
OFFICIAL REPORT

(HANSARD)

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NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Friday 2 October 2009

Written Answers to Questions

OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER

Allegations of Child Abuse

Mr D Simpson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister if, within the Department's responsibilities relating to children and young people, they will seek a meeting with (i) the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland; (ii) the Chief Constable; and (iii) the Children's Commissioner in order to press for a thorough investigation of allegations of child abuse in (a) St Patrick's home on the Glen Road, Belfast; (b) Termonbacca in Londonderry; and (c) any care facility organised by (i) the Roman Catholic Church; (ii) any other church or religious organisation; and (iii) any care facility run by the state. (AQW 255/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister (Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness):

- The issue of child protection and the safeguarding of children is a key priority for all of us and an issue which impacts on the work of several departments in the devolved administration, as well as the Northern Ireland Office.
- OFMDFM has recently published a major policy statement on Safeguarding Children which has brought together developments underway across the Northern Ireland Executive, NIO and Court Service. It has helped us to identify gaps and where further initiatives are required.
- Regulation, inspection and provision of arrangements for vulnerable children here have been strengthened significantly over many years. An independent Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority has been established with statutory responsibility and powers to inspect services. The Northern Ireland Social Care Council, the independent public regulatory body for the social care workforce in Northern Ireland, is dedicated to improving and regulating standards of training and practice for social care workers.
- Under current legislative procedures here, individuals who wish to work in a paid or unpaid capacity with children in a regulated position will be subject to pre-employment vetting procedures. New Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups legislation will be introduced next month to strengthen further protection for children in workplace situations. DHSSPS also intends to establish a regional Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland next year. This will strengthen further safeguarding arrangements within Northern Ireland.
- In February 2008 the NSMC considered a paper on child protection and agreed that a cross-border group of officials from relevant departments would intensify co-operation on child protection and report progress to NSMC. The Executive has also proposed child protection as a new work stream within the British Irish Council. The Council has deferred a decision on the proposal pending the outcome of the various enquiries into the Baby P case, but has tasked officials to consider the matter.
- We share concerns about allegations of abuse against children and want to see full investigations of any specific incidents take place. We would strongly urge if anyone has evidence of abuses committed within this jurisdiction against them, if they have not already done so, to bring it to the attention of the PSNI for investigation.

We have agreed to put the issues that you have raised on the agenda of the next Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People for discussion.

Sexual Abuse of Children

Mr D Simpson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister if their Department has had any discussions with the Children's Commissioner regarding the question of sexual abuse of children in (i) any environment of trust organised by the Roman Catholic church; (ii) any environment of trust organised by any other church or religious organisation; (iii) any state run care environment. (AQW 291/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The issue of child protection and the safeguarding of children is a key priority for all of us and an issue which impacts on the work of several departments in the devolved administration, as well as the Northern Ireland Office.

Because of the cross cutting nature of this issue and its direct link to the 'living in safety and with stability' aspect of the 10-year strategy for children and young people, we took the initiative to co-ordinate the development of the recently published Safeguarding Statement which pulls together the work of a number of departments.

We worked closely with the Commissioner for Children and Young People on the development of the cross-departmental Safeguarding Statement but our Department has not been approached by the Commissioner regarding sexual abuse of children in any specific environment or organisation.

Under current legislative procedures here, individuals who wish to work in a paid or unpaid capacity with children in a regulated position will be subject to pre-employment vetting procedures. New Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups legislation will be introduced next month to strengthen further protection for children in workplace situations. DHSSPS also intends to establish a regional Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland next year. This will strengthen further safeguarding arrangements here.

We have not directly been made aware of any calls for an investigation into any particular institution. If anyone has specific information about Termonbacca, St Patrick's or any other institution, they should report it to the PSNI and seek help from the Social Services. Every individual case brought to the attention of the PSNI or Social Services will be investigated.

We have agreed to put the issues you raise as an agenda item for discussion at the next Ministerial Sub-Committee for Children and Young People.

Child Abuse

Mr D Simpson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what consideration their Department has given to supporting calls for an investigation into child abuse in any care facility organised by (i) the Roman Catholic church; (ii) any other church or religious organisation; and (iii) the state. (AQW 292/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The issue of child protection and the safeguarding of children is a key priority for all of us and an issue which impacts on the work of several departments in the devolved administration, as well as the Northern Ireland Office.

Because of the cross cutting nature of this issue and its direct link to the 'living in safety and with stability' aspect of the 10-year strategy for children and young people, we took the initiative to co-ordinate the development of the recently published Safeguarding Statement which pulls together the work of a number of departments.

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We have agreed to put the issues you raise as an agenda item for discussion at the next Ministerial Sub-Committee for Children and Young People.

Child Protection Issues

Mr D Simpson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what is their Department's assessment of the child protection issues arising from the allegations of sexual abuse in Termonbacca, Londonderry; and how they intend to investigate those child protection issues. (AQW 293/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The issue of child protection and the safeguarding of children is a key priority for all of us and an issue which impacts on the work of several departments in the devolved administration, as well as the Northern Ireland Office.

Because of the cross cutting nature of this issue and its direct link to the 'living in safety and with stability' aspect of the 10-year strategy for children and young people, we took the initiative to co-ordinate the development of the recently published Safeguarding Statement which pulls together the work of a number of departments.

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We have not directly been made aware of any calls for an investigation into any particular institution. If anyone has specific information about Termonbacca, St Patrick's or any other institution, they should report it to the PSNI and seek help from the Social Services. Every individual case brought to the attention of the PSNI or Social Services will be investigated.

We have agreed to put the issues you raise as an agenda item for discussion at the next Ministerial Sub-Committee for Children and Young People.

Child Protection Issues

Mr D Simpson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what is their Department's assessment of the child protection issues arising from the allegations of sexual abuse at St Patrick's home on the Glen Road, Belfast; and how they intend to investigate those child protection issues. (AQW 294/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The issue of child protection and the safeguarding of children is a key priority for all of us and an issue which impacts on the work of several departments in the devolved administration, as well as the Northern Ireland Office.

Because of the cross cutting nature of this issue and its direct link to the 'living in safety and with stability' aspect of the 10-year strategy for children and young people, we took the initiative to co-ordinate the development of the recently published Safeguarding Statement which pulls together the work of a number of departments.

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We have not directly been made aware of any calls for an investigation into any particular institution. If anyone has specific information about Termonbacca, St Patrick's or any other institution, they should report it to the PSNI and seek help from the Social Services. Every individual case brought to the attention of the PSNI or Social Services will be investigated.

We have agreed to put the issues you raise as an agenda item for discussion at the next Ministerial Sub-Committee for Children and Young People.

Integrated Development Fund

Mr M Durkan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how much of the monies allocated to the Integrated Development Fund remains unallocated, and to indicate how these monies will be made available to qualifying projects. (AQW 301/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: Of the 32 pilot projects submitted for approval to date, 31 have been formally approved and Integrated Development Funding support totalling £45.2m has been made available to the projects. The most recent project to be submitted for approval, Broadbridge Dualling in the North West, is being considered.

The Executive closed all Central Funds, including the Integrated Development Fund, as part of the Budget 2008 settlement. Consequently, there are no further monies to be allocated from the Fund.

Those outstanding pilot projects which had previously received approval in principle may still be brought forward as bids for funding, subject to the provision of the required economic appraisals. Following formal endorsement by OFMDFM/DFP Ministers, each will be considered, as a high priority, for funding support by the Executive as part of the quarterly financial monitoring process.

Legislation

Mr G Savage asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline any legislation their Department intends to bring before the Assembly before 31 December 2009. (AQW 405/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: We introduced the Department of Justice Bill in the Assembly on 14 September 2009. A policy consultation is currently underway in relation to the setting up of a Victims and Survivors service which will require primary legislation in due course. A Legislative Consent Motion will be brought forward seeking the Assembly's endorsement to the extension of the UK Child Poverty Bill to Northern Ireland. We also anticipate bringing secondary legislation to create a Maze/Long Kesh Development Corporation to drive forward redevelopment of the site before 31 December 2009.

Commissioner for Older People

Mr J Shannon asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when the Commissioner for Older People will be in place; and what discussions have taken place, since the announcement of their intention to appoint a commissioner, with Help the Aged and other such organisations to garner opinions on any appointment. (AQW 429/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: We intend shortly to seek the Executive's agreement to issue a consultation document and Draft Bill which sets out our proposals to establish a Commissioner for Older People. After careful consideration of all the consultation responses, we will make a decision about the scale and scope of the proposed Commissioner's powers. We are unable to appoint a Commissioner until the legislative process is complete and it is likely that this will take until spring 2011.

Since the decision to appoint a Commissioner was announced, OFMDFM officials have been engaged in research and pre-consultation with key stakeholders, including Help the Aged/Age Concern; Age Sector Platform, the Advocate, Dame Joan Harbison and others. They have had a range of meetings with stakeholder organisations to ensure that there is the broadest possible involvement in the policy development and legislative processes prior to formal public consultation. A list of these meetings has been placed in the Assembly Library.

Furthermore, Junior Minister Kelly and Junior Minister Newton also met with Dame Joan Harbison in July this year to hear at first hand about the issues which older people are raising with her and to discuss the Advocate's role in the consultation process.

Projects in the North Antrim Constituency

Mr D McKay asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) what projects their Department has funded; and (ii) the amount of money provided by their Department, in the North Antrim constituency, since May 2007. (AQW 462/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: Our Department has funded a number of projects in the North Antrim constituency since May 2007. The projects and the amount of funding involved are detailed below.

Projects	Amount of Funding
Northern Health & Social Services Board Trauma Advisory Panel	2007/08 - £71,777 2008/09 - £79,891 (The Panel will continue to be funded by OFMDFM during 2009/10)
Ballymena Inter-Ethnic Forum	2007/08 - £40,000 2008/09 - £46,000 2009/10 - £20,650 * (*out of their total allocation of £45,000 for 2009/10)
Dunclug Partnership Group – Summer Community Relations event	2007/08 - £200
Dunclug Partnership Group – Shared Future Event	2007/08 - £2700 2008/09 - £3000
Harryville Partnership Initiative – Cross-border Community Relations programme	2007/08 - £800
Corrymeela Community residential programme Minority ethnic communities	2007/08 - £2500 2008/09 - £5000
Community Relations Residential	
Harryville Partnership Initiative Cross border Community Relations programme	2007/08 - £800
Dervock and District Community group Community festival	2007/08 - £1450
Bann valley Community Assoc. Community Relations discussion	2007/08 - £825
WAVE trauma Centre (Victims Core funding grant)	2007/08 - £36,648
Psychotherapy intervention services	2008/09 - £38,178
Alternative therapy services	2008/09 - £6720
Structured activities dealing with past	2008/09 - £2560 2008/09 - £4532
Ballymena All saints Church development of Churches Forum	2008/09 - £325
Ballymena Inter Ethnic Forum Community Relations week event	2008/09 - £1500
Ballymena Community Safety Partnership Summer interventions	2008/09 - £880
Ballymena Peace group Community Relations residential	2008/09 - £1500
Ballymena Community Forum Minority Ethnic event	2008/09 - £480
Ballymoney Resource Centre	2008/09 - £2682
Dunloy Development Association Shared history Project	2008/09 - £256
Ballycastle Trinity Community Choir Community Relations music event	2008/09 - £2500
Moyle Four Swans Community Arts Festival	2008/09 - £5000
Ballymena RUC GC Association Social Engagement programme	2008/09 - £2630
Ballymena District Council	2007/08 - £69240 2008/09 - £71730 2009/10 - £15736.45 (1st qtr allocation)
Ballymoney District Council	2007/08 - £55271.28 2008/09 - £78819.22 2009/10 - £10716.61 (1st qtr allocation)

Projects	Amount of Funding
Moyle District Council	2007/08 - £47634.28
	2008/09 - £49665.13
	2009/10 - £9620.15 (1st qtr allocation)

Employment Levels

Mr D McNarry asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what plans they have to change employment levels within their Department in the next 12 months; and how many of these changes are planned to be made through redundancies. (AQW 600/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: Staffing levels in the Department are regularly reviewed to ensure the work of the Department is delivered in the most efficient and effective way. The size of the Department has reduced from 408 staff in post in September 2007 to 394 in September 2009.

