The first of these vehicles have already arrived; 26 A&E ambulances, 25 Patient Care Service vehicles and 13 rapid response vehicles. This investment will make a difference to patients where it matters on the ground.

Smoking

Mr D Ford asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what further action he will take to reduce smoking levels. (AQO 2658/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Further action I intend to take to reduce smoking levels includes banning the display of tobacco products at point of sale and introducing controls on the sale of

tobacco from vending machines. I also intend to bring forward proposals which will impose sanctions on retailers who continue to flout the law on underage tobacco sales. The continued use of public information campaigns and the further development of smoking cessation services will also be key in helping to reduce the appeal and uptake of smoking.

Resettlement Programme

Mrs C Hanna asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the budget for the Resettlement Programme. (AQO 2659/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The additional resources of £54m (£27 recurrent) for mental health services and £33m (£17m recurrent) for learning disability services which I secured under the Comprehensive Spending Review for the period 2008-2011 are being used to provide a range of additional services for people with a mental health and a learning disability.

A proportion of those additional resources have been directed towards the resettlement of long stay patients from mental health and learning disability hospitals during the CSR period 2008-2011.

Fire and Rescue Service: Attacks

Mr B Armstrong asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of attacks on Fire Service personnel and property. (AQO 2660/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The number of attacks on Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service personnel and its appliances has shown a marked reduction over recent years – from 86 in 2003 to 35 reported in 2008. However, any attack on our front line emergency services is one too many. Injuries to fire and rescue personnel are usually incidental to attacks on their vehicles responding to a callout. Such attacks are inexcusable, putting at unnecessary risk both the lives of highly skilled personnel and essential fire fighting equipment with a potentially devastating impact on fire fighting and rescue capabilities. In the worst case, that could mean the death of a member of the public if an appliance is held back by a mindless attack on fire fighters or their vehicles.

Enniskillen Hospital

Mr T Gallagher asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the funding crisis for the new hospital in Enniskillen. (AQO 2661/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I am assuming the funding crisis you refer to is the withdrawal of HSBC from the PFI market. The procurement process for the new South West Acute Hospital in Enniskillen is nearing financial close. The successful tenderer, the Northern Ireland Health Group, has put in place the necessary funding arrangements and all of the stakeholders in this project are completing final checks. Due to the complexities associated with the PFI process and scale of the project, it is crucial that this is completed thoroughly and accurately.

Cardiac Screening

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans he has to implement the cardiac screening objectives proposed by Cardiac Risk in the Young. (AQO 2662/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: In 2008 the UK National Screening Committee reviewed the research evidence on screening for Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy, the main cause of sudden cardiac death. In December 2008 they advised the four UK Health Departments that screening should not be offered, and that pre-participation screening of athletes for Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy or other causes of sudden cardiac death should not be instituted at present.

In view of the advice provided by the UK National Screening Committee, my Department has no plans to implement screening in Northern Ireland.

Royal Victoria Hospital: Fertility Services

Mr A Attwood asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps are being taken to address the staff shortage at the Fertility Services Department in the Royal Victoria Hospital. (AQO 2663/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The recent staff shortage has related specifically to embryologists and has been part of a general national shortage in this area. Steps have been taken to address the situation and two embryologists are due to take up post soon, filling all current vacancies. The Centre has also advertised a further post which will increase its capacity. The shortage, while temporarily restricting capacity at the Centre, has had no impact on publicly funded fertility work.

Hospitals: Cleanliness

Ms J McCann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if any staff have been reprimanded over the level of cleanliness in hospitals. (AQO 2664/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information on the number of staff reprimanded is not recorded by Health and Social Care organisations. However, in answer to AQW 6872/2009 I reported that one member of staff has been disciplined for failing to follow hygiene procedures since the new HSC Trusts were established in April 2007.

Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drugs

Mrs M Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if an assessment has been made by his Department on the level of misuse of prescription and over-the-counter drugs. (AQO 2665/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Department is aware of the growing concern about the misuse of "prescription drugs", and there is a range of survey work undertaken by the Department to uncover the level of use and misuse of prescription medication in Northern Ireland.

Prevalence rates on the use of (though not misuse of or addiction to) sedatives and tranquilisers and anti-depressants in Northern Ireland were published in Bulletin 6 of the 2006/2007 Drug Prevalence Survey. The relevant figures are set out in the table below:

	Anti-Depressants	Sedatives and Tranquillisers	Other Opiates
Lifetime use	21%	20%	20%
Last year use	9%	9%	8%
Last Month use	8%	7%	5%

Further details from the Survey can be found at:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/drug_prevalence_survey_2006-07__bulletin_6.pdf

In addition, the Drug Misuse Database holds information on people presenting to treatment services with problem drug misuse. The annual statistical bulletin provides an analysis of the main drug of misuse of people presenting for treatment. Some of these drugs such as benzodiazepines, codeine and paracetamol, are prescribed medication. According to the most recent information (published in October 2008) benzodiazepines were the second most commonly reported main drug of misuse (reported by 31% of individuals), codeine & paracetamol were reported as the main drug of misuse by just 2%. Further information can be found at:

http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/dmd_bulletin_2007-08.pdf

With both sets of data it is not possible to establish if the drugs have been obtained on prescription by an individual or through another source.

The Department is beginning the process to review the ongoing implementation of the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs (NSD). As part of this work the Department will consider all relevant information, seek further research where necessary, to inform the ongoing development process, and decide if further action is required on specific issues, such as the misuse of prescription drugs.

Childcare

Mrs N Long asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action has been taken by his Department to clarify departmental responsibility for school age childcare. (AQO 2666/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Policy responsibility for Early Years including all childcare and its associated staff resources transferred from my Department to the Department of Education in November 2006, with DHSSPS remaining responsible for regulation and inspection of childcare.

Childcare is an issue which cuts across the remit of a number of departments. My Department is a member of the cross-departmental sub group on Poverty, led by OFMDFM, which has been asked to examine childcare provision along with getting an agreed cross-departmental policy in relation to childcare.

My Department is also working with the Department of Education through a joint sub committee on Childcare Provision and Early Years to clarify and establish clear lines of policy responsibility and financial accountability in relation to childcare provision and Early Years between DE and DHSSPS.

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many representations he has made to his Department in his capacity as an MLA, since taking up office. (AQO 2667/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: This information is not held centrally.

Lagan Valley Hospital

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, further to his decision on the midwifery led unit in the Lagan Valley Hospital, what assurances he can give that all other existing services will be maintained, including the numbers and provision of ambulance vehicles at the Lagan Valley ambulance station. (AQO 2668/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The provision of services at Lagan Valley Hospital and Lisburn Ambulance Station are matters for the South Eastern HSC Trust and Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Trust respectively. The South Eastern Trust and Northern Ireland Ambulance Service Trust have recently concluded public consultations on their proposals for CSR efficiency savings. I am currently considering the Trusts' final proposals and I will be announcing my decisions with respect to the Trusts' recommendations in due course.

I can assure you of my commitment to developing Lagan Valley Hospital as a local hospital and a specialist centre for elective surgery. Last year I announced significant capital investment in Lagan Valley Hospital, including £3.2 million for two new operating theatres. In the longer term there will be a major capital project on the site to provide a new local hospital/elective centre and a co-located new health and care centre for Lisburn, at an estimated cost of £62 million.

Generic Medicines

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the generic medicines tendering process. (AQO 2669/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The pharmaceutical clinical effectiveness programme (PCEP) has promoted a rationalised and transparent approach to the selection of pharmaceutical products from those suppliers who can provide the highest standard of evidence for the quality, safety and cost-effectiveness of their products.

Regional contracts have been established with selected suppliers identified through EU tendering mechanisms for influenza vaccinations, wound care products and hospital generic medicines. These arrangements have delivered demonstrable improvements in quality and risk management of services in addition to delivering significant cash efficiencies for reinvestment in HSC.

You will also be aware that over the CSR 2008-11 period, I have set challenging targets to improve generic dispensing rates in order to achieve greater convergence with equivalent generic dispensing rates across the rest of the UK. With these objectives in mind, I have been presented with an opportunity to purchase generic medicines at a NI level and therefore am interested that my Department pursues that approach.

Although policy in respect of a generic medicines tender has yet to be determined, I have noted the impact on efficiencies of implementing the tender in addition to the opportunities for community pharmacy. I am therefore undertaking discussions with the Pharmaceutical Contractors Committee before reaching a decision relative to the centralised purchase of generic medicines.

Budget 2009-2010

Mr D O'Loan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the impact of the 22 April budget on his Department. (AQO 2670/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I cannot give any assessment of the impact of the 22 April Budget for my Department as the Executive has yet to consider its implications.

DEPARTMENT FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Cullybackey Railway Halt.

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development if there are any plans for the semi-derelict property at Cullybackey railway halt. (AQW 1854/09)

Minister for Regional Development (Mr C Murphy): Northern Ireland Holding Company sold the house and grounds and half the station building in 1973 and the remainder of the property in 1997. They have no plans at present to re-acquire it.

Northern Ireland Water

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) to explain why Northern Ireland Water land at Conlig was sold; and (ii) if the jobs at this location will be retained. (AQW 1931/09)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that no land has yet been sold at Conlig but following the closure of the depot the property and associated lands will be disposed of in accordance with NIW's disposal policy and legislative and regulatory requirements. The introduction of new technology and working practices and the ability to work from other locations will deliver significant savings. This will impact on NIW's staffing levels and accommodation needs and a number of depots will be closed, including Conlig. Manpower reductions will be spread across the North. Following closure of the depot there will be no jobs retained at Conlig and staff will provide water and sewerage services to the Conlig area from other NIW offices and works to ensure standards of service are maintained.

Drainage Area Study

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development when the Drainage Area Study covering Comber will be published. (AQW 1948/09)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that a Drainage Area Study is currently underway in the Comber and Newtownards areas which will assess the adequacy of the sewerage system and identify parts of the system which need to be upgraded. The Study is scheduled for completion by January 2009.

Any upgrading work identified by the report will be implemented subject to the availability of funding and priority within Northern Ireland Water's capital investment programme.

Northern Ireland Water

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline Northern Ireland Water's policy for informing people if their water supply is going to be temporarily switched off; and if the policy applies in all instances. (AQW 1974/09)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that its policy is to give at least 48 hours advance written notification for a planned interruption to supply lasting for more than four hours. This notification also includes a commitment from NIW to restore supplies by the time specified within the notice. For unplanned interruptions, NIW aims to restore supplies as soon as possible. If an interruption is anticipated to last for longer than 24 hours, NIW will provide an alternative water supply to customers. NIW aims to apply this policy in all instances where it is practicable.

NIW maintains a register of customers who have informed the company that they have specific medical conditions and operates a priority service for ensuring that an alternative water supply is available to these customers in the event of any interruption to the public water supply.

Northern Ireland Water

Mr R Beggs asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to his answers to AQWs 104/09 and 1048/09, to itemise the estimated costs of the current Northern Ireland Water proposals in terms of the supply and installation of (i) pipeline to carry flows from Whitehead to Ballycarry and then the coast; (ii) pumping equipment; (iii) modifications to treatment works at Ballycarry; and (iv) the sea outfall pipe at Cloughfin Bay. (AQW 2370/09)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the total estimated cost associated with the current proposal for providing appropriate treatment of wastewater from Whitehead, Ballycarry and Ballystrudder is £10.08 million. A breakdown of the estimated cost into the categories requested is shown below.

No.	Supply And Installation Of	Estimated Cost (£Million)
(i)	Pipeline from Whitehead to Ballycarry then to the coast	3.83
(ii)	Pumping equipment (including screening requirements)	2.83
(iii)	Ballycarry Wastewater Treatment Works - no modifications required	NIL
(iv)	Sea outfall pipe at Cloughfin Bay	3.42

Northern Ireland Water

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail how much Northern Ireland Water pays Enterprise Ltd. to undertake survey and installation work. (AQW 2390/09)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that, following a full procurement process, it awarded Enterprise Ltd a contract in January 2007 to undertake water meter surveys and installation. Since then, around 40,000 surveys have been completed and 16,000 meters installed at a cost of £2.4 million.

Speed of Buses

Mr W Clarke asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the potential to reduce the speed of buses around (i) Belfast City Hall; and (ii) Royal Avenue, Belfast. (AQW 2408/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's transport proposals for Belfast City Centre are set out in the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan 2015. The Plan proposes a reorganisation of the road network within the city centre, which in turn, will facilitate the reduction of traffic and encourage walking, cycling and increased use of public transport.

The design aspiration for the streets in the main retail and commercial areas of Belfast City Centre, such as Donegall Place and Royal Avenue, is for a high level of priority for pedestrians. However, these streets are used for a number of different purposes, including access for servicing and for public transport; therefore conflict can arise between the needs of transport and the urban environment.