Proposals for organisational change to support delivery of current and future Departmental objectives are currently under consideration.

A key aim for the Northern Ireland Civil Service is to avoid redundancy if this is possible; it is planned that any staff who become surplus through organisational changes in the Department would be redeployed within the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

Child Protection Issues

Mr D Simpson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) for their assessment of the child protection issues arising from the allegations of serious physical assault against children in (a) Termonbacca, Londonderry; (b) Nazareth House, Londonderry; (c) Nazareth Lodge, Belfast; (d) Nazareth House, Belfast; (e) St Patrick's home, Belfast; and (ii) how they intend to investigate those child protection issues. (AQW 672/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: As we have stated previously, the issue of child protection and the safeguarding of children is a key priority for all of us and an issue which impacts on the work of several departments in the devolved administration, as well as the Northern Ireland Office.

Recognising the seriousness of this matter, Ministers will consider it at the next meeting of the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People.

We would like to repeat that we have not directly been made aware of any calls for an investigation into any particular institution and have no plans to seek meetings at this time. However, we share concerns about allegations of abuse against children and want to see full investigations of any specific incidents take place. We would strongly urge if anyone has evidence of abuses committed against them within this jurisdiction, if they have not already done so, to bring it to the attention

Child Protection Issues

Mr D Simpson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) what assessment they have made of the need for a public investigation of allegations of serious physical assault against children in (a) Termonbacca, Londonderry; (b) Nazareth House, Londonderry; (c) Nazareth Lodge, Belfast; (d) Nazareth House, Belfast; (e) St Patrick's home, Belfast; and (ii) how they intend to investigate those child protection issues. (AQW 673/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: As we have stated previously, the issue of child protection and the safeguarding of children is a key priority for all of us and an issue which impacts on the work of several departments in the devolved administration, as well as the Northern Ireland Office.

Recognising the seriousness of this matter, Ministers will consider it at the next meeting of the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People.

We would like to repeat that we have not directly been made aware of any calls for an investigation into any particular institution and have no plans to seek meetings at this time. However, we share concerns about

allegations of abuse against children and want to see full investigations of any specific incidents take place. We would strongly urge if anyone has evidence of abuses committed against them within this jurisdiction, if they have not already done so, to bring it to the attention

The Executive

Mr G Savage asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to list all issues on which the Executive has not reached agreement. (AQW 874/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: It is not our practice to disclose details of Executive business. The content of Executive papers and all aspects of Executive business are confidential.

The Executive

Mr G Savage asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to list the 451 issues on which the Executive has reached agreement. (AQW 875/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: It is not our practice to disclose details of Executive business. The content of Executive papers and all aspects of Executive business are confidential.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Apple Industry

Mr G Savage asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the current state of the apple industry. (AQW 278/10)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (Ms M Gildernew): There are approximately 1500 hectares of orchard in the north of Ireland, with approximately 200 apple growers. Bramley Seedlings occupy 97% of the orchard area.

The projected yield for 2009 is estimated at 30,000 tonnes which represents 45% of the 2007/2008 crops. However, it represents 75% of the long term average yield. The projected reduction in crop yield is due to the extremely poor weather conditions (wet and cold) in May when the orchards were in blossom. However, it is anticipated that the apple sector will meet market demand from the fresh and processed sectors.

It is too early in the season to make definitive statement on producer returns for 2009, however early indications are that an increase on 2008 prices is anticipated.

Apple Growers

Mr G Savage asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what assistance is available for apple growers. (AQW 279/10)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: My Department through CAFRE works closely with the apple industry to deliver industry training, knowledge and technology transfer and benchmarking programmes. CAFRE, in conjunction with AFBI, appraise plant health and assist growers to develop pest and disease control plans for their orchards. Technical support and advice is also given on the processing and packaging of apples and apple products.

My Department is a major sponsor of apple research, with considerable research being carried out by AFBI, Loughgall. Financial assistance may be available to the apple industry involved in the processing and marketing of apples through the Rural Development Programme's Agriculture and Forestry Marketing Development Grant Scheme. This scheme, which is currently open to producers and processors in the Agri-Food and Forestry sectors can provide grant assistance of 40% up to £150,000, to assist in the development of marketing capability.

The EU Agricultural and Forestry Processing and Marketing Scheme seeks to improve the economic performance and international competitiveness of the agri-food processing, horticulture and forestry sectors.

The Supply Chain Development (SCD) Programme is aimed at helping farmers and food producers work together to improve the rewards from their supply chain by helping to stimulate the formation of “embryonic” supply chain partnerships and support these as they move forward, by providing financial assistance and expert guidance.

The Department has assisted the Fruit Industry Federation in developing an application to register ‘Armagh Bramley Apples’ as a Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) under the EU Protected Food Names Scheme.

The EC Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Aid Scheme aims to channel “grants” to Producer Organisations (POs), who come together to produce, harvest, store, package and market their crop. Approved programmes are guaranteed up to 50% EU funding of their incurred expenditure.

Apple Growers

Mr G Savage asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail what assistance her Department (i) has given to date; and (ii) continues to give to apple growers, in conjunction with DETI and Invest NI, in finding new markets for their products. (AQW 281/10)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: To date my Department has awarded £1.35m of grant aid to the Apple Industry, under the previous Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme (PMG) 2000 – 2006.

DARD has facilitated the Fruit Industry Federation in their application for Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) status for the Armagh Bramley under the EU Protected Food Name Scheme. This scheme aims to identify regional and traditional foods whose authenticity and origin can be guaranteed.

The Fruit Industry Federation participation in the Supply Chain Development Programme (SCDP) helped the industry develop a strategy to enable them to move forward together.

In May 2009, the apple industry was provided with £10k of support through the NI Regional Food Programme which aims to promote quality regional food and its consumption within Ireland and Britain.

As part of the NI Rural Development Programme 2007 - 2013, financial assistance continues to be made available to apple growers and processors through schemes administered by DARD. These include the EU Agriculture and Forestry Processing and Marketing Scheme which is delivered jointly by DARD and Invest NI; and The Agriculture and Forestry Marketing and Development Grant Scheme which provides financial support to encourage greater integration and collaboration between producers, processors and others in the Agri - food, wood supply and renewable energy chains.

In addition, Invest NI has had and will continue to have significant engagement with apple processors to assist them in finding new markets for their products. Over the past three years, five companies have participated in 75 specialist ‘Meet the Buyer’ events organised by Invest NI. Some of these processors have also exhibited/attended major sectoral trade shows such as the International Food Exhibition (IFE) in London and CATEX in Dublin.

In addition, through Invest NI’s Food Sector Marketing Advisors, over £200,000 first year sales were secured for three clients engaged in apple processing to 11 customers outside the north of Ireland. Given the timing of this business it is estimated that this could represent in excess of £500,000 cumulative sales.

Organic Farming Scheme

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) when the Organic Farming Scheme will open for applications; and (ii) when successful applicants will receive financial payments under the scheme. (AQW 307/10)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development:

- (i) On 6 August I issued a press release confirming that the Organic Farming Scheme (OFS) will open for new applications again in early 2010.
- (ii) Successful applicants will receive payment at the end of each OFS agreement claim year if all agreement requirements have been met. All OFS agreement claim years run from 1 January to 31 December each year.

Hence, for agreements entered into in January 2009, the first payments will be due to commence in January 2010.

DARD Direct Facility in Newtownards

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) what sites are being investigated as possible locations for the DARD Direct facility in Newtownards; and (ii) when the new service will be fully operational. (AQW 308/10)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: In January this year, I announced that a network of 12 DARD Direct offices would be established to deliver services to customers across the north of Ireland. At that time I identified the locations of 10 of these offices. These are Omagh, Dungannon, Armagh, Newry, Downpatrick, Newtownards, Ballymena, Coleraine, Claudy and Magherafelt. (These are in addition to the Enniskillen office, which was established as the pilot DARD Direct office). In July, I confirmed that the 12th and final office would be located in the centre of the South and East Antrim area (eg, between Mallusk and Antrim).

With respect to identifying actual office accommodation, my officials are working in partnership with DFP (Department of Finance and Personnel) to determine this, as they are responsible for providing office accommodation to meet the needs of all Government Departments. They are working through a range of steps to assess the suitability of existing accommodation and/or identify alternative accommodation that will optimise alignment with the DARD Direct specification. It is a process of elimination and at this stage, for the majority of locations, there is no final decision on what accommodation we will occupy.

A property search of the Newtownards area has not identified any suitable premises. We are currently working with DFP to explore the potential of new accommodation being available by working through an "Expressions of Interest" process for this location. This is a complicated process and may take considerable time to implement.

In the shorter term, we are implementing management changes to enable us to deliver all key services from the existing offices at Kiltonga.

It is hoped that our customers can benefit from this improved accessibility to our services from the Spring of next year.

Protected Geographical Indication

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the achievement of Protected Geographical Indication status for the Comber potato. (AQW 309/10)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The NI Potato Stakeholder Forum's application to register 'Comber Earlies' under the EU Protected Food Name Scheme is currently being finalised.

Once the application has been finalised, the Department will oversee a consultation with interested parties. Following this, the application will be forwarded to Defra, as the competent authority, before onward transmission to the EC.

The EC can take at least 18 months to consider, approve and register the product under the scheme.

Food Production Sector

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what strategy is in place for the growth of the food production sector; and what targets have been set for expanding the industry. (AQW 310/10)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The local agri-food sector plays a significant role in contributing to the wider local economy, as well as being the backbone of rural communities here. It is the single largest private sector employer and demand for our quality local produce means that the sector contributes significantly to external sales.

In May last year, I, and the then DETI Minister, Nigel Dodds, established new structures for development support for the agri food industry. These comprised an Inter-Departmental Group (IDG) and an Industry Advisory Panel (IAP), which gave representatives of the agri-food industry unprecedented direct influence at a strategic level on public policy relating to this important sector.

The IAP and IDG have agreed a Strategy Framework for the agri-food industry to help build a strong and robust food sector capable of competing within the competitive environment which exists in both the domestic and international marketplace. Work is now underway with industry representatives to develop performance indicators against which to measure the Strategy Framework.

A key issue for consideration was to define the scope and focus of development priorities for the industry. The Framework identified market dynamics, changing demographics, lifestyles and consumer consumption patterns as challenges which underlined the need for priority to be given to industry investment in both marketing and innovation and points to the need to further stimulate capability development across critical strategic areas.

To support the development of these priorities, key strategic themes were identified: market understanding and development, fostering innovation, supply chain management, capability development and waste & energy. Dedicated Project Teams, including representation from the IAP, have been established to take forward work in these respective areas.

Waste Management Solutions

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if her Department has advertised for tenders for the provision of waste management solutions to address the problem faced by poultry farmers in relation to the disposal of poultry litter. (AQW 326/10)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: My Department has not advertised for tenders for the provision of waste management solutions. Those who have waste to dispose of may have commercial contracts to do so.

The Nitrates Action Programme Regulations require farmers to put in place sufficient storage capacity for livestock manure. In the case of poultry enterprise this needs to be sufficient for at least 26 weeks.

Pig Producers

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many pig producers are registered in 2009 compared to each of the last 3 years. (AQW 392/10)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The number of pig producers in the last four years as recorded from the Agri farm census were:

2006	2007	2008
452	490	488

Figures for 2009 will not be available until December 2009.