I am advised by Translink, who currently operate the bus service through the city centre, that bus speed has not been an issue in the city centre. This is due to various factors, such as, traffic congestion, streetscape, vehicle parking, traffic calming measures, traffic lights and pedestrian crossings. In addition the current speed restrictions, both the statutory 30mph limit and those set out in Translink Company policy, for example, 15 mph through the subject area, ultimately contribute to reducing bus speeds.

Translink have also advised that through their ongoing monitoring process, they have a significant staff presence on the ground, with Bus Inspectors and mobile patrols monitoring their services.

My Department's Roads Service receives details of all road traffic collisions that involve personal injury from the PSNI. Officials use this information to identify locations where engineering measures might be used to reduce the likelihood of further incidents. I am aware that there have been a number of such incidents recently within Belfast City Centre, although full details of the circumstances surrounding them are not yet known. When these details become available, my officials will review them to see what, if any, further measures might be appropriate to improve safety for all road users in these areas.

Ballynagross Wastewater Pumping Station

Mr W Clarke asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to his answer to AQW 1484/09, to investigate why Ballynagross Wastewater Pumping Station is producing malodours affecting the wellbeing of residents in the Ardmeen Green area of Downpatrick. (AQW 3086/09)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the chemical dosing regime introduced in April 2008 at Ballynagross Wastewater Pumping Station has proven effective in reducing malodours in the Ardmeen Green area of Downpatrick. A recent process fault at the Pumping Station caused the dosing pumps to shut down and the malodours recurred, however, the fault has been rectified and Northern Ireland Water is satisfied that the problem is now resolved.

Compensation Claims

Mr B Armstrong asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) how many compensation claims have been received by his Department; and (ii) how much money has been paid out to the owners of vehicles damaged by potholes in the Mid-Ulster constituency, in each of the last five years. (AQW 7155/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Unfortunately, my Department's Central Claims Unit (CCU) does not hold the information in the format requested. However, CCU does maintain a record of compensation claims details for each Roads Service Section Office. The area of the Mid-Ulster constituency includes all of the Cookstown and Magherafelt Section Offices plus some of the Dungannon Section Office area. The following figures show the number of compensation claims received and the amounts of compensation paid in respect to damage to motor vehicles caused by potholes in the Cookstown, Magherafelt and Dungannon Section Office areas by the Central Claims Unit for each of the last five financial years. Disaggregation of the Dungannon Section Office figures to show only those claims within the Mid-Ulster constituency could only be extracted at disproportionate cost.

	No. of Claims Received	Compensation Paid
2008/2009		
Cookstown Section Office	106	£10,633.06
Magherafelt Section Office	24	£1,027.00
Dungannon Section Office	106	£6,849.42
Total	236	£18,509.48

	No. of Claims Received	Compensation Paid
2007/2008		
Cookstown Section Office	55	£4,501.47
Magherafelt Section Office	14	£1,785.40
Dungannon Section Office	58	£3,771.05
Total	127	£10,057.92
2006/2007		
Cookstown Section Office	51	£2,095.19
Magherafelt Section Office	22	£563.63
Dungannon Section Office	64	£3,492.83
Total	137	£6,151.65
2005/2006		
Cookstown Section Office	13	£1,920.00
Magherafelt Section Office	8	£5,553.79
Dungannon Section Office	25	£1,618.89
Total	46	£9,092.68
2004/2005		
Cookstown Section Office	23	£1,112.32
Magherafelt Section Office	20	£1,421.62
Dungannon Section Office	30	£2,104.58
Total	73	£4,638.52

Anti-Social Behaviour on Trains

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development how many convictions for anti-social behaviour on trains have been made using evidence from CCTV camera footage. (AQW 7210/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink has informed me that over the last four years, there have been three cases involving CCTV evidence where convictions were secured for offences on trains.

Anti-Social Behaviour on Trains

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development what action has Translink taken against persistent offenders such as those who are abusive and/or violent to other passengers or who write graffiti on trains. (AQW 7211/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink have informed me that it seeks the conviction of persistent criminal offenders and will make its records available during the judicial process. All appropriate options are considered to address the issue. In some cases Translink will consider a court injunction against an individual. This action has been taken against two individuals who are now banned completely from NIR property and trains.

CCTV Cameras on Trains

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development how many trains have CCTV cameras on board.
(AQW 7212/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink have informed me that all Class 3000 trains are fitted with CCTV.

CCTV Cameras on Trains

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development if CCTV cameras will be rolled out in every train.
(AQW 7213/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink have informed me that the replacement of Class 450, Class 80 and Gatwick with Class 4000 (New Trains Two project) will lead to full CCTV coverage on these trains.

CCTV Cameras at Train Stations

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development how many train stations on the network have operating CCTV cameras.
(AQW 7214/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink have informed me that of NI Railways' 54 stations/halts, 18 have CCTV systems installed (see below). Out of these 18 locations, 9 are equipped with digital recording equipment whilst the remaining 9 locations have less modern VCR systems.

- Antrim
- Ballymena
- Ballymoney
- Bangor
- Botanic
- Carrickfergus
- Central
- Coleraine
- Greenisland
- Great Victoria Street
- Lisburn
- Lurgan
- Londonderry
- Moira
- Newry
- Portadown
- Whitehead
- Yorkgate

Footpath and Resurfacing Projects

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the footpath and resurfacing projects planned for the Upper Bann constituency in the next 12 months.
(AQW 7251/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it does not draft work programmes on a constituency basis, instead, they are produced by Council area.

Roads Service's budget allocation for individual Council areas is currently being finalised, after which the proposed work programmes can be confirmed. Details of the work programmes are presented to the respective Councils in the spring of each year and are dependant on the amount of funding available.

I understand that the Upper Bann constituency covers regions from both Banbridge and Craigavon Council areas. When the Council Reports, containing the works programmes, for these areas are finalised, they 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 contact in relation to this request is Mr Bertie Ellison, Acting Divisional Roads Manager, Southern Division, at Marlborough House, Central Way, Craigavon, BT64 1AD (Tel. 028 3832 0250).

Train Service Disruption

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister for Regional Development in relation to train service disruption in the past year, caused by (i) civil disturbance; (ii) riotous assembly; and (iii) vandalism, in the Upper Bann constituency, to detail; (a) how many times; (b) dates and duration of rail closure; and (c) costs incurred by Translink.

(AQW 7253/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink have provided the following information.

The following schedules list individual incidents of security alerts and vandalism/riotous assembly.

Security alerts; 16 events which resulted in 18 services cancelled and 59 services operated by bus substitution.

Vandalism/riotous assembly; 12 events which resulted in 3 service cancellations and 32 services operated by bus substitution.

It was not possible to determine the costs of incidents, direct and indirect, within the time available and these are still being compiled.

Security alerts				
Date	Area	Duration	Services operated by Bus Substitution	Services Cancelled
29/04/08	Lurgan	3hrs	0	0
21/07/08	Lurgan - Moira	3hrs 30min	8	5
22/07/08	Lurgan - Moira	2hrs	4	0
23/07/08	Lurgan - Moira	30min	5	5
03/08/08	Lisburn – Portadown	1hr	0	1
07/08/08	Lisburn – Portadown	1hr	0	1
22/08/08	Lurgan	2hrs	2	1
23/08/08	Lisburn - Portadown	5hrs	14	0
20/10/08	Lurgan	2hr 45min	6	2
09/11/08	Lurgan	3hrs	2	0
22/02/09	Lurgan	30min	0	0
08/03/09	Lurgan	45min	0	2
24/03/09	Lurgan	2hrs	3	0
25/03/09	Lurgan	1hr	1	0
27/03/09	Lurgan	4hrs	9	0
28/03/09	Lurgan	3hrs	5	1

Vandalism and Riotous Assembly Events				
Date	Location/Reason	Service delays	Services operated by Bus Substitution	Services Cancelled
15/04/08	Lurgan suspicious activity	1hr 05min	0	0
06/06/08	Lisburn bridge strike	15min	0	0
16/06/08	Knockmore line side fire	1hr 50min	0	0
28/10/08	Damhead Automatic Half Barrier debris on line	18min	0	0
02/11/08	Lurgan Lake Street Crossing fire	67min	0	0
11/11/08	Lurgan area trespass	1hr 43min	0	0
02/01/09	Lurgan unruly passenger	10min	0	0
06/02/09	Lurgan area trespass	1hr 28min	0	0
12/02/09	Lurgan Bells Row Crossing fire	32min	1	0
14/03/09	Lurgan Civil unrest	6hrs	26	1
15/03/09	Lurgan Civil unrest	3hrs	4	0
25/03/09	Lurgan Bells Row Crossing fire	2hrs	1	2

Translink

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the impact of Translink's price increases on the Bangor to Belfast train and bus routes. (AQW 7256/09)

Minister for Regional Development: The average fares increases are 2% for bus travel and 3% for rail.

Under Translink's proposals, cash fares would be increased, but most multi journey ticket prices would remain at present levels. This would provide positive benefits for regular public transport users on the Bangor route; it aims to encourage the use of pre-paid tickets, the use of which reduces boarding times and keeps buses running on schedule.

Translink

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development if and when the Department approved the recently announced price rises by Translink. (AQW 7257/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My role, and that of my officials, is to consider and approve the assumptions underpinning the cost and revenue changes included in the Translink Corporate Plan for each of Metro, Ulsterbus and Northern Ireland Railways.

Changes in fares is obviously an important element of this process and for 2009/10 my intention was to keep fares increases to a minimum. Against all the other changes in cost and revenue I was aware of plans for average bus fares to increase by 2% and average rail fares to increase by 3%.

As a result of my intervention the final package from Translink involved lower fare increases than previously proposed and at the same time kept job losses to a minimum. This was achieved by ensuring that Translink implement an efficiency programme which focused on the level of overheads in Translink and bus services which were poorly utilized and where alternatives were provided.

I approved the Translink Corporate Plan on the 18 March 2009 which included these assumptions on average fares increases.

It is then the role of Translink, as the bus and rail operator, to decide how individual fares will change within these average fares increase parameters. It is not my role to approve fare changes for individual services or ticket types, however, Translink do inform me and my Department of these changes before announcing them. I expect Translink to consult with the Consumer Council in drawing up these detailed fare measures.

Translink

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what consultation took place between his Department and Translink, before Translink announced price increases. (AQW 7259/09)

Minister for Regional Development: The role of my Department was to consider and challenge the assumptions underpinning the cost and revenue changes included in the Translink Corporate Plan for each of Metro, Ulsterbus and Northern Ireland Railways for 2009/10.

As a result of my intervention the final package from Translink involved lower fare increases than previously proposed and at the same time kept job losses to a minimum. This was achieved by ensuring that Translink implement an efficiency programme which focused on the level of overheads in Translink and bus services which were poorly utilized and where alternatives were provided.

Changes in fares is obviously an important element of this process and the Translink plans shared with DRD envisaged average bus fares increase by 2% and average rail fares increase by 3%.

It is the role of Translink, as the bus and rail operator, to decide how individual fares would change within these average fares increase parameters. It is not my role to approve the fare change for individual services or ticket types; however, Translink do inform me and my Department of these changes before announcing them.

Anti-Social Behavior on Trains

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development what steps have been taken to tackle anti-social behavior on trains on the Larne line. (AQW 7277/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink have informed me that they encountered problems relating to anti-social behaviour on Larne line services in October 2008. At that time Translink introduced the following measures:

- Code of Conduct leaflets and posters aimed at school children were developed and distributed on Larne line trains;
- PSNI officers (100+) were trained in railway bye-laws;
- Local MLAs, Councillors and community representatives were approached in relation to anti-social behaviour in both Whitehead and Greenisland;
- Three private security operations were put in place on the Larne line. Similarly, following a request from railway management, PSNI presence on the line was given a high profile, with 3 separate operations conducted. Local representatives participated in some of these special operations;
- Railway inspectors were on duty most weekends on Larne line trains;
- CAF trains with on-board CCTV were allocated to late night shifts;
- Counselling was offered to some members of staff who suffered verbal abuse whilst performing their duties; and
- Translink's Press Office released statements to local newspapers highlighting the problem and warning of the possibility of service cuts, should such attacks continue.

Since then there has been an ongoing number of incidents on the Larne line, however at a lower frequency than that experienced in 2008. Translink continue to mount special operations with PSNI as were conducted in 2008.

Ballymena to Coleraine Track Relay

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) what is the progress on the Ballymena to Coleraine track relay; and (ii) if it is on schedule. (AQW 7281/09)

Minister for Regional Development: The works on the track between Coleraine and Ballymena are progressing well. The line is currently closed and bus substitution is in operation. It is planned to re-open the line on Monday 29 June 2009, as scheduled, when full services will be resumed. The rest of the work required to finish the project is still on course to be completed by the middle of 2010.

Translink

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development if Translink has indicated how many jobs will be lost through (i) voluntary redundancy; (ii) compulsory redundancy; and (iii) natural wastage in Northern Ireland Railways. (AQW 7282/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink have indicated that they expect that 25 jobs will be lost from Northern Ireland Railways. Translink aim to achieve all these reductions through voluntary redundancy or natural wastage but this process is not complete as yet. At this stage the option of compulsory redundancies is not being considered.

M1 Citybound Bus Lane

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister for Regional Development why the M1 citybound bus lane does not extend to junction 6 or 7; and if plans exist to extend it. (AQW 7321/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service initially provided a bus lane on the M1, in August 2006, as a measure to facilitate construction of the M1/Westlink roadworks. The start of the bus lane, at Ballyskeagh Bridge, allows buses to bypass traffic queuing back from the Black's Road junction during peak times. Whilst, traffic can queue back beyond Ballyskeagh Bridge, the length of the existing bus way is considered to be appropriate.

There are no plans, at present, to extend the M1 bus lane.

Traffic Calming Schemes

Mr S Moutray asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to his answer to AQW 6886/09, to detail the (i) traffic calming schemes; and (ii) school travel and safety projects proposed for the Upper Bann area, in the next twelve months. (AQW 7323/09)

Minister for Regional Development: As the Member is aware the Upper Bann Constituency covers areas from both Craigavon and Banbridge Councils.

In relation to the 2009/10 financial year, the tables below provide details of my Department's Roads Service programme for traffic calming schemes and school safety projects, in the Banbridge and Craigavon Council areas. However, scheme delivery is dependant on community support, the necessary resources being available and the successful completion of the required statutory procedures.

Traffic Calming Schemes - Banbridge Council Area	
Location	Possible Measures
Dromore Street, Banbridge	Traffic islands, sheltered parking
Huntly Road	Mini-roundabout, speed cushions

Traffic Calming Schemes - Banbridge Council Area	
Location	Possible Measures
Ballygowan Road	Traffic islands, gateway feature
Seapatrick Rd, Seapatrick	Speed cushions, gateway feature
Newry Street, Rathfriland	Speed cushions, gateway feature

Traffic Calming Schemes - Craigavon Council Area	
Location	Possible Measures
North Circular Road, Lurgan	Speed cushions
Ballymoney Road, Aghacommon	Speed cushions
Mill Hill, Waringstown	Speed cushions, gateway feature
Lower Toberhewny Lane, Lurgan	Speed ramps

School Safety Projects - Banbridge Council Area	
Location	Measures
Banbridge Academy	Flashing school warning signs and road markings
St Matthew's, Leitrim	Flashing school warning signs and road markings

School Safety Projects - Craigavon Council Area	
Location	Measures
Portadown Integrated Primary School	Flashing school warning signs and road markings
Eglis Primary School	Flashing school warning signs and road markings

Opening of the M2

Mr T Burns asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to his answer to AQW 5492/09, when the official opening ceremony of the M2 will take place. (AQW 7338/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the official opening ceremony for the M2 Improvements Scheme is scheduled to take place on 9 June 2009.

However, as I announced on 7 May 2009, the works were sufficiently completed to allow traffic to use three lanes in each direction between Sandyknowes and Greencastle junctions, from Saturday 9 May 2009.

Some minor road works remain to be completed, which may require closures of the hard shoulder. The overall M2 Improvements scheme is currently on target to be completed later this month, some 3 months ahead of the original programme.

Roads Service and Northern Ireland Water

Mr T Burns asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the work that will be carried out by Roads Service and NI Water, in the South Antrim constituency, in May 2009. (AQW 7339/09)

Minister for Regional Development: As I announced on 7 May 2009, the M2 Improvement Scheme works were sufficiently completed to allow traffic to use three lanes in each direction between Sandyknowes and Greencastle junctions, from Saturday 9 May 2009.

Some minor road works remain to be completed, which may require closures of the hard shoulder. The overall M2 Improvements scheme is currently on target to be completed later this month, some 3 months ahead of the original programme.

In addition to the ongoing M2 Improvements Scheme, the following work will be undertaken in the South Antrim Constituency during May 2009:

- environmental improvement scheme at The Square, Ballyclare;
- carriageway resurfacing on the A57 Templepatrick Road, Ballyclare;
- storm sewer and new footway construction at Park Road, Mallusk;
- provision of central hatching and right turning pockets on the Antrim Road, near Chimney Corner Hotel;
- extension of footway at Whelans Park, Randalstown;
- improvement work on footway at Ardmore Road / Diamond Road junction; and
- surface dressing works at some 25 locations covering approximately 112,000 square metres in Antrim Borough Council area.

Roads Service will also carry out routine maintenance work on roads in the South Antrim constituency during May 2009.

Northern Ireland Water has advised of the following work to be carried out in the South Antrim Constituency during May 2009:

- replacement watermain - Birchill Road, Antrim;
- reservoir Rehabilitation Programme 3 – various locations within South Antrim Constituency;
- service reservoir, enhanced security and telemetry work at divisional sites - Newtownabbey and Antrim;
- replacement of joints - Hyde Park Service Reservoir;
- new and replacement Watermains - Enkalon Industrial Estate, Antrim;
- foul sewer upgrade - Aldergrove Sewerage Scheme, Antrim Road;
- installation of Storm Tank - Roughfort Wastewater Treatment Works;
- upgrading of existing works - Milltown Waste Water Treatment Works, Antrim;
- construction of Pumping Stations at Masserene, Antrim and Randalstown;
- laying of sewers - Main Street and New Street Randalstown; and
- ongoing investigation work, consisting of bore holes, trial pits and slit trenches – no road closures are planned - Whitehead, Ballystrudder and Ballycarry.

This work is in addition to the day-to-day maintenance and repair required to the water and sewerage network.

Out-of-Sewer Flooding

Mrs N Long asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) what investigations have been undertaken; and (ii) what has been the outcome of those investigations, into the underlying causes of repeated out-of-sewer flooding at Eastleigh Dale, BT4. (AQW 7376/09)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the flooding that affected Eastleigh Dale in June 2007 and August 2008 was caused by extreme levels of rainfall which overwhelmed the drainage system in parts of the North. The flooding was compounded by rainfall causing surcharging of rivers and watercourses to which the drainage would normally discharge. It was widely acknowledged that no sewerage system could have coped with the intensity of the rainfall.

The ongoing Drainage Area Study of the East Belfast sewer network will assess the adequacy of the sewerage system in the area and identify any parts that need to be upgraded. The Study is expected to be completed in late 2009 after which a Drainage Area Plan (DAP) incorporating any improvements recommended by the Study, will be developed. Completion will take a further 6-9 months and the planned improvement works will subsequently be included in NIW's capital works programme. Implementation of proposals within the plan will be dependent on available funding.

Pending the outcome of the DAP, NIW will continue to monitor and maintain the public sewer network and take all practicable steps to reduce the risk of future flooding. Regrettably, whatever measures are implemented, it will not be possible to guarantee that flooding caused by exceptional weather conditions such as occurred in June 2007 and August 2008 will not recur.

Out-of-Sewer Flooding

Mrs N Long asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) if any improvement schemes are currently being developed; and (ii) to detail the prospective time-table for the implementation of any such schemes, to address the causes of repeated out-of-sewer flooding at Eastleigh Dale, BT4. (AQW 7377/09)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the flooding that affected Eastleigh Dale in June 2007 and August 2008 was caused by extreme levels of rainfall which overwhelmed the drainage system in parts of the North. The flooding was compounded by rainfall causing surcharging of rivers and watercourses to which the drainage would normally discharge. It was widely acknowledged that no sewerage system could have coped with the intensity of the rainfall.

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Out-of-Sewer Flooding

Mrs N Long asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to any planning applications in the vicinity of Eastleigh Dale, BT4, and specifically application Z/2009/0235/F, if the history of repeated out-of-sewer flooding is being, or has been considered as part of the statutory consultation response to Planning Service that is being prepared by NI Water. (AQW 7378/09)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that, as part of the planning consultation process, it is currently considering a response for a proposed development in the Eastleigh area of East Belfast. The response will take into account the capacity in the sewer network in the area and will propose that the developer enters into early discussions with NIW to assess the options for serving the development in line with current procedures.

East Belfast Drainage Area Study

Mrs N Long asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the progress of the East Belfast Drainage Area Study and Plan; and when he anticipates that the Drainage Area Plan will be finalised. (AQW 7379/09)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the flooding that affected Eastleigh Dale in June 2007 and August 2008 was caused by extreme levels of rainfall which overwhelmed the drainage system in parts of the North. The flooding was compounded by rainfall causing surcharging of rivers and watercourses to which the drainage would normally discharge. It was widely acknowledged that no sewerage system could have coped with the intensity of the rainfall.

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Pending the outcome of the DAP, Northern Ireland Water will continue to monitor and maintain the public sewer network and take all practicable steps to reduce the risk of future flooding. Regrettably, whatever measures are implemented, it will not be possible to guarantee that flooding caused by exceptional weather conditions such as occurred in June 2007 and August 2008 will not recur.

Planning Service

Mrs N Long asked the Minister for Regional Development if advice has been issued to Roads Service or NI Water to complement advice circulated to the Planning Service regarding the cumulative effects of development (PC 0307). (AQW 7380/09)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) and my Department's Roads Service that they have not received advice to complement the Department of the Environment's internal Planning Service guidance note, PC 0307.

A Transport Assessment will normally be required to identify the cumulative effects of development. Advice for Roads Service staff is provided in the joint Department for Regional Development and Department of the Environment document 'Transport Assessment Guidelines for Development Proposals in Northern Ireland'.

NIW and Roads Service are acutely aware of the impact that cumulative development can have on existing infrastructure, and they work closely with Planning Service on such matters, in accordance with current procedures, and legislative and regulatory requirements.

Rapid Transit

Mrs N Long asked the Minister for Regional Development what public consultation is planned in respect of the rapid transit (E-Way) proposals for the Comber Greenway. (AQW 7403/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Following the Executive's endorsement of the findings of the Strategic Outline Case (SOC), a dedicated Rapid Transit Division has been established to take the project forward. At present they are drawing up a project programme and, as part of the preliminary design, are considering a range of route options to best meet the objectives within the SOC. The preliminary design will form the basis for public consultation at the appropriate time, which will probably be in the latter part of this year.

Rapid Transit

Mrs N Long asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) when the detailed plans for the Rapid Transit (E-WAY) will be completed; and (ii) if any formal decisions have been taken regarding the route on the city-centre side of the Hollywood Arches junction. (AQW 7404/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Following the Executive's endorsement of the findings of the Strategic Outline Case (SOC), a dedicated Rapid Transit Division has been established to take the project forward. As part of the preliminary design, the division is considering a range of route options to best meet the objectives within the SOC, and at present is carrying out the necessary on-site surveys. Therefore, no formal decisions have been made at this time about any of the routes, including the city-centre side of the Hollywood Arches junction. As this work will take some time to complete, it is likely to be towards the latter part of this year before detailed plans would be available.

Rapid Transit

Mrs N Long asked the Minister for Regional Development what communications there have been between his Department and landowners, both public and private sector, whose property may be affected by or are adjacent to the proposed route of the Rapid Transit (E-WAY) system between Dundonald and Belfast. (AQW 7405/09)

Minister for Regional Development: To date, the Rapid Transit Division in my department has not had direct communication with landowners, public or private, whose property may be affected by or is adjacent to the proposed route of the EWAY. However they have started to engage with key public sector stakeholders and are a member of the Connswater Greenway Project multi-agency team and the steering group overseeing the East Belfast Development Strategy.

Door Sensors on Trains

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) if costs have been estimated to establish the viability of fitting door sensors on trains that do not have fully automated door systems; and (ii) to detail what these costings are. (AQW 7423/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Currently three out of 38 trains fleet operating on the railways network do not have door sensors fitted. These are all Class 80 trains. For these trains the door mechanisms are safe if operated according to proper procedures. The mechanism has been approved for use by HM Railway Inspectorate.

In March of this year I announced that 20 new trains would be purchased and introduced to passenger service on the railways network from 2011 thus allowing 13 old trains still in service to be replaced, including the three Class 80 trains.