The Animal Welfare Act

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development when she intends to introduce the Animal Welfare Act. (AQW 426/10)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: A new Animal Welfare Bill is one of my key ministerial priorities and it is my intention, subject to Executive approval, to progress an Animal Welfare Bill through to introduction to the Assembly by June 2010 and enactment during the lifetime of the current Assembly.

Farm Modernisation Programme

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether the documentation associated with unsuccessful applications to the Farm Modernisation Programme will be acceptable as applications under any further releases of the programme, and will they be given preferential treatment over fresh applications. (AQW 430/10)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: As the European Commission have requested additional selection criteria for future tranches of the Farm Modernisation Programme and as there will be there will be

revisions to the List of Eligible Items it will be necessary for farmers to submit a further application. I will be ensuring however that the application forms remains as straightforward and as easy to complete as before.

Applications will therefore be assessed on the revised selection criteria.

Projects in the North Antrim Constituency

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) what projects her Department has funded; and (ii) the amount of money provided by her Department, in the North Antrim constituency, since May 2007. (AQW 464/10)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The following table details the projects funded since 8 May 2007:-

Name of Project	Funding	Description of Project
*Projects Funded by Forest Service		
*Harvesting of trees	It is not possible to extract costs that were incurred on this project through Forest Service operational expenditure	80,000 m ³ harvested, with associated replanting and maintenance actions.
*Conservation	It is not possible to extract costs that were incurred on this project through Forest Service operational expenditure	Assistance with NI Environment Agency (NIEA) on restoration work to Breen Oakwood ponds Special Area of Conservation.
*Squirrel preservation	It is not possible to extract costs that were incurred on this project through Forest Service operational expenditure	Facilitated Red Squirrel preservation using feeders and crop manipulation jointly with the Glens Red Squirrel Group.
*Deer management	It is not possible to extract costs that were incurred on this project through Forest Service operational expenditure	Establishment of deer lawns in Ballycastle and ongoing monitoring of population levels.
*Boundary drain cleaning	It is not possible to extract costs that were incurred on this project through Forest Service operational expenditure	250 metres of boundary drains cleaned.
Projects funded by Rivers Agency		
Ballymoney Ring Road Drain	£42,000 Approximate Cost	Drainage infrastructure (pipe laying and river channel works) project constructed by Rivers Agency's Coleraine Area Office, Direct Labour Organisation to facilitate drainage from development of approximately 10 hectares of land in Ballymoney. Project completed in December 2007.
Lower Bann Motorisation of Sluice Gates	£900,000 Approximate Cost	Mechanical & Electrical project to install electric motors on the 3 main sluice gates control structures on the Lower Bann River (at Toome, Portna & Cutts Coleraine). Project also included, automation of controls to enable remote control and installation of CCTV systems for monitoring the gates. Project completed in December 2008.
Projects funded by Animal Welfare		
Bluetongue Eradication	£47,190	Bluetongue was detected in animals imported to a north Antrim farm in February 2008. The Minister took prompt and decisive action: the animals concerned (and in-contacts) were culled, restrictions were imposed, and additional testing was carried out. This action was successful in stopping the Bluetongue becoming established here.

Name of Project	Funding	Description of Project
Projects funded by Service Delivery Group		
DARD Direct Accommodation Rollout Project	£25,000	Refurbishment and upgrade of customer service reception area and private interview room in Kilpatrick House, Ballymena.
Supply Chain Development Programme (SCDP)	£11,738.75	The north Antrim Dairy Development Group received support from the SCDP, between November 2007 and June 2008, to facilitate the development of a calf export business.
*Projects funded by the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE)		
*CAFRE – Further and Higher Education programmes	It is not possible to extract from the College accounts the money spent on delivery of these programmes on the north Antrim Constituency.	Further Education and Higher Education programmes provided for those wishing to pursue a career in the agri-food industry and delivered at the CAFRE Campuses of Greenmount, Loughry and Enniskillen. Courses are open to application to those who meet the required entry criteria from across the north of Ireland.
*Industry training programme	It is not possible to extract from the College accounts the money spent on delivery of these programmes on the north Antrim Constituency.	Training courses for those working in the agri-food industry, which are delivered locally across the north or at the CAFRE Campuses of Greenmount, Enniskillen and Loughry.
*Knowledge and Technology Transfer programme	It is not possible to extract from the College accounts the money spent on delivery of these programmes on the north Antrim Constituency.	This programme aims to equip those in the agri-food industry with the knowledge, skills and experience to adopt appropriate technologies and systems within their businesses. CAFRE Technologists and Development Advisers work with the industry to encourage the adoption of the technology or system within their businesses. This is achieved through training courses, normally delivered throughout the north, Demonstration events on the College Farm/local farms or Food Processing Units and through mentoring.
*Benchmarking programme	It is not possible to extract from the College accounts the money spent on delivery of these programmes on the north Antrim Constituency.	This programme involves the collection of physical and financial data from farmers and growers, the analysis of this data by CAFRE Business Technologists and comparison with similar farm businesses. Through this programme the strengths and weaknesses of farm business performance can be identified and actions to improve performance implemented. This programme is available to farmers and growers across the north.
Projects funded by Rural Development Division		
Empowering Community Energy	£46,957.17	The upgrading of an existing water turbine installation at Houston's Mill complex to improve energy output from 1kwh to 14kwh.
North Antrim Community Development and Networking	£419,336.40	The project is to provide a community development and networking service in the rural areas of Ballymena, Ballymoney, Moyle and Larne. The primary areas of work within this project will involve building capacities of rural communities, stimulating community development in areas of low community infrastructure, to increase and support voluntary activity and networking

Name of Project	Funding	Description of Project
Business Development Support	£82,761	As part of the Leader support which north Antrim will offer, Business Development Support will be offered to successful applicants. It will ensure a coherent and innovative approach is adopted by the project promoters. It will thus complement the capital grants available.
Artisan Food Producers' Country Market	£31,709.31	To develop and market artisan food producers by developing markets for selling
Woolcraft	£29,017.22	To identify options for wool and sheep products, look at product development and marketing of these new products. This project will also aim to raise the profile of wool production in the areas.
The Irish Sheepdog (Phase 2)	£11,625.60	The project focuses on expanding the sheepdog enterprise on a small farm enterprise that has already received £1,800 Leader+ grant assistance to establish a web presence.
Newferry Environmental Improvements	£78,092	Ballymena Borough Council, in conjunction with Newferry Water-ski Club, wish to upgrade the current facilities at Newferry – slip-way, jetty, car park, picnic area and public toilets, in line with the Lower Bann Tourism and Recreation Study.
PBS Office Provision	£15,000	With the help of EU Funding, PBS wishes to renovate an old farm building to provide a purpose built call centre and office facility to allow its current operation to expand, creating flexible, local employment in a rural area.
Women into Enterprise	£47,941.12	This project will look at business linkages between Isle of Wight and north Antrim. It will link individual businesses and provide a programme of training, mentoring and marketing assistance
The Weir Footbridge, Bushmills	£120,317	The construction of a new footbridge over the River Bush in Bushmills village.
ER&M E-commerce Business - Marketing Consultant	£7,800	Assistance to ER&M for the appointment of a Marketing Consultant to complement the work through existing markets and launch the business fully into new markets.
Armoy Comm. Tourism Project	£56,196.55	To develop a multimedia tourist information facility based on the villages motorcycle history.
BUSH Heritage	£80,325.12	Develop tourism and regeneration initiatives for village.
Moycraig Young Farmers' Hall	£129,261.11	Renovation of Moycraig Farmers Recreational Hall to include heating, toilets and other internal works. Project also includes construction of a car park adjacent to the hall.
Glenovation - Provision of Specialised Technology Developer	£7,500	This project is to provide a technology related developer who will be based in Ballycastle providing Internet programming services mainly to international clients.
Gracehill Farm Foods	£9,600	To develop three food products and establish a small food processing unit that will manufacture quality black and white puddings and haggis.

Name of Project	Funding	Description of Project
Rankin Engraving - New Laser Engraver	£10,000	The addition of a new laser engraver will enable Rankin Engraving and Graphics to offer a greater portfolio of services to the wider rural community in which it serves, as well as across all of the north.
Food and Cultural Tourism	£35,000	<p>This project seeks to establish how an appreciation of local culture can help local tourism providers, food producers, crafts people and others meet the needs of discerning consumers.</p> <p>The partners will explore culture as and local food as a resource which can benefit local business.</p>
Beachview Cottages (Extension)	£39,000	Beachview Cottages has been in business for 10 years. During this time they have developed a unique tourist product and in recent time the demand for accommodation has exceed its availability. Beachview Cottages now wish to extend its facilities to capture this market and encourage more visitors into the Cushendun area.
Steel Shed Company - Develop a Manufacturing Facility	£3,126.40	<p>The purchase of the necessary plant equipment, such as, concrete moulds, vibrating table, handling equipment, jigs, cutting/welding equipment and associated tools for the manufacture of both concrete sectional and steel buildings.</p> <p>Additionally there is a requirement for the development of a functional stand alone web site for the promotion of the steel buildings.</p>
Myra and Robert Gault	£10,000	Modernising of refrigeration in shop.
Celtic Crafts	£3,759	Installation of shop windows and painting to exterior of shop.
Ballyvoy Service Station	£6,570.60	Re-establishment of a business shop.
CM Recycling - Shredding Machine	£40,000	CM Recycling are in the process of buying an industrial shredding machine for the recycling of green waste and hope to initially supply local authorities, agriculture industry, plant nursery and equestrian centres as their product portfolio expands.
Mosside Cultural and Environmental Regeneration	£74,099.13	Environmental improvements, production of booklet and interactive workshops, re-establishment of Mosside fair day.
The Loughgiel Synergy Project	£7,500	The project aims to bring together local women from the Loughgiel area to plan, develop and manage a personal and social development project which will enable those involved to gain experience and confidence in managing and engaging in development workshops.
Bridge to Lifelong Learning	£4,245	Provide variety of taster sessions and courses to rural women to promote skills for social, economical and environmental purposes actively promoting the inclusion of all women wishing to learn and enhance skills to combat disadvantage.
A Step Further	£30,000	J & S Stairs relocation and expansion project.

Name of Project	Funding	Description of Project
MJ. Dougherty Building and Joinery	£14,607.20	Funding for MJ Doherty Building & Joinery Contractors to purchase machinery for the manufacture of bespoke pieces of furniture.
Biker Tourism (Main project)	£19,821.05	This is a pilot initiative aimed at encouraging small businesses to tap into the biker tourism sector and to provide facilities for these bikers through corporation by accommodation providers.
Lismoyle Engineering Co Ltd - Decorative Marine Steelwork	£8,000	For the manufacture of high specification stainless steel fittings and railings for leisure boats.
Ballymena Birdwatchers' Club tern breeding	£9,592	The Tern Breeding Programme is a habitat restoration project involving erection of a number of tern breeding platforms on Lough Beg on the River Bann.
Bespoke Jewellery Manufacturing	£6,988	Purchase of specialist equipment which will help improve the product range and manufacturing techniques.
Metal Fabrication Equipment	£36,241.60	GMC Engineering wish to develop their business and expand into additional dealerships across Ireland for ATV Quads. The company also wishes to engage in the new opportunity to manufacture traditional farming gates.
Nirox IT	£9,420	The company wishes to invest in IT infrastructure to support the businesses current growth and secure the employment of existing staff and help the company expand to meet demand.
MJF Sailpower Coaching	£9,275	To establish a sail coaching facility in Cushendall serving all of Ireland, aimed at the established sailor wishing to improve and participate more fully in the sport of sail racing
Boundless Play	£26,132	To purchase play equipment and develop a disused Council site for disabled and able bodied children in the local and surrounding area.
McCurdy Specialist Engineering	£2,600	To improve the efficiency and profitability of the business by bringing in house a key production method, namely the metalworking of specialist decorative scrolls
Tourism Car-Parking at Fairhead	£10,000	The provision of secure off road car parking for climbers and walkers who visit the Fairhead cliffs.
Strand One: Rural Service Centre Hubs Programme	£5,000	Providing Development Support and associated financial Technical Assistance.
Strand One: Rural Service Centre Hubs Programme	£3,609.15	Providing Development Support and associated financial Technical Assistance
Strand Two: Service Centre Hubs Project	£16,171.60	Providing Development support and Grant assistance towards Technical Assistance costs.
Enterprise Networking Europe	£25,440	The project will involve partners initially in Finland and France with Polish and Estonian partners joining shortly. All the participating groups work with small enterprises and have identified a need to diversify their markets and learn from their experience with similar enterprises in other EU states.