Given that the three Class 80 trains will be taken out of service in two to three years and that the mechanisms on them are safe to operate, Translink have advised that they have not costed installing door sensors at this stage. Translink have indicated that in light of the fact that the anticipated remaining life of the trains is two to three years, it is unlikely that the investment would meet value for money tests particularly as the specification procurement and installation of a new system would take time and would involve costs from taking the three trains out of service.

Railway Stations in East Antrim

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development if there are any plans to install CCTV cameras at all railway stations in East Antrim. (AQW 7443/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink have informed me that Northern Ireland Railways (NIR) currently have CCTV cameras at 4 stations on the Larne Line (Yorkgate, Greenisland, Carrickfergus and Whitehead).

CCTV cameras are also installed at the automatic road/rail barriers at Jordanstown and Trooperslane.

Translink bus and rail own and maintain over 400 buildings at 180 locations, a large proportion of which are accessible to the public. Capital expenditure on CCTV equipment and maintenance is costly and Translink use the criteria of high passenger throughput and reportable incidents in deciding where to install such equipment.

At present it would not be Translink's intention to install CCTV equipment at all stations and halts on the Larne line, but each location is considered on its own merits. However, all trains operating on the Larne line will have CCTV fitted as standard by 2013.

Translink

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development if Translink is legally able to lease trains from other companies within, and outside, the UK. (AQW 7444/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Legally Translink can lease trains from other companies within, and outside, Britain.

Practically Northern Ireland Rail (NIR) can only lease from Irish Rail. This is because the NIR track is broad gauge (1600mm) compared to standard gauge (1483mm) used in Britain. No other similar broad gauge fleet exists outside the island of Ireland. Accordingly trains from Britain and Europe would require substantial modification before use.

NIR is in regular contact with Irish Rail on rolling stock issues. Translink have informed me that, currently, Irish Rail have no suitable vehicles to lease.

Translink

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development if Translink has examined the possibility of leasing trains from other companies for the Larne line, given that it will be a minimum of two years before new stock will arrive. (AQW 7445/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink have informed me that there are no possibilities for leasing trains from outside Ireland for use by Northern Ireland Railways (NIR). This is because the NIR track is broad gauge (1600mm) compared to standard gauge (1483mm) used in Britain. No other similar broad gauge fleet exists outside the island of Ireland.

NIR is in regular contact with Irish Rail on rolling stock issues. However, Irish Rail currently have no suitable vehicles to lease. At some point in the future Irish Rail will have loco-hauled Mark 3 intercity coaches available but these are not suitable for suburban services.

In making any decisions on leasing trains NIR needs to consider its overall financial position and the value for money of leasing options.

Door to Door Transport Scheme

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of members of the Door to Door Transport Scheme in the Bangor area. (AQW 7472/09)

Minister for Regional Development: On 11 May 2009 there were 827 members in the Bangor operational area.

Potholes

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development what procedures are in place to (i) find; (ii) list; (iii) repair; and (iv) inspect potholes in the various classes of roads. (AQW 7495/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Article 8 of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993, places a duty on my Department to maintain all public roads in reasonable condition. To comply with this duty, my Department's Roads Service has a set of Maintenance Standards in place, which are based on best practice, research and consultation with the public, other professional bodies and industry representatives. These standards, which were last reviewed in 2006, and continue to provide a systematic approach to road maintenance management, are designed to ensure a consistent service level and safe carriageways, while also offering value for money.

The standards establish frequencies for road inspections, which are dependent on traffic volumes. They also specify response times for the repair of identified defects. Inspection frequencies vary between daily cycles for motorways, to four monthly cycles for carriageways carrying low volumes of traffic.

Response times specified for the repair of identified defects are dependent on the type of road (Urban or Rural), the traffic volume and the severity of the defect. They range from one calendar day, to inclusion in that particular route's next work programme. When a relevant response time cannot be met, Roads Service has the option of installing signs to warn road users of a possible danger.

Translink

Mr T Burns asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to, AQW 5017/09, in relation to Translink paying less for fuel under the renewed fuel hedging deals, to detail his reasons for approving public transport fare increases. (AQW 7508/09)

Minister for Regional Development: The percentage changes to the net price per litre of fuel provided in AQW 5017/09 for the year 2009/10 are:

	ULSD	Gas Oil
6 Months January 2009 to June 2009	+24%	+25%
Months July 2009 to September 2009	-8%	-8%

	ULSD	Gas Oil
3 Months October 2009 to December 2009	-0.4%	-0.3%
3 Months January 2010 to March 2010	-6%	-5%

This information indicates that while there will be a percentage fall in the price Translink will pay for fuel for the last three quarters of this year this is greatly outweighed by the percentage increase Translink will pay for fuel in the first quarter. The net effect of this is that Translink's fuel bill for bus and rail for 2009/10 will be around 5% and 12% higher respectively than for 2008/09.

Fuel cost increases are only one area of cost pressure Translink will face in 2009/10. There are wider cost pressures which also have to be covered, for example, pay increases, increased pension contributions, additional running costs of new buses and bus stations etc. These cost pressures are countered by efficiencies and revenues and on balance I content for average bus fares to increase by 2% and average rail fares to increase by 3%.

Cloughogue to Beechill Section of the A1

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister for Regional Development when the Cloughogue to Beechill section of the A1 will be completed and fully in use. (AQW 7541/09)

Minister for Regional Development: The contractor's programmed completion date for this scheme is December 2010. The latest information from the contractor would indicate that works are currently some 2 months ahead of schedule. However, the completion date on this scheme will depend on the timely completion of the remaining engineering works.

Cloughogue to Beechill Section of the A1

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister for Regional Development if he will give a timetable for the opening of the various completed sections of the Cloughogue to Beechill part of the A1. (AQW 7549/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the contractor for the A1 Beech Hill to Cloughogue dual carriageway scheme has not indicated that any sections of the new road will be opened ahead of the opening of the complete scheme. However, the contractor has indicated that temporary traffic management measures, involving traffic using various sections of new carriageway, will continue to be put in place as the work proceeds.

The completion date of this scheme will depend on the timely completion of the remaining engineering works.

Northern Ireland Water

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister for Regional Development what action his Department is taking to stop recurrent flooding at the intersection adjacent to 26, Bridge Street, Newry. (AQW 7602/09)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the flooding during periods of heavy rainfall at Bridge Street, Newry resulted from blockages in an undesignated drain, known as the Railway drain. Although this drain is not part of the public sewerage system and NIW has therefore no responsibility for its operation or maintenance, it cleared the blockages and desilted the drain to reduce the risk of further flooding.

NIW plans to liaise with other agencies to establish ownership of the drain and responsibility for its future maintenance.

School Buses

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister for Regional Development what discussions he has had with the Minister of Education to ensure that school bus runs are gritted during winter months. (AQO 2672/09)

Minister for Regional Development: I have had initial discussions with the Minister of Education regarding gritting of school bus runs during winter months and have had a meeting with the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development regarding the general issue of gritting of rural roads.

I can also confirm that Roads Service's examination of the Winter Service operational response around rural schools regularly affected by adverse weather conditions is underway.

As part of this examination, Roads Service intends to contact all rural schools that are not on the gritted network to gather relevant information. In due course, Roads Service will report to me with the outcome of their examination and, at that stage, I will consult again with Minister Ruane and Minister Gildernew.

It is anticipated that any changes to operational practice will be in place for the commencement of the next winter season.

Roads and Transport Budgets

Mr T Lunn asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail his capital budget for (i) roads and (ii) public transport, in the 2009/10 financial year. (AQO 2678/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the Capital budget for roads in 2009/10 is £185 million, as identified in the Executive's Budget 2008-2011 and the Investment Strategy 2008-2018.

I do not intend to give finite detail on what is an extensive capital programme within Roads Service but would draw your attention to the main highlights of what is planned for the year. These are:

- The completion of:
 - the M2 Widening from Sandyknowes to Greencastle;
 - the Newtownards Southern Distributor Road;
 - this year's Local Transport and Safety Measures programme; and
 - this year's Bridge Strengthening programme.
- There will be further work on:
 - the final section of the A1 to dual carriageway standard around Newry;
 - four junction improvements on the A1; and
 - a dual carriageway on the A4 between Dungannon and Ballygawley.
- Schemes that will commence work on the ground are:
 - the new dual carriageway on the A2 from Derry to the City of Derry Airport;
 - the A26/M2 Ballee Road East Link at Ballymena; and
 - the Carland Bridge Realignment scheme on the A29 between Dungannon and Cookstown – although this scheme is subject to the satisfactory completion of the procurement process.
- Plans are also progressing well to:
 - dual the A6 between Derry and Dungiven;
 - dual the A5 between Derry and Aughnacloy; and
 - dual the remaining single carriageway section of the A8 between Belfast and Larne.
- Turning to Public Transport the Capital budget in 2009/10 is around £54 million.
- The £36 million Railways allocation will assist Northern Ireland Railways in taking forward several major projects. These include:
 - the procurement of 20 new trains;
 - the construction of a new railway station at Newry; and
 - most of the track life extension works on the railway line between Ballymena and Coleraine.
- The £15 million bus allocation will allow Translink:
 - to purchase at least 69 buses; and
 - to carry out work at a number of Bus Stations, Workshops and Garages.

- Lastly, the £3 million Rapid Transit allocation will go towards my Department's PSA target 13 which is to commence work on the first Rapid Transit line in Greater Belfast by 2011.

Translink

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development what representations Translink has made to him for extra resources in the past 12 months. (AQO 2679/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink make representations through the normal Public Expenditure process, specifically the in-year monitoring rounds or other budgetary exercises commissioned by the Department of Finance and Personnel.

In September 2008, Translink bid for additional resources for the next two financial years as part of the DFP review of the existing budget settlement. Bids of £5.25 million and £6.1 million additional revenue funding lodged for the railways for 2009/10 and 2010/11 respectively. In the same exercise DRD bid for £6.4 million and £6.6 million additional revenue funding for bus travel for 2009/10 and 2010/11. An additional capital bid for £3.4 million for signage and lighting for school buses was withdrawn until the legislation was enacted.

None of these bids were met and the existing budget settlement remains in place.

Translink also bid for additional funding for 2008/09, through the in-year monitoring round process. This included bids in the June, October and December monitoring rounds. The size of the bids varied over the course of the year as additional funding became available and circumstances changed. In the initial June Monitoring Round, Translink bid for £3.3 million additional revenue funding for railways and £6million for the bus side. By the time of the December Monitoring Round, this had reduced to £2.2 million and £3.6 million for rail and bus respectively.

During the year DRD allocated additional resources of £1.9 million for rail and £1.6 million for the bus side including budget to cover additional concessionary fare travel and additional funding for an increase in Fuel Duty Rebate.

Memorials and Symbols

Mr D Simpson asked the Minister for Regional Development what estimate his Department has made of the number of symbols displayed or memorials erected, on Departmental land or property, which glorify criminal behaviour. (AQO 2680/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service does not have any specific criteria for classifying different types of roadside symbols or memorials. However, when last counted in November 2007, there were 106 unauthorised monuments on public roads, of which 72 related to road traffic fatalities, 31 related to the troubles and 3 had been erected to mark deaths due to other causes.

Public Transport Reform

Mr C Boylan asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline his proposals and timescale for taking forward the recently announced reform of public transport. (AQO 2681/09)

Minister for Regional Development: The proposed reform of public transport is designed to help improve the arrangements for the provision of a modern, efficient and well managed public transport system. It would also ensure compliance with EU requirements involving new contractual arrangements for the delivery of public transport.

An Outline Business Case is being completed which examines the options for organisational arrangements that will best support the reform. The OBC findings and the proposals for reform are scheduled to be discussed with the Regional Development Committee on 17 June 2009.

Subject to the views of the Regional Development Committee, I intend to undertake a public consultation exercise on the reform in the autumn, after which policy proposals for any required legislative changes would be introduced to the Assembly in spring 2010.

Disabled Parking Enforcement

Mrs C Hanna asked the Minister for Regional Development when he plans to extend legislation to cover disabled parking enforcement to car parks for shopping centres. (AQO 2682/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it has no plans to control the use of car parks on private property. The current legislation that governs the operation of the Blue Badge Scheme and the enforcement of parking restrictions, only applies to on-street car parking and off street car parks on the publicly adopted road network.

Translink: Price Increases

Mr R Beggs asked the Minister for Regional Development how the recent price increases announced by Translink fit in with his Department's long-term strategy for public transport. (AQO 2683/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's long-term strategy for public transport is contained within the Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS), and the three underpinning Transport Plans.

An important theme within the RTS is to encourage people away from private car use onto public transport. The relative cost of modes of transport is an important factor in this regard. I believe that proposed average fares increases of 2% for bus and 3% for rail maintain bus and rail services as attractive alternatives to the car, taking account of budget and other constraints.

Quality of service is also important in terms of increasing the numbers of passengers moving onto public transport. There has been investment of £127 million on 938 new buses from 2003/04 to 2008/09 and £157 million on new trains and railway infrastructure from 2004/05 to 2008/09. I think this demonstrates clearly my desire to improve public transport.

This investment has resulted in the establishment of a modern bus and rail fleet and has proved successful in seeing bus and rail passenger numbers increasing over the last few years as well as improved punctuality levels meeting the targets set in the Passenger's Charter.

The RTS is currently under review, and this review process will allow consideration of further ways of developing and promoting the use of public transport within the context of existing and future budgets.

Rural Bus Services

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans he has to ensure that the frequency of buses on vital rural routes is maintained, to ensure rural dwellers are not disadvantaged. (AQO 2684/09)

Minister for Regional Development: I can confirm that there will be no reduction in the overall coverage of bus services in the North.

Translink has extremely limited plans to change rural transport services, involving a reduction in frequency on three routes and the withdrawal of one very low use sub route in County Derry.

Minister for Regional Development

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister for Regional Development how many representations he has made to his Department in his capacity as an MLA, since taking up office. (AQO 2685/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Since taking up post as Minister for Regional Development, in my capacity as an MLA, I have made one formal written representation to Roads Service about traffic calming/speed control issues on the Portadown Road, Armagh.

Public Procurement

Mr F Molloy asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans his Department has to revise public procurement guidelines, or regulations, to provide greater opportunities for local contractors. (AQO 2686/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service, like other Government clients, has to abide by the Public Contracts Regulations and must not show favouritism to local contractors. It has in place a procurement strategy that provides opportunities for small medium enterprises (SMEs) to tender for contracts. SMEs will, in most cases, be made up by local contractors.

For example, all Roads Service's Maintenance and Minor Works is carried out using a series of Term Contracts, with individual works orders within such contracts, up to £350,000. This accounts for an annual spend of £70-80 million per annum. Projects costing between £350,000 to £5 million are procured individually, which again gives tendering opportunities to local contractors in the SME range.

It is also a requirement to publicly advertise all construction procurement opportunities, which is completed by Roads Service through a dedicated Tenders webpage and, as required, the Official Journal of the European Union.

Roads Service has also been represented on the Procurement Task Group which was set up under the auspices of the Construction Industry Forum for Northern Ireland. The Group has representatives from the construction industry and government construction clients and aims to agree the broad principles governing government construction procurement going forward.

A6 Road Scheme

Mr F Brolly asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the A6 road scheme.

(AQO 2687/09)

Minister for Regional Development: On 6 May 2009, I announced the preferred route for the proposed 30 kilometre Derry to Dungiven dual carriageway, including a dual carriageway bypass of Dungiven. This was a key milestone in the planning of this road, which will greatly improve access to the Northwest.

Public exhibitions took place on 6 and 7 May in Dungiven and are planned for 12 and 13 May in Drumahoe, to inform local representatives and the public about the preferred route. Roads Service staff and their advisors are available to answer questions.

The next stage of the project will be an examination of the preferred route in greater detail by Roads Service's Consultants and preparation of the necessary statutory procedures. I anticipate that these will be published in Autumn 2010, followed by a public enquiry in 2011.

Work on the scheme could possibly commence in 2012/13 subject to:-

- satisfactory progress through the statutory processes;
- economic appraisal;
- the availability of funding through the normal budgetary process; and
- satisfactory progression through the procurement process.

Rathlin Island

Mr D McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the Executive's policy for Rathlin Island.

(AQO 2688/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department has taken the lead in developing a central government policy for Rathlin Island. The work has been undertaken on a cross departmental basis but also incorporating the views of the islanders.

The policy has recently been endorsed by the Executive and it is my intention to make a statement to the Assembly. The policy is subject to the normal range of impact assessments and public consultation.

Translink: Operating Costs

Mr J McCallister asked the Minister for Regional Development if any of Translink's operating costs have risen disproportionately or unexpectedly, in the last 2 years.

(AQO 2689/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Apart from an increase in fuel costs, I am aware that costs have increased in a number of areas. The cost to Translink of the Enterprise service increased due to unfavourable

movements in the sterling euro exchange rate. Translink pension costs have increased disproportionately but this is in line with costs arising for all employees in the NILGOSC pension scheme. Wage costs have risen in line with Department of Finance and Personnel Pay Guidelines.

DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Homeless Numbers in Lagan Valley

Mr J Craig asked the Minister for Social Development how many people were registered as homeless in the Lagan Valley constituency in 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09. (AQW 7287/09)

Minister for Social Development (Ms M Ritchie): I am not able to provide this information in the format requested as the Lagan Valley constituency covers parts of the Lisburn, Dairy Farm and Banbridge district offices of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. The table below instead details the requested information with regard to the number of people registered as homeless by each of these district offices.

Homeless presentations and acceptances from 2006/07 until 2008/09 in district offices within the Lagan Valley constituency						
	2006/2007		2007/2008		2008/2009 (provisional)	
	Presented	Accepted	Presented	Accepted	Presented	Accepted
Lisburn District	1433	631(44%)	1226	521(42%)	1190	587(49%)
Dairy Farm District	497	264 (53%)	434	224 (52%)	427	249 (58%)
Banbridge District	510	178 (35%)	457	164 (36%)	307	118 (38%)

Grants Scheme

Mr F Cobain asked the Minister for Social Development how much new money is in the grants scheme for (i) owner occupiers; and (ii) private landlords, in the financial year 2009/10. (AQW 7370/09)

Minister for Social Development: The Private Sector grant budget for the 2009/10 financial year is £20.25m. I will continue to make bids for additional funding in future monitoring rounds.

Responsibility for the allocation of the Private Sector grant rests with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr F Cobain asked the Minister for Social Development how much new money is in the Warm Homes Scheme for the financial year, 2009/10. (AQW 7371/09)

Minister for Social Development: The Warm Homes Scheme budget for 2009/10 is £20.5 million.

Grants Scheme

Mr F Cobain asked the Minister for Social Development how much has been awarded in grants to (i) owner occupiers; (ii) Housing Executive properties; and (iii) private landlords, in the financial year, 2008/09. (AQW 7372/09)

Minister for Social Development: A total of £40.5m for Private Sector grants was paid in the 2008/09 financial year. Owner occupiers received £34.7m and private landlords received £5.8m.

Housing Executive properties are not eligible for grant aid.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr F Cobain asked the Minister for Social Development how much money has been awarded through the Warm Homes Scheme to (i) owner occupiers; (ii) Housing Executive properties; and (iii) private landlords in financial year 2008/09. (AQW 7373/09)

Minister for Social Development: To date, £16.76 million has been spent on owner occupiers and £1.86 million sent on private

landlords. Eaga are finalising their 2008/09 accounts, however I do not expect this figure to change considerably. Only households in the owner-occupied and private rented sector are eligible for assistance under the Warm Homes Scheme.

Social Housing

Mr F Cobain asked the Minister for Social Development how her Department arrived at the figure of £350,000 per unit, to redevelop social housing. (AQW 7374/09)

Minister for Social Development: During our debate on 21 April 2009 I referred to the estimated costs of putting back new houses in areas that are currently being considered for redevelopment.

Given the high number of privately owned homes that often have to be purchased at market value to make way for redevelopment, this sort of intervention is undoubtedly a more costly option when compared to traditional new build schemes.

Obviously costs will vary between different schemes depending on a range of issues. However the figure I quoted during the debate was lifted directly from one economic appraisal currently before me.

These figures include acquisition, compensation and demolition costs associated with existing housing in the redevelopment area. It also includes the construction costs including all fees in building the new put back housing alongside other costs associated with the total redevelopment plans.

Mortgage Payment Assistance

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to mortgage payment assistance, (i) how many people have received help; (ii) how much time elapsed before they became eligible for assistance; and (iii) if single parents were treated differently from other applicants, in each of the last seven years. (AQW 7381/09)

Minister for Social Development: Payments towards mortgage interest and home loans can be considered when eligible customers are in receipt of the income based benefits of Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance, Employment & Support Allowance and State Pension Credit.

- (i) The data held by Social Welfare Statistics and Consultancy Branch shows that the number of claimants to income related benefits (Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance, State Pension Credit and Employment & Support Allowance) that have benefited from Mortgage Interest payments or Interest Payments on Home Loans for each of the last seven years is set out in the table below.

Year	Number of claimants benefiting from Interest Payments
April 2002 - March 2003	21,884
April 2003 - March 2004	22,372
April 2004 - March 2005	22,372
April 2005 - March 2006	22,024
April 2006 - March 2007	20,885
April 2007 - March 2008	19,290
April 2008 - March 2009	20,899

Source: Unvalidated scans from the computer systems of Income related Benefits.

Social Security Benefits

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Executive houses were sold to people in receipt of Social Security benefits, in each of the last seven years. (AQW 7382/09)

Minister for Social Development: Information in the form requested is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Bonfire Programmes

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the bonfire programmes that are being funded by the Housing Executive in the East Antrim constituency in 2009. (AQW 7387/09)

Minister for Social Development: The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister funds Council bonfire programmes. However, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive provides financial support of £500 per Housing Executive District Office area for communities whose Councils have not yet put in place a bonfire initiative.

Welfare Reform Bill

Mr F Cobain asked the Minister for Social Development if her Department is monitoring amendments to the Welfare Reform Bill in Westminster, that may effect Northern Ireland. (AQW 7398/09)

Minister for Social Development: Yes. My Department is monitoring the Welfare Reform Bill as it progresses through its parliamentary stages at Westminster.

Income Support Fresh Claims

Ms M Anderson asked the Minister for Social Development how many income support fresh claims were received in the Foyle office in 2007/08 and in 2008/09. (AQW 7434/09)

Minister for Social Development: The information requested is detailed in the table below.

Financial Year	No. of Income Support fresh claims received in Foyle Jobs & Benefits Office
2007/2008	1527
2008/2009	1280

This information is extracted from Social Security Agency internal monitoring systems.

Environmental Improvement Scheme

Mr A Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the Environmental Improvement Scheme phases three and four, for the Market area in South Belfast. (AQW 7441/09)

Minister for Social Development: The Member will be aware that following our debate in the Assembly on 30 September 2008 my department rejected proposals for phase 3 of this Environmental Improvement Scheme as these included the unnecessary demolition of social houses in an area of such high housing need. The Housing Executive has agreed to reconsider how best to deliver the wider objectives of phase 3 without demolition and I am still awaiting these revised proposals.

Plans for Phase 4 are well developed and once the resources are identified to deliver them, work will begin. Unfortunately due to the collapse of the land and property market, the housing budget will suffer a shortfall in the region of £100m in each of the next two years. The result of this is that the Housing Executive has had to reprioritise many Environmental Improvement Schemes and programmes such as this one for the Markets. I will keep you appraised once new plans for Phase 3 are approved and resources identified to deliver phases 3 and 4.

Environmental Improvement Scheme

Mr A Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the total cost of the Cromac Street Environmental Improvement Scheme. (AQW 7442/09)

Minister for Social Development: The Environmental Improvement Scheme for the Markets has not yet been completed. The work will be delivered over four phases.

To date £550,061 has been spent completing phase one and phase two whilst the overall costs of completing all four phases is estimated to be £2,284,061.

Household Fuel Payment Team

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) how many letters; (ii) telephone calls; and (iii) emails have been received by the Household Fuel Payment Team since 01 April 2009 and the average timescale for the team to issue a reply. (AQW 7450/09)

Minister for Social Development: My officials have not formally recorded all calls, letters and emails relating to the Household Fuel Payment as a significant number of these enquiries, in particular the telephone calls, were dealt with at the point of contact. However, it is estimated that approximately 4,000 letters and emails have been received seeking clarification of entitlement to a payment.

My officials handled calls from 6 April until 16 April. From 17 April, the Energy Savings Trust, which is operated by Bryson Charitable Group, handled calls regarding the Household Fuel Payment. To date, over 10,000 calls have been made to this helpline. However I am advised that approximately 60% of these are repeat callers.

We have begun the process of responding to those individuals who wrote to the Department but do not meet the qualifying criteria and an additional 16,000 payments accompanied by a notification letter will be issued to eligible householders by 22 May. Those who believe they qualify for the Household Payment have until the 30 June to write to the Department setting out the reasons why they believe they are entitled to a payment. My officials will continue to respond to such letters promptly, either by making a payment or providing an explanation as to why there is no entitlement.

Registered Carers in North Down

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many registered carers in North Down are over 60 years of age. (AQW 7467/09)

Minister for Social Development: The information requested is not available as my Department does not hold a list of registered carers.