Name of Project	Funding	Description of Project
Reducing Risks / Cutting Costs	£3,875	This self implementation project focuses on the barriers to growth for small businesses. These primarily concern health and safety and failure to meet the standards required of the legislation results in higher insurance premiums. This will look at ways of reducing insurance costs and implementing H&S practices.
Dervock 2006 and Beyond	£4,784.98	Dervock 2006 and Beyond Community Plan (commissioned via the NIHE) identifying a number of issues and action points. The Plan aims to capitalise and build on a previous CRISP Scheme carried out in the village in 1997.
Maximising Community. Space — Cloughmills Cultural and Historical	£46,362.25	Provision of a large community facility which meets health and safety standards, and complies with disabled access regulations.
North Antrim Leader (NAL) business capital support programme	£150,000	NAL will put in place a micro business development programme which will address an identified need for small business support in the north Antrim area. The programme will aim to stimulate economic growth through the provision of targeted capital assistance.
Round 2 Maximising Community. Space — Derrykeighan and District Community Association	£40,000	Provision of a small community facility which meets health and safety standards, and complies with disabled access regulations.
Round 2 Maximising Community Space — Carnelea Orange Hall Management Committee	£39,534.79	Provision of a large community facility which meets health and safety standards, and complies with fire authority regulations.
Newferry — a good place to give berth!	£29,257.50	The project will involve the purchase of new floating jetties to facilitate the demand for berthing of boats using this section of the river for water skiing.
Total	£2,979,380.60	

The project below was a cross-border initiative between north Antrim and Donegal. The outputs and impacts from this project were to be shared equally across the target areas. In this instance, it has not been possible to disaggregate the actual amount of funding apportioned to the north Antrim Constituency.

Name of Project	Funding	Description of Project
Maximising the Rural Resource	€1,269,631	There are four themes to the framework based on shared natural and cultural resources in the two areas:- Marine Leisure Development; Language and Culture; Building sustainable capacity; and Reviving traditional skills.

* It is not possible to disaggregate specific funding for the north Antrim Constituency for these projects.

Farm Modernisation Scheme

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to the Farm Modernisation Scheme, (i) how many applications were received since its inception; (ii) how many were approved for payment; and (iii) of those approved, how many took up payment, in the North Down constituency. (AQW 469/10)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: 33 applications from farm businesses located in the North Down Constituency were submitted to the First Tranche of the Farm Modernisation Programme.

Of these 7 have received Letters of Offer of financial support towards the purchase costs of modernisation items.

As farmers have 4 months in which to purchase these items and submit their claims, information on the number of farmers in the North Down constituency who have received payment is not yet available.

Legislation

Mr G Savage asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline any legislation her Department intends to bring to the Assembly before 31 December 2009. (AQW 533/10)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has no plans to formally introduce any new legislation to the NI Assembly before 31 December 2009.

Employment Levels

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what plans she has to change employment levels within her Department in the next 12 months; and how many of these changes are planned to be made through redundancies. (AQW 601/10)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development currently has no plans to change its employment levels in the next 12 months or to make any staff redundant. Should change become necessary the Department would make every reasonable effort to minimise the number of employees compulsorily made redundant.

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, ARTS AND LEISURE

Projects in the North Antrim Constituency

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) what projects his Department has funded; and (ii) the amount of money provided by his Department, in the North Antrim constituency, since May 2007. (AQW 461/10)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (Mr N McCausland): The information requested is set out at Annex A.

NELSON MCC AUSLAND MLA

ANNEX A

INLAND FISHERIES

Project	Amount (£)
Refurbishment of Trap Building at River Bush Salmon Station	119,700
New store at River Bush Salmon Station	32,500
Buttermilk Bridge, Broughshane	5,000
Newferry Environmental Improvement Scheme	20,000
Total	177,200

EVENTS UNIT

Project	Amount (£)
*All Ireland Antrim Girls Golf Championships	10,000

Project	Amount (£)
*Northern Ireland Milk Cup	25,000
Northern Ireland Milk Cup	48,700
Northern Ireland Milk Cup	65,000
Armoy Road Races	20,000
Total	168,700

* Funded by Northern Ireland Events Company

SPORT NI

Project	Amount (£)
Glenravel Community Development Association (Multi-purpose community building)	994,892
Construction of full size grass pitch (All Saints GAC)	248,195
Construction of full size GAA grass pitch (Glen Rovers GAC)	188,793
Construction of full size GAA grass pitch with floodlighting (St Mary's GAC)	225,000
Total	1,656,880

NATIONAL MUSEUMS NORTHERN IRELAND

Project	Amount (£)
Boyd's Ballycastle (Ballycastle Museum)	420
Boyd's Ballycastle Tours (Ballycastle Museum)	350
Preserved Medieval Wood Artefacts from Ballymoney (Ballymoney Museum)	4,747
1911 - 1914 - New Perspectives (The Braid)	4,250
Tullygrawley Wood Cut Prints Archive (Ballymena Museum)	1,349
Storage materials for archive documents and replacements of wooden drawer unit with conservation grade metal map cabinet (Ballymoney Museum)	895
Education/Outreach Post (Mid Antrim Museum Service)	1,500
Legends in the Landscape School Programme (Mid Antrim Museum Service)	1,529
Conservation of Staton Bronzes (Ballymoney Museum)	273
Conservation and dating wooden artefacts (Ballymoney Museum)	3,083
Conservation of dating of a possible Bronze Age wooden tub (Ballymoney Museum)	494
Conservation of metal artefacts (Ballymoney Museum)	781
Divine Inspiration: Remarkable objects reflecting faith (Mid Antrim Museum)	6,000
C18th medical Book (Ballymoney Museum)	200
Two Clocks (Mid Antrim Museum)	3,425
30 Emigrant Letters (Ballymoney Museum)	200
Total	29,496

ARTS COUNCIL OF NORTHERN IRELAND

Project	Amount (£)
Public Art Sculpture at Station Road, Ballymena (Kells & Connor Improvement Association)	15,000
SStart Up – ‘Sensory Mural for Disability Playground’, Moyle (Place & Identity Art)	5,000
Travel application to South Africa for artist Liz Weir	500
Exchange trips between Glens of Antrim Comhaltas and Ballyduff Comhaltas (Waterford)	9,943
Malta Residency for Artist Damian Gorman	450
Drumaheagles Young Defenders Flute Band, Ballymoney (Musical Instrument Application)	5,000
Enhancing Capacity of Northern Ireland Theatre Association	45,000
African drumming workshop in Senegal. Residency for artist Nicola Such	500
Residency at Martha Street Studio, Winnipeg for artist Ivan Frew	1,400
The Magic Flute – Dervock & District Community Association	14,936
Ballymena & Harryville Young Conqueror (Purchase of instruments)	5,000
Residency West Bengal, India for artist Raymond Watson	650
To produce 20 paintings during the residency. The work should reflect the local landscape and aspects of it. Artist Maurice Orr	1,961
Susan F Hunter, Moyle, Creative Industries Business Development	6,670
Public Art Project – Moyle District Council	9,095
Ballyeamon Barn Creative Breaks	25,000
Fiona Kerr Jewellery , Cullybackey, Creative Industries Development Project	9,940
Castlegore Amateur Flute Band (Purchase Musical Instruments)	5,000
Total	161,045

COMMUNITY FESTIVALS FUND

Project	Amount (£)
Dunaghy Cultural and Community Festival (Ballymoney)	2,250
Heart of the Glens Festival 2007 (Cushendall)	3,000
Ballymena Borough Council	32,160
Ballymoney Borough Council	11,500
Moyle District Council	8,800
Total	57,710

NI SCREEN

Project	Amount (£)
‘The Truck’ – Mobile Digital Creativity vehicle run by North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB), based at the Antrim Board	36,000
Creative Learning Centre (The Nerve Centre) – two 5 day film schools for teenagers in Ballycastle 2008	2,000

Project	Amount (£)
Creative Learning Centre (The Nerve Centre) – production of animated film, 4 primary schools in Ballycastle area	10,000
Total	48,000

LIBRARIES NI

Project	Amount (£)
Capital investment to Library Branches (Disability access, CCTV and other improvements)	79,940
Ballymena HQ Building Health & Safety Improvements	18,733
Total	98,673

FORAS NA GAELIGE

Project	Amount (£)
Ballycastle Programme of Events	2,770
Summer Camp, Ballycastle	3,500
Community of Ballycastle (2008-10)	117,441
Voice of Dalraida (2009)	1,310
Voice of Dalraida (2008)	500
Dunloy Arts Club	3,319
The Glens' Feis (Cultural Festival)	2,000
Donncha O'Broin, Ballycastle (A Publication)	8,000
Total	138,840

ULSTER-SCOTS AGENCY

Project	Amount (£)
Bushmills Ulster-Scots Heritage Project	14,380
Bendoragh Lambeg Drumming (Drum & Fife tuition)	1,950
Ballinlea Community Group (Ulster-Scots evening)	246
Ballinlea Community Group (at home with Ulster-Scots)	483
Kingdom of Dalriada Ulster-Scots Society (Festival)	7,790
Lavin Flute Band (music tuition)	400
Stranocum Ulster-Scots Cultural & Heritage (Robert the Bruce 700th Anniversary)	2,750
Lower Bann Valley Ulster-Scots Society (Festival)	3,200
Sir George White Memorial Flute Band (flute & drum tuition)	5,850
Mossie Development Group (Mossie Cultural Regeneration)	2,774
Maralagh Educational & Cultural Group (Ulster-Scots Celebration Night)	1,150
Dunloy Accordion Band (tuition workshops)	2,137
Ballinlea Community Group (festival)	3,742
Dunloy Accordion Band (commission of musical arrangements)	3,600

Project	Amount (£)
Stranocum Ulster-Scots Cultural & Heritage (music tuition)	1,400
Dunloy Accordion Band (festival day)	623
Cullybackey Pipe Band	25
Gig'n the Bann Festival Committee (festival)	3,310
Maralagh Educational & Cultural Group (Flute & Drum Tuition)	8,462
Maralagh Educational & Cultural Group (Ulster-Scots Concert)	250
Killycoogan Accordion Band (accordion & drum classes)	2,250
Lower Bann Valley Ulster-Scots Society (flute & drum tuition)	2,250
Mosside Development Group (fair day)	1,004
Bushmills Ulster-Scots Heritage (skills training, education & awareness talks)	17,950
Craiganeer Accordion Band (tuition project)	2,408
Stranocum Ulster-Scots Cultural & Heritage (alternative St Patricks night)	250
Cullybackey Pipe Band (summer school)	700
Dunloy Accordion Band (accordion & drum classes)	4,475
Eden Accordion Band (accordion & drum classes)	3,200
Bannside Community Safety Group (summer school)	1,927
Glebeside Community Association (summer school)	700
Riada Concert Group (accordion, fifi & drum tuition)	2,031
Craiganeer Accordion Band (accordion & drum classes)	600
Broughshane District LOL (Festival)	1,490
Goldsprings T.D.F.B (flute & drum tuition)	1,050
Stranocum Ulster-Scots Cultural & Heritage (festival)	2,167
Cullybackey Pipe Band (festival)	1,265
Bannside Community Safety Group (summer school)	2,560
Cullybackey Pipe Band (educational workshop)	1,000
Mosside Development Group (Mosside word park)	10,984
Cullybackey Pipe Band (summer school)	1,305
Benvardeen Flute Band (Flute & Drum tuition)	675
Glebeside Community Association (community week)	250
Mosside Development Group (fair day)	3,890
Kingdom of Dalriada Ulster-Scots Society (Burns supper)	250
Moyasset Heritage & Cultural Society (St Patricks celebration)	250
Ballymoney Fife & Lambeg Drumming Club (National Lambeg & Fife Showcase)	2,000
Cullybackey Pipe Band (pipe & drum tuition)	1,855
Garryduff Flute Band (Flute & Drum Tuition)	600
Ballykeel Loyal Sons of Ulster (Flute & Drum Tuition)	800
Ullans Speakers Association (running cost)	20,203
Broughshane Community Safety Group (festival)	1,950

Project	Amount (£)
Sir Edward Carson Festival, Glenarm	1,350
Total	160,161

NI Association of Target Shooting Sports

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure if he would consider meeting with the NI Association of Target Shooting Sports to ensure that there are opportunities for young people to be introduced to the sport in preparation for the 2012 Olympics. (AQW 717/10)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Responsibility for providing opportunities for young people to be introduced to shooting sports rests, in the first instance, with the recognised governing bodies for the sports. Sport Northern Ireland, which is responsible for the development of sport including the distribution of funding, recognises the Northern Ireland Shooting Federation as the umbrella body for the three principal shooting organisations - the Ulster Rifle Association, the Northern Ireland Smallbore Shooting Union and the Ulster Clay Pigeon Shooting Association.

I have not received a request from the NI Association of Target Shooting Sports for a meeting but would be prepared to consider such a meeting if their proposals had the clear support of the Northern Ireland Shooting Federation and the relevant governing bodies.

Post Offices

Mr W Clarke asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (i) what services his Department currently provides through post offices; and (ii) for his assessment of any additional services that could be provided through local post offices. (AQW 753/10)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: DCAL currently sells angling permits and licences through a distribution network including fishing tackle shops, hotels and tourist information outlets. The Department also use the services of local Post Offices in rural locations to act as angling permit and licence distributors on behalf of the Department.

Where there are geographical gaps in the current distribution network, rural Post Offices located close to prime angling waters could consider becoming an approved DCAL angling permit and licence distributor and stock angling related merchandise to encourage anglers into their premises.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

GAA Sports Coaching

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to list the eight controlled primary schools which offer GAA sports coaching under the sports teaching programme, which she introduced in 2007. (AQW 67/10)

Minister of Education (Ms C Ruane): Tá socráithe agam go gcuirfead an t-eolas a iarradh i Leabharlann an Tionóil.

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

Average Class Size

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Education to detail the average class size at (i) Key Stage one; and (ii) Key Stage two in (a) controlled schools; (b) maintained schools; (c) integrated schools; and (d) Irish medium schools, in each of the last five years. (AQW 719/10)

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

The information requested is detailed in the table below.

Average class sizes in primary schools by management type and Key stage 2004/05 – 2008/09

Year	Key Stage	School type			
		Irish Medium	Controlled	Catholic Maintained	Integrated
2004/05	KS1	20	23	23	24
	KS2	19	24	23	26
2005/06	KS1	20	23	23	24
	KS2	18	24	24	26
2006/07	KS1	19	23	23	25
	KS2	19	24	24	27
2007/08	KS1	19	23	23	25
	KS2	20	24	24	26
2008/09	KS1	19	23	23	25
	KS2	19	24	24	26

Source: School Census

Notes To Table:-

- Figures for 2004/05 and 2005/06 include classes in special units. From 2006/07 data have been collected in such a way that special units can be identified separately. Figures for 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09 exclude special units.
- The integrated sector includes 'controlled integrated' and 'grant maintained integrated' schools.
- Classes that contain pupils from more than one year group are referred to as 'composite'. Composite classes that span Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 have been excluded.
- In 2006/07 the definition of Key Stages changed. Prior to this, Key Stage 1 included Years 1 – 4. From this year onwards, Years 1 and 2 have been referred to as 'Foundation stage', with only Year 3 and 4 being defined as Key Stage 1. For the purpose of this exercise, Key stage 1 has been defined as Years 1 – 4, to provide consistency across all of the five years.

Pupil/Teacher Ratio

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of Education what is the pupil/teacher ratio for primary level education in the (i) controlled sector; (ii) voluntary sector; and (iii) Irish-medium sector. (AQW 755/10)

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

The information requested is detailed in the table below.

PUPIL: TEACHER RATIOS, 2008/09

Sector	Pupil: Teacher Ratio
(i) Controlled ¹ sector	20.4
(ii) Voluntary ² sector	20.4
(iii) Irish-medium ³ sector	16.3

- Includes controlled integrated primary schools, and the preparatory departments of controlled grammar schools.
- Includes maintained and grant-maintained integrated primary schools, and the preparatory departments of voluntary grammar schools.
- Includes schools in which Irish is the only medium. English-medium schools with Irish-medium units are not included.

Pupil/Teacher Ratio

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of Education what is the pupil/teacher ratio for secondary level education in the (i) controlled sector; (ii) voluntary sector; and (iii) Irish-medium sector. (AQW 757/10)

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

The information requested is detailed in the table below.

PUPIL: TEACHER RATIOS, 2008/09

Sector	Pupil: Teacher Ratio
(i) Controlled ¹ sector schools	14.4
(ii) Voluntary ² sector schools	14.5
(iii) Irish-medium ³ sector	11.3

1 Includes controlled integrated secondary schools, and controlled grammar schools.

2 Includes maintained and grant-maintained integrated secondary schools, and voluntary grammar schools.

3 This figure refers to the only wholly Irish-medium secondary school.

Nutritional Policy Objectives

Ms J McCann asked the Minister of Education to outline her policy objectives in relation to improving nutritional standards in schools and educating children on healthy food choices. (AQO 95/10)

Minister of Education: Chuir an Roinn Oideachais, i bpáirtíocht leis na boird oideachais agus leabharlainne, tús le Caighdeáin Chothaitheacha Nua do Lóna Scoile i mí Mheán Fómhair na bliana dhá mhíle a cúig, agus tá siad in áit in gach scoil anseo.

The Department of Education, in conjunction with Education and Library Boards, began the implementation of New Nutritional Standards for School Lunches in September 2005 and they are now in place in all schools here. The aims of the Standards are to help pupils make healthy choices by providing a range of healthy meals, to convey the meaning and importance of a healthy diet, and to contribute to a reduction in levels of child obesity.

From September 2007 the Standards programme was extended to include other sources of food in schools, such as tuck shops and vending machines. Only healthy choices should be provided in vending machines, tuck shops, and other sources of food within the premises of each school.

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

It is also a requirement of the revised curriculum for all children to undertake Home Economics at Key Stage 3. This will provide opportunities for young people to develop their understanding of a healthy diet and the hygienic and healthy use of foods in the preparation of meals.

My Department, in conjunction with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, is developing a Food In School policy which will encompass all aspects of food in schools, including other food provided in schools, such as breakfast clubs, tuck shops, etc and education on nutrition and healthy eating. The policy was issued for public consultation on 14 September.

Classroom Assistants: Pay Dispute

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister of Education for an update on the resolution of the classroom assistants' pay dispute. (AQO 96/10)

Minister of Education: Is maith a thuigim an ról tábhachtach atá ag cúntóirí ranga. Mar Aire Oideachais, thug mé cuairt ar roinnt mhór scoileanna agus chonaic mé le mo chuid súl féin an tacaíocht ard-cháilíochta foghlama a chuireann cúntóirí ranga ar fáil, agus chonaic mé fosta chomh tiomanta agus dílis atá siad.

I very much appreciate the important role that classroom assistants perform. As Minister for Education I have visited a large number of schools and have witnessed at first hand the high quality learning support that classroom assistants provide, and their commitment and dedication.

I am, therefore, very concerned about the length of time it is taking to complete the classroom assistants' job evaluation process. Whilst I do acknowledge that it is a complex task, I am calling on all parties involved – the Education Boards, the Trade Unions, the School Principals and the classroom assistants - to resolve all outstanding issues at the earliest possible date.

As regards the progress that has been made since the November 2007 JNC Collective Agreement, I can advise that 94% of classroom assistants have signed and returned the 'Variation of Contract Form' and have received the one-off compensatory payment due to them. However, the calculation of salary arrears, which in some cases date back to 1 January 1995, has proved to be a much more complex and detailed process.

To date, of the 5,266 career histories and job descriptions that issued to schools, 1,958 cases have been assessed and agreed, and 44% (853) of these have received their arrears.

I can also advise that, while all classroom assistants who signed the Variation of Contract form were entitled to receive the one-off compensatory payment, it is estimated that up to 50% of classroom assistants could be entitled to Job Evaluation arrears.

The Boards have given priority to processing Special Schools' cases to ensure that those most likely to be entitled to arrears are paid their arrears as quickly as possible.

There have also been difficulties agreeing some of the job descriptions. It is hoped that proposals for an appeals process to expedite the clearance of these cases will be agreed by the Joint Negotiating Council (JNC) in the very near future.

The Boards have assured me they are working proactively with the schools to ensure that the remaining career histories and job descriptions are submitted as soon as possible. Nevertheless, I will be writing to the Boards to ask them to redouble their efforts to ensure that all the outstanding cases are processed as quickly as possible.

Educational Performance: Ethnic Minorities

Mr B Wilson asked the Minister of Education, in light of the increase in the number of children from ethnic minorities leaving school with no qualifications, if she has a strategy to improve their educational performance.

(AQO 97/10)

Minister of Education: Is é ceann de mo chuid tosaíochtaí é mar Aire Oideachais a chinntiú go mbaineann páistí mionlaigh eitnigh a lánchumas amach.

Ensuring that minority ethnic children reach their potential is one of my priorities as Minister of Education.

There has not been an increase in the percentage of minority ethnic children leaving school with no qualifications here in the north. Following the establishment of the Inclusion and Diversity Service in 2007 and the Department's initiatives, Departmental statistics show a considerable drop in the percentage of minority ethnic children leaving school with no qualifications between 2006 and 2008. However, while I am pleased this has happened, we can't be complacent. We need to achieve further improvements. Credit should be given to the children, parents and the schools.

Schools with newcomer and Traveller children, including Roma, are funded directly via the Common Funding Formula. In the current financial year, a total of just over £7.7 million of additional funding has been provided to schools on this basis.

In April of this year I launched the policy 'Every School a Good School – Supporting Newcomer pupils.' The aim of this policy is to ensure that schools and Education and Library Boards are in a position to welcome newcomer pupils into their school communities. I have taken action to help schools assist newcomer children with their acquisition of the language of instruction, whether it is English or Irish, in an inclusive manner, to enable them to access the curriculum in particular, and partake in every aspect of school life.

Whilst the number of minority ethnic children leaving school with no qualifications has reduced, most of these children are Travellers. There are still significant numbers of Traveller children leaving school with no qualifications, indicating that there is still a long way to go to ensure that Traveller children reach their potential in the education system.

To this end, I established the Taskforce for Traveller Education in November 2008 jointly chaired by Katherine Joyce and Robbie McVeigh, as a cross-sectoral group including members of the Traveller community from across the north, representatives from a range of non-government organisations, as well as government Departments and public bodies from all of Ireland. The aim of the Taskforce is to assist the Department develop an action plan on Traveller education.

My Department funds the regional Inclusion and Diversity Service (IDS), which is responsible for a range of work areas aimed at providing support to schools with newcomer pupils. These services range from providing school-based support for initial parent/teacher meetings to follow-up advice on pastoral needs, basic language needs, curriculum support and an extensive training programme for school staff etc.