Public Procurement Contracts

Ms J McCann asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the companies that were successful in securing public procurement contracts in works, services and goods through her Department, in the last two years and the percentage of these that were from the SME or the Social Economy sectors. (AQW 7485/09)

Minister for Social Development: The tables over provide details for contracts awarded by Central Procurement Directorate on behalf of the Department for Social Development for 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2009.

DSD - Supplies (Goods) and Services			
2008/09 Financial Year			
	Name of Company to which Contract was Awarded	Contract awarded to	
		SME	/SEE(Y/N) *
Supplies			
DSD	Gael Force Ventures	Not specified	
Works			
Services			
DSD	ASM Horwath	Not specified	
	Deloitte	Y	
	FGS McClure Watters	Y	
	KPMG	Y	
	Moore Stephens	Y	
	Oxford Economics/PWC	Y	
	PWC	Y	

* Information based on information provided by each company when registering on eSourcingNI

DSD - Supplies (Goods) and Services			
2007/08 Financial Year			
	Name of Company to which Contract was Awarded	Contract awarded to	
		SME	/SEE(Y/N) *
Supplies			
Works			
Services			
DSD	Advice NI	Y	
	BDO Stoy Hayward	Y	
	Biznet	Y	
	CIPFA	Not specified	
	Citizens Advice	Y	
	Co-operation Ireland	Not specified	
	Deloitte	Y	
	Education and Development	Y	
	Goldblatt McGuigan	Y	
	Grant Thornton	Y	
	KPMG	Y	
	Locus	Y	
	McCann Consulting	Y	

DSD - Supplies (Goods) and Services			
2007/08 Financial Year			
	Name of Company to which Contract was Awarded	Contract awarded to	
		SME	/SEE(Y/N) *
	McClure Watters	Not specified	
	Octoberstone	Not specified	
	PA Consulting	Y	
	Penna Consulting	Y	
	Peter Quinn	Y	
	PWC	Y	
	Quay Marinas	Not specified	
	Roger Tym & Partners	Y	
	SQW	Y	
	Venturei	Y	
	Volunteer Development Agency	Not specified	
	William Consulting	Y	

* Information based on information provided by each company when registering on eSourcingNI

Department - DSD Construction Works and Services			
2008/09 Financial Year			
	Name of Company to which Contract was Awarded	Contract awarded to	
		SME	/SEE(Y/N)
Supplies	See separate return - above		
Works	John Graham (Dromore) Ltd	No	
	John Graham (Dromore) Ltd	No	
	F P McCann Ltd	Yes	
Services	McAdam Design	Yes	
	McAdam Design	Yes	
	McAdam Design	Yes	
	McAdam Design	Yes	
	McAdam Design	Yes	
	McAdam Design	Yes	
	McAdam Design	Yes	
	Tribal Consulting	No	
	Tribal Consulting	No	
	GVA Grimley	Not known	
	GVA Grimley	Not known	
	GVA Grimley	Not known	
	GVA Grimley	Not known	
GVA Grimley	Not known		
GVA Grimley	Not known		

Department - DSD Construction Works and Services			
2008/09 Financial Year			
	Name of Company to which Contract was Awarded	Contract awarded to	
		SME	/SEE(Y/N)
	Paul Hogarth Company	Yes	
	Paul Hogarth Company	Yes	
	Paul Hogarth Company	Yes	
	Paul Hogarth Company	Yes	
	Paul Hogarth Company	Yes	
	Paul Hogarth Company	Yes	
	Paul Hogarth Company	Yes	
	Byrne Looby Partners	Yes	
	Scott Wilson	No	
	RPS Consulting	Yes	
	RPS Planning & Environment	Yes	
	RPS Planning & Environment	Yes	
	RPS Consulting	Yes	
	White Young Green	No	
	White Young Green	No	
	White Young Green	No	
	White Young Green	No	
	Sammon Chartered Surveyors	Yes	
	Savills Commercial Ltd	Not known	

Department - DSD Construction Works and Services			
2007/08 Financial Year			
	Name of Company to which Contract was Awarded	Contract awarded to	
		SME	/SEE(Y/N)
Supplies	See separate return – above		
Works	Dan George	Single	
	F P McCann Ltd	Yes	
Services	Paul Hogarth Company	Yes	
	Paul Hogarth Company	Yes	
	McAdam Design	Yes	
	McAdam Design	Yes	
	McAdam Design	Yes	
	McAdam Design	Yes	
	McAdam Design	Yes	
	McAdam Design	Yes	

Department - DSD Construction Works and Services			
2007/08 Financial Year			
	Name of Company to which Contract was Awarded	Contract awarded to	
		SME	/SEE(Y/N)
	Colin Buchanan & Partners	Yes	

Regeneration Schemes for Coleraine

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister for Social Development (i) if the regeneration schemes for Coleraine town centre are on schedule; and (ii) to indicate what problems, if any, have been encountered. (AQW 7491/09)

Minister for Social Development: There are currently two proposed regeneration schemes for Coleraine town centre that are being taken forward by my Department. These schemes are the 'Lanes', which is to be developed on the site of the Abbey Street car park, and the 'Ramparts', which is to be developed on a site that includes the Mall car park. As I indicated in my response to AQW 3552/09, there have been delays in both schemes.

The delay in the Lanes scheme arises from a procedural difficulty with the transfer of the Abbey Street car park from the Department for Regional Development to my Department. The procedures currently in place only allow a Government Department to dispose of land if the land has been declared surplus. Although the purpose of the Lanes scheme is to create a multi-storey car park for Coleraine town centre, the fact that there is an identified shortage of car parking spaces in Coleraine means that the Abbey street car park cannot be declared surplus and, therefore, the disposal cannot proceed.

To allow the site to be transferred, the procedures for the disposal of Government land must be amended. I have agreed an appropriate amendment with the Minister for Regional Development and we will submit a joint paper to issue to the Executive Committee for consideration before the end of May.

I have determined that it is in the best interests of Coleraine overall for the Lanes scheme to be delivered before the Ramparts scheme. This means that the start of construction work on the Ramparts scheme will have to take place after the Lanes scheme is completed.

Strategic Business Review of Social Services

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister for Social Development how many jobs will be created in Coleraine following the recent Strategic Business Review of Social Services. (AQW 7494/09)

Minister for Social Development: The Strategic Business Review proposals have recently been issued for a final period of public consultation which runs until June 2009. The proposals, if approved, will result in the relocation of some posts to Coleraine from Ballymoney and Limavady. It is not possible to confirm details until the consultation process and implementation planning is complete.

Conflict Transitional Initiatives Court Case

Mr R Newton asked the Minister for Social Development what was the cost to her Department of the Conflict Transitional Initiatives court case. (AQW 7515/09)

Minister for Social Development: The Department has not received notification of costs from the legal representatives involved in the Conflict Transitional Initiatives court case at this point in time and therefore is not in a position to answer this question. Figures for final costs will not be available until the period for possible appeal against the judgement expires which will be 10 June 2009.

Bonfires

Mr M McLaughlin asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the total expenditure resulting from bonfires in the South Antrim area, in each of the last five years. (AQW 7521/09)

Minister for Social Development: The clean-up costs associated with bonfires for the Housing Executive's Antrim and Newtownabbey 2 District Office areas (which comprise the South Antrim constituency) for the last five years are detailed in the following table:-

Year	Cost
2008	£14,576
2007	£24,549
2006	£15,350
2005	£13,801
2004	*£18,330

* estimated cost

Senior Civil Servant Bonuses

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development how much was paid in bonuses to senior Civil Servants in her Department in (i) 2003/04; (ii) 2004/05; (iii) 2005/06; (iv) 2006/07; and (v) 2007/08.

(AQW 7536/09)

Minister for Social Development: The total amount paid in non-consolidated bonus payments to Senior Civil Servants in the Department for Social Development in respect of performance years 2003/04 through to 2007/08 is as shown in the table below. The table also includes the number of payments made.

Department for Social Development					
Performance Year	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Total Number of Bonuses	10	14	14	13	13
Total Value of Bonuses	£41,250	£65,000	£79,000	£90,000	£101,000

Co-Ownership Housing

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many applications for co-ownership housing were (i) submitted; and (ii) successful in 2006/07, 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 to date, in the North Down constituency.

(AQW 7545/09)

Minister for Social Development: Co-Ownership Housing has advised me that it records statistics according to local council area, rather than by constituency. The table below details the information requested in both the North Down and Ards council areas which are situated, at least in part, in the North Down constituency.

Year	Applications made	Successful
2006/07	131	112
2007/08	305	229
2008/091	42	9
2009/102	20	4

The number of applications for the 2008/09 financial year was affected by the suspension of new applications to the scheme between April and November 2008.

A number of applications received during April 2009 are currently being processed. Therefore, the number of successful applications may increase.

Homeless Numbers in North Down

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many people were registered as homeless in 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09 in the North Down constituency. (AQW 7546/09)

Minister for Social Development: I am not able to provide this information in the format requested as the North Down constituency includes areas covered by both the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Bangor and Newtownards district offices. The table below instead details the requested information with regard to the number of people registered as homeless by each of these district office areas.

Homeless presentations/acceptances 2006/07 until 2008/09 at district offices in the North Down Constituency						
	2006/2007		2007/2008		2008/2009 (provisional)	
	Presented	Accepted	Presented	Accepted	Presented	Accepted
Bangor	839	395 (47%)	768	392 (51%)	755	397 (53%)
Newtownards	618	382 (62%)	635	391 (62%)	631	375 (59%)

Smoke Alarms

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Social Development if it is standard Housing Executive policy to fit smoke alarms in its properties. (AQW 7552/09)

Minister for Social Development: While the Housing Executive do not have a standard policy to fit smoke alarms in its properties, there are 87,589 tenanted properties of which 70,075 have hard wired smoke alarms. The Housing Executive installs hard wired smoke alarms where dwellings' electrical systems are being upgraded through its planned improvement and maintenance programmes. It is Housing Executive's policy to each year advise tenants who have yet to have a 'hard-wired' smoke alarm fitted to buy one or more of the battery smoke alarms.

Mortgages

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister for Social Development if she has been in discussion with the Prime Minister in relation to ending the practice of offering 100% mortgages. (AQW 7605/09)

Minister for Social Development: Although I have not had any discussions with the Prime Minister about ending 100% mortgages I have met with the Council of Mortgage Lenders to both encourage responsible lending to homebuyers and to press lenders to ensure that affordable mortgage products are made available which help first time buyers and which will, in turn, help the wider economy.

Housing Executive Grant Aided Works

Mr W Irwin asked the Minister for Social Development how many people in the Newry and Armagh Constituency are awaiting approval for Housing Executive grant aided works relating to renovation, replacement, and home repair. (AQW 7612/09)

Minister for Social Development: The information is not available in the format requested and is only available by District Council area. The Newry and Armagh Parliamentary Constituency covers the Armagh City and District Council and part of the Newry & Mourne District Council areas. The table below details the information for each of these District Council areas.

Grant Type	Armagh	Newry and Mourne
Renovation Grant	71	248
Replacement Grant	22	50
Home Repairs Assistance	87	556
Totals	180	854

Redevelopment Scheme at Queen's Parade, Bangor

Mr L Cree asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the proposed comprehensive re-development scheme at Queen's Parade, Bangor (AQW 7663/09)

Minister for Social Development: My Department has been working closely with key stakeholders such as North Down Borough Council, Planning Service and Roads Service to review the response to the Development Brief submitted by the developer in December 2008. This review is nearing completion and officials are due to present the Department's findings to North Down Borough Council elected members on 14 May 2009.

Social Security Agency: Fraud and Error

Mrs C Hanna asked the Minister for Social Development what progress has been made in reducing fraud and error in the Social Security Agency. (AQO 2697/09)

Minister for Social Development: Very significant progress has been made in reducing fraud and error in the Agency. The Social Security Agency operates a rigorous benefit security strategy which has resulted in a steady reduction in losses through fraud and error. The figures for 2008 are currently being finalised but early indications, subject to audit by Northern Ireland Audit Office, are that fraud and error losses are likely to fall further to their lowest level ever recorded. Put into context, this represents 1.2 % of the Agency's £3.8bn annual expenditure, made up of 0.5% official error, 0.4% customer error and 0.3% customer fraud. This compares very favourably with other similar large financial undertakings such as the insurance sector which experiences fraud levels of around 4%.

To date there has not been a noticeable impact on the levels of benefit fraud as a result of the increase in those receiving Social Security benefits, but this is something I will continue to monitor closely. Reducing incorrectness whether through fraud or error has been, and will remain, one of the Agency's top priorities and goes to the heart of ensuring those properly entitled to benefit receive the help they need.