Currently, each Education and Library Board is also funded for Traveller services which will be brought together under the Education and Skills Authority.

I plan to continue to build the capacity and skills of the school workforce to support minority ethnic pupils both now and into the future as part of the overall raising standards agenda.

Primary School Strategy: East Belfast

Lord Browne asked the Minister of Education if a strategy for new builds of primary schools in inner city east Belfast has been agreed and, if so, what is the timescale for implementation. (AQO 98/10)

Minister of Education: Níor cuireadh straitéis pleanála ceantair do bhunscoileanna ionchathracha oirthear Bhéal Feirste faoi bhráid mo Roinne le breithniú agus ceadú a dhéanamh uirthi.

An area-planning strategy for primary schools in inner city east Belfast has not been submitted to my Department for consideration and approval.

The Belfast Education and Library Board has advised, however, that it is currently progressing an area-based approach for all controlled primary schools in Belfast.

It is vital for the Belfast Education and Library Board to take this forward so that following the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority in January 2010, the modernisation of the schools' estate can progress as quickly as possible.

Educational Underachievement

Mr R Beggs asked the Minister of Education to outline the major contributing factors to educational underachievement; and what action she has taken to address each of them. (AQO 99/10)

Minister of Education: Nuair a rinneadh Aire Oideachais díom fuair mé le hoidhreacht córas a d'fhreastail ar riachtannais daichead den chéad de pháistí.

When I was appointed as Education Minister, I inherited a system that was built around the needs of 40% of children.

Last year around 11,000 children left school without five good GCSEs including literacy and maths. They were failed by the education system here. For the most part, these were already disadvantaged children. I am not prepared to tolerate such inequality.

Even among schools with similar levels of disadvantage, performance varies greatly. Gaps also exist between schools under different management types. Traveller children experience some of the worst educational outcomes of any minority ethnic group.

I am taking forward a major reform programme that will enable every young person to fulfil her or his potential.

On 30 April, I launched 'Every School a Good School – A Policy for School Improvement'. This flagship policy will tackle underachievement and promote equality and the raising of standards across the north.

On June 25, 2009 I published my final Transfer 2010 Guidance. This document provides post-primary schools with a menu of recommended admissions criteria that, if used, will end academic selection at 11. The much needed abandonment of academic selection at 11 will enable excellence to be spread around our system rather than unfairly concentrated in a minority of schools.

These will be supported by other key reforms aimed at raising standards. These include the revised curriculum; the Entitlement Framework for post-primary pupils; a revised literacy and numeracy strategy; an early years strategy; the Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion; support for Newcomer pupils; and the Extended Schools programme. I am also working through the North South Ministerial Council to tackle underachievement because it is an issue of concern right across this island.

Lagan College: Newbuild

Ms A Lo asked the Minister of Education whether she can give a clear indication of when the building work at the new premises at Lagan College will commence. (AQO 100/10)

Minister of Education: Is féidir tús a chur le hobair tógála i ndiaidh conradh a shíniú; sular féidir seo a dhéanamh, áfach, caithfidh mo Roinn dearbhú a fháil gurb é an bealach is fearr chun tosaigh é an tionscadal. Dá bhrí sin, tá mo Roinn ag obair i bpáirtíocht leo sin atá bainteach sa tionscadal le aghaidh a thabhairt ar an ábhar seo go práinneach.

Building work can commence after a contract has been signed but before this can happen my Department has to be assured that this project is the best way forward. The Department is therefore working closely with those involved in the project to address this issue as a matter of urgency.

Post-Primary Places

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Education if it is her intention to revoke the primary legislation which gives priority to children living in Northern Ireland in respect of securing post-primary school places. (AQO 101/10)

Minister of Education: Tá rún agam an reachtaíocht a scrios a cheanglaíonn ar gach scoil thuaisceartach tús áite a thabhairt in iontrálacha do iarratasóirí a bhfuil cónaí orthu sa Tuaisceart.

It is my intention to delete the legislation which requires all northern schools to give priority in admissions to applicants resident in the North. I wish to make sure that there can be no potential for conflict with EU law on the accessing of services across geographical boundaries between member states.

I wish to give schools the freedom to choose the nature of their geographical admissions criteria. I believe that children in border areas should enjoy the same prospects of admission to local schools as children in other areas.

Many families, from all community backgrounds, live their lives, work and access services on either side of the border and we should modernise our approach to admissions to reflect this.

I am currently considering a paper for the Executive on this issue.

School Uniform Grants

Ms M Anderson asked the Minister of Education how many children were awarded a grant for a primary school uniform up to the start of the new school year. (AQO 102/10)

Minister of Education: Am cruatain eacnamaíoch é seo, go háirithe dóibh sin a bhfuil teaghlaigh óga acu nó tá deacrachtaí acu riar ar chaiteachas gach aon lae, mar shampla, éide scoile.

This is a time of economic hardship, particularly so for those in our community with young families who struggle to meet the cost of basic everyday needs, such as the cost of school uniforms.

As Minister of Education, I am determined to do everything I can to help ease the financial need faced by parents simply by sending their child to primary school. I introduced this new payment as an anti-poverty measure to help reduce the spiralling costs facing parents at this time of year and it is the first time that such a measure has been taken here.

The Education and Library Boards, which administer the scheme, have confirmed that at the end of August they paid 24,135 grants towards the cost of primary school uniforms. They have also advised that they are still processing applications for the Primary School uniform grant.

Rural Schools

Mr T Gallagher asked the Minister of Education what action her Department is taking to protect smaller rural schools. (AQO 103/10)

Minister of Education: Leagann mo Bheartas do Scoileanna Inbhuanaithe amach na sé chritéir seo leanas do inmharthanacht scoileanna a mheasúnú:

My Sustainable Schools Policy sets out criteria for assessing the viability of schools, both rural and urban, but recognises and takes specific account of the particular needs of rural schools and communities. This is reflected in the lower minimum enrolment threshold for primary schools in rural areas (at 105) than in urban areas (at 140). The policy also provides guidance on reasonable home to school travel times for pupils, which takes account of the availability of suitable schools in the area, and considers the strength of the school's links with the local community.

Ballynahinch High School: Newbuild

Mr J Wells asked the Minister of Education for an update on her Department's plans to provide a new complex for Ballynahinch High School. (AQO 104/10)

Minister of Education: Tá saincheisteanna athfhillteacha ann maidir le Rollú Fadtéarmach agus inmharthanacht Ardscoil Bhaile na hInse, rud a tharraingeann aird ar lochtanna sa phróiseas pleanála caipitil atá againn.

There have recurrent issues surrounding the Long-Term Enrolment and sustainability of Ballynahinch High School, which highlights the deficiencies in the current capital planning process. The area based planning system, which will be taken forward by ESA will ensure that in future provision is accurately matched to demand.

There is also the question of the number of children who travel from Down to Belfast to attend post-primary schools. In 2007/8, this number was 309. The rationality of this amidst the fact that post-primary schools in Down are losing pupils has to be addressed. If followed, the Department's Transfer 2010 Guidance, will help address this: it recommends that schools no longer use academic criteria and it is these criteria, in the main, that facilitate long-distance admissions.

DEPARTMENT FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING

Evening Classes at Belfast Metropolitan College

Lord Browne asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many people have enrolled for evening classes at Belfast Metropolitan College in Castlereagh in each of the last three years. (AQW 344/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning (Sir Reg Empey): The table below shows the number of enrolments on evening courses at Castlereagh College from 2004/05 to 2006/07. Castlereagh College became part of the Belfast Metropolitan College in August 2007. The latest enrolment data available is for academic year 2007/08, however this cannot be broken down into the pre-merger college format.

Academic year	Enrolments on evening courses
2004/05	3,687
2005/06	3,916
2006/07	3,389

Source: Further Education Statistical Record

Apprenticeships in East Belfast

Lord Browne asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many people have enrolled in apprenticeships in East Belfast in each of the last three years. (AQW 355/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The Department has supported 770 apprentices in the East Belfast area between March 2006 and March 2009. The data in Annex A lists numbers of apprentices in each of the last three years whose given address is within the East Belfast area. Although these apprentices reside within the East Belfast area, they may or may not have enrolled with Training Providers in the East Belfast area and may or may not be employed by companies in the East Belfast area. The Department is not in a position to break enrolments down by constituency.

ANNEX A

NUMBER OF ENROLMENTS FOR APPRENTICESHIPS PROGRAMMES IN THE EAST BELFAST AREA MARCH 2006 – MARCH 2009

March 2006 – March 2007	March 2007 – March 2008	March 2008 – March 2009
134	249	387

Apprenticeships in North Down

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many people have enrolled in apprenticeships in North Down, in each of the last three years. (AQW 422/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The Department has supported 946 apprentices in the North Down area between March 2006 and March 2009. The data in Annex A lists numbers of apprentices in each of the last three years whose given address is within the North Down area. Although these apprentices reside within the North Down area, they may or may not have enrolled with Training Providers in the North Down area and may or may not be employed by companies in the North Down area. The Department is not in a position to break enrolments down by constituency.

ANNEX A

NUMBER OF ENROLMENTS FOR APPRENTICESHIPS PROGRAMMES IN THE NORTH DOWN AREA MARCH 2006 – MARCH 2009

March 2006 – March 2007	March 2007 – March 2008	March 2008 – March 2009
218	356	372

Projects in the North Antrim Constituency

Mr D McKay asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) what projects his Department has funded; and (ii) the amount of money provided by his Department, in the North Antrim constituency, since May 2007. (AQW 457/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The Department has provided European funding to one organisation in the North Antrim constituency area since May 2007. During 2007/08, DEL offered £172,020 of funding to the Triangle Housing Association Ltd, Ballymoney under the Programme for Building Sustainable Prosperity (2000-2006) for the Triangle Supported Employment Service project.

Under the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme 2007-2013, DEL has offered the Triangle Housing Association Ltd £1,091,256 in funding towards the project costs of the organisation's Progression to Employment Services project, over the period 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2011.

Under the Department's Bridge to Employment programme, which aims to provide trained staff for inward investment companies and existing companies entering an expansion phase, the Department has supported one company over two projects to recruit unemployed drivers in North Antrim. The total spend was £4,935 and nine people were employed.

Skillsafe was introduced by the Department to assist apprentices that were being put on short time by their employer as a result of the economic downturn. The purpose of the scheme is to fill the Apprentice's downtime with accredited training that will contribute to their Apprenticeship. To date there is one company in North Antrim availing of this opportunity, with three apprentices currently working a four-day-week and one day at the Training Provider. The total spend to date is £5,624.

Under Management and Leadership Development a total of 17 small to medium enterprises have received support through the Management Analysis and Planning (MAP) programme representing total funding of £44,170. In addition, 85 individual managers have been supported through the Management and Leadership Development (MLDP) and INTRO graduate programmes, representing a total funding of £141,402. The programmes outlined seek to develop and enhance managerial and leadership skills in Northern Ireland companies and social enterprises.

Jobskills/Training for Success/ApprenticeshipsNI - Funding

The Department contracts with over 50 Suppliers to deliver Jobskills, Training for Success and ApprenticeshipsNI throughout Northern Ireland.

Six of these Suppliers are headquartered in the North Antrim constituency and, since May 2007, the Department has approved some £17.7m by way of funding and associated allowances to individual participants.

In the Further Education sector, the Department has funded a number of projects in Northern Regional College since May 2007. The total spend is £2,913,871.02, broken down as follows:

- Cultural Diversity project - £36,765.49;
- Innovation Fund project - £66,729.53;
- Joint DEL/DE Vocational Education Programme - £1.6m;
- Upgrade to Northern Regional College interconnectivity network - £31,000;
- Upgrade of IT Equipment from Information Learning Technology Capital Funding - £620,576; and
- 28 small construction projects funded through Health & Safety, Minor Works and Disability Compliance programmes - £563,000.