I would like to pay tribute to the management and staff of the Agency for this very strong business performance which Members will be aware has been delivered against a background of ever-increasing efficiency requirements.

Benefit Fraud

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister for Social Development what impact the current recession is having on benefit fraud levels. (AQO 2698/09)

Minister for Social Development: Very significant progress has been made in reducing fraud and error in the Agency. The Social Security Agency operates a rigorous benefit security strategy which has resulted in a steady reduction in losses through fraud and error. The figures for 2008 are currently being finalised but early indications, subject to audit by Northern Ireland Audit Office, are that fraud and error losses are likely to fall further to their lowest level ever recorded. Put into context, this represents 1.2 % of the Agency's £3.8bn annual expenditure, made up of 0.5% official error, 0.4% customer error and 0.3% customer fraud. This compares very favourably with other similar large financial undertakings such as the insurance sector which experiences fraud levels of around 4%.

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I would like to pay tribute to the management and staff of the Agency for this very strong business performance which Members will be aware has been delivered against a background of ever-increasing efficiency requirements.

Executive Stock-take

Dr A McDonnell asked the Minister for Social Development what assessment she has made of whether the Executive's Strategic Stocktake will address her Department's spending priorities in the current economic crisis. (AQO 2699/09)

Minister for Social Development: The Minister for Finance & Personnel announced the outcome of the Autumn 2008 Strategic Stocktake exercise to the Assembly in a statement on 20 January 2009. The key point I took from the Minister's statement was a recognition that the current financial position meant the only way in which more resources could have been allocated to a particular service would have been to scale back other public services. However, he indicated there was no appetite amongst Ministerial colleagues for such an approach.

I'm not sure if that was right. I do not believe the Strategic Stocktake was a sufficiently rigorous exercise – settling for describing our budgetary issues rather than tackling them. Members will be aware that my Party has produced a discussion paper on the budget – *New Priorities in Difficult Times* – which indicates ways that further resources can be directed to Jobs and Housing from within the existing budget framework.

Unlike many party political productions the SDLP paper shows where the money could come from. I hope that Members will read it. At the present time there is a £200million shortfall in the housing budget and this needs to be corrected. Housing cannot continue to live hand-to-mouth hoping for additional scraps from quarterly monitoring rounds. Housing needs, once and for all, to be put on a sound financial footing.

Whilst appreciating the demands now being placed on the finite resources available to the Executive from the NI Block allocation, I would expect housing to get its share of the additional Barnett funding being made available following the Chancellor's recent Budget statement.

Minister for Social Development

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister for Social Development how many representations she has made to her Department in her capacity as an MLA, since taking up office. (AQO 2700/09)

Minister for Social Development: The Member offers no definition of "representations" and so I will apply the broadest reasonable meaning in the interests of openness and clarity. I take very seriously my responsibility to ensure that there should be no conflict of interest between my roles as a Minister and as a constituency MLA and am scrupulous in ensuring that I do not advocate inappropriately on behalf of constituents on matters which fall within my responsibilities as a Minister.

However my constituents deserve the same level of service from me as they might expect from any other MLA and so, for example, it is my practice to pass on to the Department inquiries from constituents relating for example to pensions, child maintenance or social security benefits and allowances. The replies to such queries are dealt with at the operational level and not by the Minister. I also receive a significant number of letters, emails and telephone calls to my constituency office and, for example, to my party email address which actually relate to Ministerial business and which are routinely redirected to my Departmental Private Office.

So as Members might expect, I run an extremely busy constituency operation and have made representations on dozens, if not hundreds, of occasions – while of course maintaining appropriate separation of roles.

Employment and Support Allowance

Mrs M O'Neill asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the Employment and Support Allowance, including any problems that have been encountered regarding its implementation. (AQO 2701/09)

Minister for Social Development: Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) is the most significant change in the benefit system in years and its implementation has been a success due to the hard work and commitment of the staff and management involved in the planning and rollout phases. The introduction of a new telephony service at the same time as a new benefit was an additional challenge and although the initial performance was good, some difficulties were experienced in January when the volume of calls to the 0845 enquiry line increased considerably. To address this issue an additional 18 telephony staff were recruited.

Overall performance continues to improve, not least, in the telephony and processing areas. The Centre answered 20,370 calls in March and assessed 2,269 claims, which is double the number of calls answered in January and a 50% increase in the number of assessments. In March 79% of customers who telephoned the claim line to make a claim opted to make the claim over the phone rather than receive a clerical form. Significantly, the length of time it takes to complete a claim by telephone has steadily reduced and the clearance time remains favourable when compared with the old Incapacity Benefit. Further improvements in performance should be realised in the coming months as staff gain experience and further planned IT enhancements are introduced.

Housing Executive

Mr D McKay asked the Minister for Social Development what action she intends to take to address the apparent absence of a programme of work for the Housing Executive in the current financial year. (AQO 2702/09)

Minister for Social Development: The Housing Executive is currently finalising its programmes of work for this financial year and these will be published for consultation with each of the District Councils in early June. Following this consultation their programme will be announced.

Housing: First-time Buyers

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development for her assessment of whether the financial institutions are doing enough to help first-time buyers to get onto the housing ladder. (AQO 2703/09)

Minister for Social Development: In 2001 first time home buyers represented about 60% of house sales. By September 2008, this percentage had fallen to 23%; indeed, given current economic challenges, it may have fallen even further. However, I am aware that there is a variety of mortgage packages available aimed at helping first time buyers. Indeed, both the Bank of Ireland and the Ulster Bank have made finance available to the Northern Ireland Co-ownership Housing Association to assist 500 first time buyers enter the housing ladder. This action is very much to be welcomed.

In addition, the recent budget announcement has set out ways to encourage banks to make more mortgages available. The Council of Mortgage Lenders has commented that the most important element of the recent Budget for the mortgage market over the long term may prove to be the new asset backed securities guarantee scheme. This potentially offers an opportunity to restart the capital market funding for mortgages that will be a crucial factor in delivering an adequate supply of mortgage credit.

Therefore, whilst some lenders are making steps to help first-timers, I will continue to encourage lenders to ensure that affordable mortgage products are made available to help first time buyers and which will in turn help the wider economy.

Social Housing: Belfast

Ms C Ní Chuilín asked the Minister for Social Development if she will consider developing land under her Department's control in Belfast City Centre for social housing. (AQO 2704/09)

Minister for Social Development: I have already asked my officials to identify all land currently held by the Department that could be used to meet housing need. This includes land in Belfast City Centre.

Consultants

Ms A Lo asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the total cost to the Department of employing consultants. (AQO 2705/09)

Minister for Social Development: The total cost of employing external consultants within the Department for Social Development (including the Social Security Agency) for 2008/09 was £1,929,236.

Curzon Apartments

Mr A Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development for her assessment of the value for money of the apartments built at the old Curzon Cinema site in South Belfast; and if they met all the criteria for family type accommodation in that area of high demand. (AQO 2706/09)

Minister for Social Development: No schemes are delivered through the Social Housing Development Programme if they do not represent value for money or meet housing need. In this particular part of South Belfast, of the applicants on the waiting list in housing stress, less than a third are families. In meeting housing need, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive must match the homes to the particular needs of localities, taking a range of factors into account. This is what has been done in the particular area of South Belfast.

Queen's Parade

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the Queen's Parade project. (AQO 2707/09)

Minister for Social Development: My Department has been working closely with key stakeholders such as North Down Borough Council, Planning Service and Roads Service to review the developer's response to the Development Brief that was received in December 2008. This review is nearing completion and officials are due to present the Department's findings to North Down Borough Council elected members in May 2009.

Housing Procurement

Ms M Anderson asked the Minister for Social Development what measures have been taken to ensure developers do not abuse the new housing procurement policy by top-slicing profits before they sub-contract to small contractors. (AQO 2708/09)

Minister for Social Development: The sub-contracting of construction work is a commercial decision for a contractor and sub-contractor and will be determined by the prevailing market conditions. The Procurement Strategy, which I launched in October 2008, requires Procurement Groups to use framework agreements with the aim of achieving efficiency in combining resources, streamlining procurement processes and utilising a pool of suppliers to undertake developments thus avoiding the need to re-tender for each development. Their purpose is not to seek to manipulate or control market forces.

Payment of Suppliers

Mr M Storey asked the Minister for Social Development how many suppliers were not paid within 10 days in the last financial year; and to confirm the longest period that a supplier had to wait before being paid. (AQO 2709/09)

Minister for Social Development: The 10 day target for payments to suppliers came into force from the end of November 2008. Since then, 1284 suppliers have not been paid within 10 days. The longest delayed payment in the period from the end of November to the end of March 2009 was 129 days.

Housing Executive: East Belfast

Mr R Newton asked the Minister for Social Development what Housing Executive maintenance programmes are underway in East Belfast; and what plans she has for the upgrading of properties and maintenance programmes in East Belfast for 2010/2011. (AQO 2710/09)

Minister for Social Development: In the East Belfast District a scheme for replacing 101 kitchens in the Short Strand area has just been completed and another scheme to replace 67 kitchens in the vicinity of Vicarage Street and Glenallen Street has recently started. The Housing Executive programmes for 2010/2011 will be formulated once budgetary information has been finalised later in the year.

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY COMMISSION

Assembly Roadshows

Mr A Ross asked the Assembly Commission for its assessment of the Assembly Roadshows. (AQW 7422/09)

The Representative of the Assembly Commission (Mr S Moutray): The Assembly Commission is convinced of the need to raise public understanding of the Assembly and that is why the Commission has developed the Engagement Strategy. In addition to this important work, the Commission decided to undertake a series of road shows across Northern Ireland; however the Commission was conscious that this was a new concept, and one which had not been trialled before by the Assembly. In addition, it was not clear what level of interest there would be from the public.

As you are aware, the Commission organised nine road shows across Northern Ireland, which were attended by over 600 people.

It was noticeable that the main issues and concerns raised at each road show were similar. Issues raised included health matters such as autism and health spending; post primary transfer; student tuition fees; the devolution of policing and justice; and the future of the Maze project.

The general consensus, of Commission Members and Members who participated in the panels, was that the road shows were an extremely useful step in raising public understanding of the Assembly.

The Assembly Commission will consider an evaluation report at its next meeting. Dependant on the outcome of that, the Commission will consider holding road shows in the remaining ten constituencies later in the year.

Rent and Office Cost Claims

Mr D McNarry asked the Assembly Commission on what basis rent expenses payments are being made for 9-11 Church Street, Ballymena that are significantly in excess of market rates. (AQW 7524/09)

The Representative of the Assembly Commission (Mr A Maginness): The rent payable for a Member's constituency office is based on the lease agreed between the Member and his or her landlord. The issue of assessing a market rate for office rentals will be considered by the Assembly Commission as part of its consideration of the SSRB Report on Members' salaries and allowances.

Rent and Office Cost Claims

Mr J Dallat asked the Assembly Commission if it will order a full independent review of all Office Cost Allowance rental expenses paid for 9-11 Church Street, Ballymena from 2007 in light of the report by the Interim Assembly Standards Commissioner published on 1 May 2009. (AQW 7534/09)

The Representative of the Assembly Commission (Mr A Maginness): Following consideration of the Interim Commissioner for Standards' report, the Committee on Standards and Privileges wrote to the Assembly Commission about this matter. The Commission will consider that correspondence at its meeting on 21 May 2009.

Rent and Office Cost Claims

Mr I Paisley Jnr asked the Assembly Commission if it will have a full independent review carried out of all rent and office cost claims made in respect of 11 Bridge Street, Kilrea. (AQW 7611/09)

The Representative of the Assembly Commission (Mr A Maginness): The Assembly Commission currently has no plans to carry out a review of any individual MLA's rent and office claims.

REVISED WRITTEN ANSWERS

Friday 15 May 2009

Written Answer Booklet of 23 January 2009
(Volume 36, No WA6)

In page WA454, replace the answer to question (AQW 3947/09) with;

The £1.2 million quoted, was published in Help the Aged's SeniorLine Benchmark Report 2008. It is an estimate of benefit potentially available to older people who contacted SeniorLine with a benefit enquiry. The report acknowledges that enquiries about social security benefits continued to be the biggest area of calls to SeniorLine, 37% of all calls, which was a 60% increase from the previous year. This was mostly due to SeniorLine's participation in the Agency's Benefit Uptake Programme. This Programme aimed to increase awareness of social security benefits for customers identified by the Agency as having potential entitlement for additional benefit. I can report that the 2007/08 Programme generated over £8 million of additional benefit.

The Housing Executive and the Social Security Agency provide a range of services on a daily basis to ensure that people are advised of their potential entitlement to benefits, including outreach services, joint working and promotional campaigns. Both organisations participate in the recently established Interdepartmental Group on Benefit Uptake, the aim of which is to coordinate efforts to increase benefit take-up.