Sir Reg Empey MLA

Minister for Employment and Learning

Night Classes in North Down

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many people have enrolled for night classes in North Down through the South Eastern Regional College, in each of the last five years. (AQW 489/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The table below shows the number of enrolments on evening courses at North Down & Ards Institute from 2002/03 to 2006/07. North Down & Ards Institute became part of the South Eastern Regional College in August 2007. The latest enrolment data available is for academic year 2007/08, however this cannot be broken down into the pre-merger college format.

Academic year	Enrolments on evening courses
2002/03	6,017
2003/04	5,661
2004/05	5,304
2005/06	4,827
2006/07	4,906

Source: Further Education Statistical Record

Redundant Workers

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, in relation to workers made redundant in Mid-Ulster in the last 18 months, to detail (i) the number of employees made redundant; (ii) what action her Department has taken to re-skill and retain redundant workers within the local area; and (iii) the number of redundant workers that have been re-employed within the local area. (AQW 493/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning:

- (i) The number of confirmed redundancies notified to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (DETI) in the last 18 months (1st March 2008 to 31st August 2009) in the Mid-Ulster Parliamentary Constituency Area was 347. This represented 6.3% of the 5,523 confirmed redundancies in Northern Ireland over the same period.
- (ii) My Department provides a comprehensive range of services and programmes to help people find and remain in work. These are, job search, work-focused interviews and employment programmes including Steps to Work, Pathways to Work, Progress to Work and specialist programmes and services for people with disabilities. The Department has also introduced contingency arrangements to allow apprentices who were made redundant from the construction, engineering and motor vehicle sectors to continue with training.
- (iii) There is no information available on the number of redundant workers that have been re-employed within the local area. There is no system or system links between DETI and DEL which can link info on those made redundant to those re-employed. Even within DEL we only have info on clients who use our services; many get jobs without engaging with us.

Programme Led Apprenticeship Scheme

Lord Browne asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) how many campuses have agreed to accept apprentices for work placement in the Programme Led Apprenticeship Scheme; and (ii) the category of places that have been agreed. (AQW 540/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: At the 24th September 2009, there were 2,287 participants on Programme-Led Apprenticeship provision across 27 training suppliers, including 1,497 in the 6 regional colleges.

We are not in a position to comment on the category of places that have been agreed as we are still within the assessment timeframe and it is not yet possible to provide more detailed information such as uptake by occupational area.

Legislation

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline any legislation his Department intends to bring to the Assembly before 31 December 2009. (AQW 546/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The Department for Employment and Learning does not intend to bring any new primary or subordinate legislation to the Assembly before 31 December 2009.

However, it is anticipated that the "Amendments to Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations (NI) 2005", which are subject to Affirmative Resolution, will be brought before the Assembly in early 2010.

You will be aware that the Employment Bill is currently before the Assembly, following its introduction in June 2009.

Employment Levels

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what plans he has to change employment levels within his Department in the next 12 months; and how many of these changes are planned to be made through redundancies. (AQW 565/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: My Department plans to at least maintain its current levels of staffing, while responding to additional demands and remaining within the limits of its existing available budget, over the next 12 months.

The Department has no plans to make changes through redundancies.

Student Complaints

Mr P Butler asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the measures his Department has in place to address student complaints in Further and Higher Education institutions. (AQW 754/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Further and higher education institutions are independent and operate at arms length from the Department. As a result, my Department does not have any direct or formal involvement with student complaints from either type of institution.

In the universities, student complaints which cannot be resolved internally are referred to the university's "Visitor" who ensures that the Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations of the University have been properly observed and carried out and that natural justice is observed within the institution.

Within Further Education (FE), the colleges have developed and implemented their own complaints procedures.

Programme-led Apprenticeship Scheme

Mr T Buchanan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what has been the uptake of the new Programme-led Apprenticeship Scheme and how this compares with the provision made by his Department. (AQW 802/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Programme-Led Apprenticeships is a demand led programme and as such it is very difficult to predict the uptake with a high degree of accuracy. There are currently 2,395 programme-led apprentices who have been registered since the inception of the programme on 7 September compared to an estimated total uptake of some 3,000.

Student Loans

Mrs M Bradley asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what action he has taken with his colleagues in other jurisdictions to raise the threshold for repayment of student loans. (AQO 111/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Following the announcement earlier this year that the March 2009 Retail Price Index was negative (-0.4%), it was agreed by all Devolved Administrations (and with Treasury) that the threshold for the repayment of income-contingent student loans should be frozen at £15,000 for a further 12 months. Had a negative Retail Price Index rate been used to calculate the repayment threshold from April 2010/11, the threshold would have reduced and borrowers would have started repaying earlier and ended up paying more.

All Devolved Administrations remain committed to exploring the option of increasing the threshold in line with Retail Price Index from April 2011/12 onwards but such a decision will be subject to the outcome of the next Comprehensive Spending Review.

University of Ulster: New Belfast Campus

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to give the estimated capital spend on the proposed new University of Ulster Campus in Belfast; and to outline if this will include expenditure from his Department or any other Northern Ireland Executive budget. (AQO 112/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The university has submitted an economic appraisal for the proposed campus in Belfast. The appraisal details a capital cost of £254.6m. This includes the cost of the work in the both the Belfast campus and the Jordanstown campus. It is estimated that the construction timeframe will be five years.

The economic appraisal is still being considered within my Department and, if approved, will be forwarded to DFP for its approval. It is only after these approvals are received that any capital contribution from this Department can be considered. Moreover, the Department can only commit funding out of the current CSR period that expires in 2010/11.

I am not aware, at present, of any proposed expenditure on the Belfast campus project from any other Executive budget.

Student Loans

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister for Employment and Learning if he is aware of any Northern Ireland students being affected by the recent delay in payments from the Student Loans Company; and what action can be taken to ensure that Northern Ireland students are not affected by similar delays in the future. (AQO 113/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: My Department is not aware of any Northern Ireland domiciled students being affected by the delays in payments by the Student Loans Company that have been recently reported in the media.

It is my understanding that these delays are primarily the result of a change in the arrangements for processing applications for new English domiciled students and an increase in applications from English domiciled students. There has been no change in arrangements for Northern Ireland domiciled students. Applications will continue to be processed by the Education and Library Boards, with payments made by the Student Loans Company.

There is regular liaison between my Department, the Education and Library Boards and the Student Loans Company to ensure that Northern Ireland domiciled students receive an effective service.

Creche Facilities

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what steps he is taking to ensure that higher education institutions are providing creche facilities. (AQO 114/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Responsibility for the provision of crèche facilities is a matter for the respective Higher Education institutions. However, my Department provides financial support in the form of 85% towards the cost of childcare for full-time students with dependant children and, a Parents' Learning Allowance of up to £1,508 in the current academic year.

STEM Subjects

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what actions are being taken by his Department to increase the participation in, and completion of, science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects, at further and higher level. (AQO 115/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The Step Up Programme which is funded by my Department encourages young people from disadvantaged areas in Belfast and Londonderry to study science in universities. This programme is extremely well regarded and has a completion rate of 95%. In addition, my Department is on target to achieve its Programme for Government target to increase by 300 the number of PhD research students at local universities in economically relevant subjects, such as science and technology, by 2010. Further Education colleges carry out a range of activities aimed at increasing participation in STEM subjects. These include promotional campaigns, collaboration with Northern Ireland's University partners through the "Connected Programme" to provide joint projects in STEM curricula areas and the development of industry linked Foundation Degree programme in STEM subject areas. My Department is also currently considering the possibility of providing a bursary or scholarship to encourage more people to study STEM subjects in further and higher education in Northern Ireland.

Apprenticeships: Leavers

Mr C Boylan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many people have left apprenticeships without attaining their qualification in the last 2 years. (AQO 116/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: During the period, September 2007 to August 2009, there were 14,235 new apprenticeship starts. Of these, the Department has been notified that 4,666 have left without completing their apprenticeship and 8676 continue in training. The majority will have acquired skills and qualifications, including National Vocational Qualifications, technical certificates and/or Essential Skills. The department is working with the Learning and Skills Development Agency Northern Ireland to develop retention strategies and these will be rolled out as best practice early next year.

Give and Take: EMA Claims

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning if he is aware that participants who take part in the Give and Take scheme provided by Include Youth are not entitled to claim Educational Maintenance Allowance; and if he has any plans to change these arrangements. (AQO 117/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: I am aware that participants who take part in the Give and Take scheme provided by Include Youth are not entitled to claim Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA). Include Youth has a long history of working to enhance services for vulnerable 16 – 21 year olds who for various reasons are unable to participate in mainstream training and employment opportunities. In addition to helping fund the Include Youth's Give and Take scheme, my Department's Career's Service has a Partnership Agreement with the scheme to facilitate access to careers guidance for participants facing barriers to education, training and employment. The Give and Take scheme is not prescriptive in terms of the hours each young person should attend as it does recognise there are individual issues and barriers to participation.

EMA in contrast is an attendance based scheme with allowances and bonus payments closely linked to recorded student attendance and absence. EMA's primary objective is to encourage participation in school or further education for 16 - 19 year olds.

As the requirements for participation in the Give and Take Scheme and EMA are quite different my Department will continue to support each separately for the foreseeable future.

Holylands, Belfast: Stakeholders' Consultation

Mr L Cree asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the stakeholders consultation process regarding the Holyland area of Belfast. (AQO 118/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: As the member may be aware, my Department facilitated a Stakeholder Forum on 7 May 2009, from which a draft report was produced. This report has identified a number of proposals and possible solutions.

An Editorial Group, comprising of key stakeholders, convened on 26 August 2009 to discuss the draft report, allocate responsibilities and develop an action plan.

I have since written to the agencies and organisations cited in the report, including my Ministerial colleagues, seeking their views on the proposed actions.

I intend to hold a follow-up conference on 28 October 2009.

Further Education: Enrolments

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many students have enrolled in courses in Further Education colleges for this coming academic year. (AQO 119/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The statistical data on student enrolments in Further Education colleges for the academic year 2009/10 will be available from 20th November 2009. I will write to you at that time.

DEPARTMENT OF ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Fixed Line Broadband

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what is being done to ensure that 100% coverage for fixed line broadband service can be offered to all households at an acceptable speed and standard.

(AQW 296/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Mrs A Foster): Within the context of a privatised and independently regulated market my Department has taken a number of steps to stimulate investment in Northern Ireland's broadband telecommunications infrastructure and to promote competition. However, my Department has maintained a technology neutral stance - in line with UK policy and in order to maximise competition and minimise market distortions - letting the market decide on the most cost effective and efficient solutions.

Research by the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills Digital Britain initiative indicates that the costs to upgrade existing infrastructures to provide services over fixed line technologies, are not economically viable for the telecommunications companies, without significant additional funding sources and this is particularly the case for rural areas. Independent research has estimated that the cost of deploying a 100% fixed line solution across all of Northern Ireland is prohibitive, with estimates of the size of investment required range from £200m to £500m depending upon the extent of fibre deployed in the solution. Naturally the private sector will only intervene and invest where the rate of return on their investment is sufficient to justify the investment.

In August 2008, I launched the Northern Ireland Broadband Fund to encourage the private sector to consider where best to deploy "in-fill" solutions into a number of priority rural areas where distance from the nearest telephone exchange prevents a fixed line-based broadband service.

As of September 2009, three projects are underway delivering wireless broadband services in rural areas in Counties Antrim, Fermanagh, and Tyrone. A fourth project trialling the delivery of wireless broadband in the Foyle basin is scheduled to commence in November 2009.