I launched the 2008/09 Benefit Uptake Programme in May 2008 to increase awareness of social security benefits. This builds on the previous successful uptake programmes which have been in place since 2005 and resulted in £15 million of additional benefit paid to the most vulnerable in our society, £11 million to older people. This year's Programme will see over 115,000 people contacted about possible benefit entitlement, over 108,000 are older people. I can report that £2.2 million in additional benefit has already been generated for older people.

In addition, an improved way to process new claims for State Retirement Pension was introduced in 2008. This has resulted in a more joined-up service for customers who are claiming State Retirement Pension but may also be entitled to State Pension Credit. This new service increases the Agency's ability to ensure that older people are receiving the full range of benefits to which they are entitled.

Overall, the Agency has a comprehensive system of reviews to ensure people are receiving their full entitlement. Since April 2008, over 5,000 cases have been adjusted upwards resulting in extra benefit payments of approximately £12.8m.

Written Answer Booklet of 13 March 2009
(Volume 39, No WA1)

In page WA77, replace the answer to question (AQO 2235/09) with;

My Department's Roads Service is progressing plans for the provision of a 7 km stretch of dual carriageway on the A26, between Glarryford and the A44 Drones Road. This is one of the major projects included in the ten year Investment Delivery Plan for Roads.

In August 2008, I announced the preferred route, which closely follows the existing corridor. The route is currently being taken through the final stage of the scheme assessment process. This will culminate in the publication of an Environmental Statement and draft Orders, for planning and land acquisition, which I would anticipate occurring during the 2010/11 financial year.

It is anticipated that construction will commence in the latter part of the Investment Delivery Plan period.

Written Answer Booklet of 27 March 2009
(Volume 39, No WA3)

In page WA268, replace the answer to question (AQO 2381/09) with;

My Department and agencies have received correspondence from me as the Member of Parliament for East Antrim on 446 occasions since 9 June 2008. This figure is made up of 88 pieces of correspondence which I sent to my Department and agencies, and 358 instances where correspondence has been received by my constituency office and forwarded to my Department.

In addition I have made 135 representations to Planning Service in the form of meetings, telephone calls and written correspondence since 9 June 2008.

Written Answer Booklet of 27 March 2009
(Volume 39, No WA3)

In page WA316, replace the answer to question (AQW 6174/09) with;

Attached is a list of all Local Enterprise Agencies that the Assembly contacted in relation to the development of the Assembly Gift Shop.

Through the Local Enterprise Agencies, local crafters then made contact with the Assembly with a view to displaying/selling their goods in the Assembly Gift Shop. As the Gift Shop developed a number of crafters also made contact with other crafters (through other networking channels) advising them of the initiative.

Enterprise NI – List of Agencies by Region with Website Details, International Dialing Codes and Map Reference

Eastern Inner

East Belfast Enterprise (14)

308 Albertbridge Road

Belfast

BT5 4GX

Tel: 00 44 28 9045 5450

Fax: 00 44 28 9073 2600

Email: info@eastbelfast.org

Web: <http://www.eastbelfast.org>

North City Business Centre Ltd (22)

2 Duncairn Gardens

Belfast

BT15 2GG

Tel: 00 44 28 9074 7470

Fax: 00 44 28 9074 6565

Email: mailbox@north-city.co.uk

Web: <http://www.north-city.co.uk>

Ormeau Enterprises Ltd (26)

Ormeau Business Park

8 Cromac Avenue

BELFAST

BT7 1EL

Tel: 00 44 28 9033 9906

Fax: 00 44 28 9033 9937

Email: info@ormeaubusinesspark.com

Web: <http://www.ormeaubusinesspark.com>

ORTUS (27)

Twin Spires Centre

155 Northumberland Street

Belfast

BT13 2JF

Tel: 00 44 28 9031 1002

Fax: 00 44 28 9031 1005

Email: hq@ortus.org

Web: <http://www.ortus.org>

Townsend Enterprise Park (30)

28 Townsend Street

Belfast

BT13 2ES

Tel: 00 44 28 9089 4500

Fax: 00 44 28 9089 4502

Email: admin@townsend.co.uk

Web: <http://www.townsend.co.uk>

Work West Enterprise Agency (31)

301 Glen Road

Belfast

BT11 8BU

Tel: 00 44 28 9061 0826

Fax: 00 44 28 9062 2001

Email: info@workwest.co.uk

Web: <http://www.workwest.co.uk>

Eastern Outer
Ards Business Centre Ltd (3)
Jubilee Road
Newtownards
BT23 4YH
Tel: 00 44 28 9181 9787
Fax: 00 44 28 9182 0625
Email: postbox@ardsbusiness.com
Web: <http://www.ardsbusiness.com>

Castlereagh Enterprises Ltd (8)
Dundonald Enterprise Park
Enterprise Drive
Carrowreagh Road
Dundonald
BT16 0QT
Tel: 00 44 28 9055 7557
Fax: 00 44 28 9055 7558
Email: enterprise@castlereagh.com
Web: <http://www.castlereagh.com>

Glenwood Enterprises Ltd (16)
Glenwood Business Centre
Springbank Industrial Estate
Poleglass
Belfast
BT17 0QL
Tel: 00 44 28 9061 0311
Fax: 00 44 28 9060 0929
Email: office@glenwoodbc.com
Web: <http://www.glenwoodbc.com>

Lisburn Enterprise Organisation Ltd (18)
Enterprise Crescent
Ballinderry Road
Lisburn
BT28 2BP
Tel: 00 44 28 9266 1160
Fax: 00 44 28 9260 3084
Email: centre@lisburn-enterprise.co.uk
Web: <http://www.lisburn-enterprise.co.uk>

Mallusk Enterprise Park Ltd (19)

Mallusk Drive

Newtownabbey

BT36 4GN

Tel: 00 44 28 9083 8860

Fax: 00 44 28 9084 1525

Email: info@mallusk.org

Web: <http://www.mallusk.org>

North Down Development Organisation Ltd (23)

Enterprise House

Balloo Avenue

Balloo Industrial Estate

Bangor

BT19 7QT

Tel: 00 44 28 9127 1525

Fax: 00 44 28 9127 0080

Email: mail@nddo.co.uk

Web: <http://www.nddo.u-net.com>

North East

Acorn the Business Centre (1)

2 Riada Avenue

Garryduff Road

Ballymoney

BT53 7LH

Tel: 00 44 28 2766 6133

Fax: 00 44 28 2766 5019

Email: enquiries@acornbusiness.co.uk

Web: <http://www.acornbusiness.co.uk>

Antrim Enterprise Agency Ltd (2)

58 Greystone Road

Antrim

BT41 1JZ

Tel: 00 44 28 9446 7774

Fax: 00 44 28 9446 7292

Email: admin@antrimenterprise.com

Web: <http://www.antrimenterprise.com>

Ballymena Business Centre (5)
Galgorm Industrial Estate
62 Fenaghy Road
Ballymena
BT42 1FL
Tel: 00 44 28 2565 8616
Fax: 00 44 28 2563 0830
Email: info@ballymenabusiness.co.uk
Web: <http://www.ballymenabusiness.co.uk>

Carrickfergus Enterprise Agency Ltd (7)
8 Meadowbank Road
Carrickfergus
BT38 8YF
Tel: 00 44 28 9336 9528
Fax: 00 44 28 9336 9979
E-mail: kelli@ceal.co.uk
Web: www.ceal.co.uk

Larne Enterprise Development Company Ltd (17)
LED COM Industrial Estate
Bank Road
Larne
BT40 3AW
Tel: 00 44 28 2827 0742
Fax: 00 44 28 2827 5653
Email: info@ledcom.org
Web: <http://www.ledcom.org>

LED COM
Willowbank Business Park
Willowbank Road
Millbrook
LARNE
Tel: 00 44 28 2826 9973
Fax: 00 44 28 2826 8247
Email: kennelson@ledcomwbp.org
Web: <http://www.ledcom.org>

Moyle Enterprise Company Ltd (20)

61 Leyland Road

Ballycastle

BT54 6EZ

Tel: 00 44 28 2076 3737

Fax: 00 44 28 2076 9690

Email: info@moyle-enterprise.com

North West

Causeway Enterprise Agency (9)

Loughanhill Industrial Estate

Coleraine

BT52 2NR

Tel: 00 44 28 7035 6318

Fax: 00 44 28 7035 5464

Email: info@causeway-enterprise.co.uk

Web: <http://www.causeway-enterprise.co.uk>

North West Marketing (24)

North West Business Complex

Skeoge Industrial Park

Beraghmore Road

Derry

BT48 8SE

Tel: 00 44 28 7135 2693

Fax: 00 44 28 7135 6293

E-Mail: info@north-westmarketing.com

Web: <http://www.north-westmarketing.com>

Roe Valley Enterprises Ltd (28)

Aghanloo Industrial Estate

Aghanloo Road

Limavady

BT49 0HE

Tel: 00 44 28 7776 2323

Fax: 00 44 28 7776 5707

Email: info@roevalleyenterprises.co.uk

Web: <http://www.lysba.com>

Workspace (Draperstown) Ltd (32)

7 Tobermore Road

Draperstown

BT45 7AG

Tel: 00 44 28 7962 8113

Fax: 00 44 28 7962 8975

Email: info@workspace.org.uk

Web: <http://www.workspace.org.uk>

Southern

Armagh Business Centre Ltd (4)

2 Loughgall Road

Armagh

BT61 7NJ

Tel: 00 44 28 3752 5050

Fax: 00 44 28 3752 6717

Email: sam@abcarmagh.com

Web: <http://www.abcarmagh.com>

Banbridge District Enterprises Ltd (6)

Scarva Road Industrial Estate

Scarva Road

Banbridge

BT32 3BQ

Tel: 028 4066 2260

Fax: 028 4066 2325

Email: info@bdelonline.com

Web: <http://www.bdelonline.com>

Craigavon Industrial Development (11)

Organisation Ltd

I² CIDO Innovation Centre

Charlestown New Road

Carn

Craigavon

BT66 6PW

Tel: 00 44 28 3833 3393

Fax: 00 44 28 3835 0390

Email: info@cido.co.uk

Web: <http://www.cido.co.uk>

Down Business Centre (12)
46 Belfast Road
Downpatrick
BT30 9UP
Tel: 00 44 28 4461 6416
Fax: 00 44 28 4461 6419
Email: business@downbc.co.uk
Web: <http://www.downbc.co.uk>

Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency (21)
Enterprise House
WIN Business Park
Canal Quay
Newry
Tel: 00 44 28 3026 7011
Fax: 00 44 28 3026 1316
Email: nmcoop@dial.pipex.com
Web: <http://www.nmea.net>

Western

Cookstown Enterprise Centre Ltd (10)
Derryloran Industrial Estate
Sandholes Road
Cookstown
BT80 9LU
Tel: 00 44 28 8676 3660
Fax: 00 44 28 8676 3160
Email: info@cookstownenterprise.com
Web: <http://www.cookstownenterprise.com>

Dungannon Enterprise Centre Ltd (13)
2 Coalisland Road
Dungannon
BT71 6JT
Tel: 00 44 28 8772 3489
Fax: 00 44 28 8775 2200
Email: admin@dungannonenterprise.com
Web: <http://www.dungannonenterprise.com>

Fermanagh Enterprise Ltd (15)
Enniskillen Business Centre
Lackaghboy Industrial Estate
Tempo Road
Enniskillen
BT74 4RL
Tel: 00 44 28 6632 7348
Fax: 00 44 28 6632 7878
Email: info@fermanaghenterprise.com
Web: <http://www.fermanaghenterprise.com>

Omagh Enterprise Company Ltd (25)
Great Northern Road
Omagh
BT78 5LU
Tel: 00 44 28 8224 9494
Fax: 00 44 28 8224 9451
Email: info@oecl.co.uk
Web: <http://www.oecl.co.uk>

Strabane Enterprise Agency (29)
Orchard Road Industrial Estate
Orchard Road
Strabane
BT82 9FR
Tel: 00 44 28 7138 2518
Fax: 00 44 28 7188 4531
Email: info@seagency.co.uk
<http://www.strabaneenterprise.co.uk>

Written Answer Booklet of 8 May 2009
(Volume 40, No WA4)

In page WA287, replace the answer to question (AQW 7173/09) with;

My Department is working on Draft Planning Policy Statement 16 on tourism which, subject to Executive clearance, we aim to publish for consultation after the summer.

We aim to implement the final statement by the end of March 2010 from which point its contents will be material to decisions on individual planning applications and appeals.

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