The last significant intervention my Department undertook left a significant legacy with over 99% of all premises with access to fixed line broadband. Currently, we are undertaking a £18m procurement targeted on a Programme for Government commitment, to ensure 85% of businesses have access to next generation broadband by 2011. No result is available yet from the procurement process. But overall, Northern Ireland remains very well served for fixed line broadband access.

Invest NI

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what expenditure on job creation has been made by Invest NI in the last five years for (i) each constituency; and (ii) each district council. (AQW 299/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Table (i) provides information on the amount of assistance offered by Invest NI to employment-related projects within each Parliamentary Constituency Area during the five-year period 2004/05 to 2008/09. The same information is repeated for each District Council Area in Table (ii). This represents the value of support which is expected to be paid towards employment-related investment during the life-time of assisted projects. The amount of investment that these projects plan to stimulate is also included.

TABLE (I): INVEST NI ASSISTANCE OFFERED TO EMPLOYMENT-RELATED PROJECTS AND ASSOCIATED PLANNED INVESTMENT BY PCA (2004/05 TO 2008/09)

PCA	Total Assistance £m	Total Planned Investment £m
Belfast East	60.36	711.41
Belfast North	7.68	115.10
Belfast South	43.33	270.47
Belfast West	9.36	41.64
East Antrim	20.46	99.15

PCA	Total Assistance £m	Total Planned Investment £m
East Londonderry	15.12	59.65
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	22.71	182.98
Foyle	44.12	207.08
Lagan Valley	14.30	116.32
Mid Ulster	15.06	137.48
Newry & Armagh	24.58	256.14
North Antrim	15.41	77.78
North Down	11.69	81.50
South Antrim	11.45	68.49
South Down	16.75	61.90
Strangford	5.43	40.93
Upper Bann	31.68	150.73
West Tyrone	7.88	63.94
Location not yet Determined	0.06	0.80
Total	377.42	2,743.51

TABLE (II): INVEST NI ASSISTANCE OFFERED TO EMPLOYMENT-RELATED PROJECTS AND ASSOCIATED PLANNED INVESTMENT BY DCA (2004/05 TO 2008/09)

DCA	Total Assistance £m	Total Planned Investment £m
Antrim	8.44	47.13
Ards	3.73	27.28
Armagh	5.64	36.01
Ballymena	11.07	60.78
Ballymoney	1.47	4.08
Banbridge	2.10	13.42
Belfast	116.71	1,108.31
Carrickfergus	0.68	4.70
Castlereagh	4.34	34.62
Coleraine	6.82	36.25
Cookstown	7.50	64.03
Craigavon	30.82	144.30
Derry	44.12	207.08
Down	3.65	11.39
Dungannon	13.07	81.02
Fermanagh	11.84	122.24
Larne	18.78	89.56
Limavady	8.30	23.41
Lisburn	14.85	121.98
Magherafelt	5.36	53.18
Moyle	2.87	12.92

DCA	Total Assistance £m	Total Planned Investment £m
Newry & Mourne	31.24	265.13
Newtownabbey	4.50	28.94
North Down	11.59	81.03
Omagh	4.77	45.86
Strabane	3.11	18.08
Location not yet Determined	0.06	0.80
Total	377.42	2,743.51

Notes to Tables:

1. Table totals may not add due to rounding.
2. Planned investment includes assistance offered.
3. Some of the assistance offered may not be paid if projects are not fully delivered by the client.
4. 'Location Not Yet Determined' refers to an inward investor that has not yet selected a specific location.

This represents 60% of the total assistance offered by Invest NI over the period and 80% of the associated planned investment. The remaining 40% (£252m) of support was offered to innovation based projects, including activities such as training, research and development, trade development and technology and process development. Although not directly related to job creation, these capability development activities will underpin business competitiveness leading eventually to growth and employment opportunities, although they cannot be accurately forecasted at this stage.

In addition to the assistance offered directly by Invest NI, offers totalling over £7m were made indirectly through the Start A Business programme to individuals intending to set up a business. This programme is delivered in partnership with Enterprise Northern Ireland and provides guidance to new businesses, reliant on the local Northern Ireland market.

Rose Energy Chicken Litter Incinerator at Glenavy

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if Invest NI is proposing to make funding available for the proposed Rose Energy chicken litter incinerator at Glenavy; and, if so, how much funding is proposed. (AQW 323/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Invest NI is in discussion with the promoters regarding this project. Quotations have been updated and are currently being assessed from an engineering and financial viewpoint.

The project promoters' case for support will be subject to the normal appraisal process.

The project is currently the subject of a planning application and any financial support would, of course, be conditional on planning approval being received.

Rose Energy Incinerator at Glenavy

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) if public funding from Invest NI will be required to finance the construction of the proposed Rose Energy incinerator at Glenavy; and (ii) the anticipated amount of Invest NI funding required. (AQW 324/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Rose Energy originally submitted their proposal for support under the DETI administered

Environment and Renewable Energy Fund (EREF). The company was seeking £16m of assistance towards the commission and operating of the waste incinerator. Their application, however, was declined. The company subsequently approached Invest NI for support.

Invest NI is in discussion with the promoters regarding support towards this project. Quotations have been updated and are currently being assessed from an engineering and financial viewpoint.

Consequently, I am not in a position to disclose an amount at this juncture. When the quantum of support is agreed the case for support will be submitted through the approval process.

Disposal of Chicken Litter

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to clarify if any formal procurement process has been undertaken in seeking waste management facilities or solutions for the disposal of chicken litter in Northern Ireland. (AQW 325/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: My Department is not aware of any formal procurement process having been undertaken in seeking waste management facilities or solutions for the disposal of chicken litter in Northern Ireland.

In 2005, a study was carried out on a biomass combined heat and power plant using poultry litter as a primary fuel. However, this was solely a feasibility study on one potential solution and did not consider alternative available options.

Inward Investment in North Antrim

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the amount inward investment in North Antrim; and (ii) the number of jobs created as a result, in each of the last five years. (AQW 358/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Table 1 addresses both points (i) and (ii) above. It provides information on the amount of foreign direct investment offered support by Invest NI within the North Antrim Parliamentary Constituency Area (PCA) and the number of jobs promoted or safeguarded as a result during the five-year period 2004/05 to 2008/09. The information in Table 1 represents the estimated total cost of these projects to Invest NI's externally-owned clients and the number of jobs that the projects expect to create or safeguard. The number of projects and the associated assistance offered by Invest NI is also included.

Projects have been split into those where (1) the main focus is on employment creation and (2) those that are innovation based, including activities such as training, research and development, trade development and technology and process development.

TABLE 1 - INVEST NI ASSISTANCE OFFERED TO EXTERNALLY-OWNED CLIENTS IN NORTH ANTRIM PCA & JOBS PROMOTED OR SAFEGUARDED (2004/05 - 2008/09)

Type of Assistance	Year	No of Offers	Total Assistance £m	Total Planned Investment £m	New jobs	Safe Jobs
Employment Related	2004/05	1	2.00	6.50	23	123
	2005/06					
	2006/07					
	2007/08	1	2.55	13.49	0	264
	2008/09					
	Total	2	4.55	19.99	23	387
Innovation	2004/05	11	0.33	1.21		
	2005/06	9	0.07	0.35		
	2006/07	9	0.38	1.85		
	2007/08	4	0.09	0.29		
	2008/09	1	0.00	0.00		
	Total	34	0.87	3.70	0	0

Type of Assistance	Year	No of Offers	Total Assistance £m	Total Planned Investment £m	New jobs	Safe Jobs
Total	2004/05	12	2.33	7.71	23	123
	2005/06	9	0.07	0.35	0	0
	2006/07	9	0.38	1.85	0	0
	2007/08	5	2.64	13.78	0	264
	2008/09	1	0.00	0.00	0	0
	Total		36	5.42	23.69	23

Notes to Table:

1. Table totals may not add due to rounding.
2. Planned investment includes assistance offered.
3. Total offer locations in geographic tables exceed total number of offers, as some projects are located in more than one area.
4. Some of the assistance offered may not be paid if projects are not fully delivered by the client.
5. New Jobs represent the number of jobs expected to be created by the project.
6. Safe Jobs represent the number jobs that would have been lost if the project was not supported.

New Investment

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the number of visits she has made to east Derry to promote new investment in the last 12 months. (AQW 381/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: I have made two visits to the East Londonderry constituency in the last year. In April I was invited by Coleraine Borough Council to a meeting where they outlined their ideas for the future development of the Borough. This meeting also afforded me the opportunity to meet with a number of the area's key employers including AVX, TBF Thompson and Northstone Concrete. During August, I visited Armstrong Medical to hear from John Armstrong of his ambitious expansion plans for the company.

I would like to assure you that Invest NI continues to work to promote all of Northern Ireland, including East Londonderry, as an attractive and viable location for both inward investment and expansion by existing companies located in the area. In particular, Invest NI is working closely with local stakeholders to encourage the development of regional sales propositions. One such example is Coleraine Borough Council's 'Invest in Coleraine' initiative, which helps ensure that the product offering for the Coleraine area is maximised to attract visits by potential investors.

Invest NI's ongoing work with those overseas investors already located in Northern Ireland is also essential, both in terms of assisting them to grow and develop and in promoting the benefits of investing in Northern Ireland. This approach has helped cultivate and foster relationships that have secured and promoted investment in East Londonderry by international companies such as Nicobrand, Dairy Produce Packers and Fugro-BKS.

It is also important to emphasise Invest NI's work in assisting indigenous companies to grow and develop by focusing on exploiting export opportunities. In East Londonderry this has helped promote the growth and development of a number of key employers such as Armstrong Medical and Causeway Data Communications.

The purchase of the former Seagate Limavady facility by Limavady Gear Company has also been particularly encouraging and I hope to visit them in the next few weeks. The company operates at the forefront of the renewable energy sector, which a recent Carbon Trust report identified as having the potential to create over 30,000 jobs. Limavady Gear is now well placed to exploit the tremendous opportunities for the growth the sector offers, for the benefit of not only East Londonderry, but Northern Ireland as a whole.

Inward Investment in North Down

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the amount of inward investment in North Down; and (ii) the number of jobs created as a result, in each of the last five years. (AQW 421/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Table 1 addresses both points (i) and (ii) above. It provides information on the amount of foreign direct investment offered support by Invest NI within the North Down Parliamentary Constituency Area (PCA) and the number of jobs promoted or safeguarded as a result during the five-year period 2004/05 to 2008/09. The information in Table 1 represents the estimated total cost of these projects to Invest NI's externally-owned clients and the number of jobs that the projects expect to create or safeguard. The number of projects and the associated assistance offered by Invest NI is also included.

Projects have been split into those where the main focus is on (1) employment creation and (2) those that are innovation based, including activities such as training, research and development, trade development and technology and process development.

TABLE 1 - INVEST NI ASSISTANCE OFFERED TO EXTERNALLY-OWNED CLIENTS IN NORTH DOWN PCA & JOBS PROMOTED OR SAFEGUARDED (2004/05 - 2008/09)

Type of Assistance	Year	No of Offers	Total Assistance £m	Total Planned Investment £m	New jobs	Safe Jobs
Employment Related	2004/05	2	0.99	5.33	140	147
	2005/06					
	2006/07	1	0.93	4.00	233	0
	2007/08	1	0.75	6.29	63	12
	2008/09	1	6.50	46.54	163	152
	Total		5	9.17	62.17	599
Innovation	2004/05	2	1.19	5.71		
	2005/06	1	0.02	0.02		
	2006/07					
	2007/08	5	0.76	3.09		
	2008/09	6	0.35	0.86		
	Total		14	2.33	9.69	0
Total	2004/05	4	2.18	11.04	140	147
	2005/06	1	0.02	0.02	0	0
	2006/07	1	0.93	4.00	233	0
	2007/08	6	1.51	9.39	63	12
	2008/09	7	6.85	47.40	163	152
	Total		19	11.51	71.86	599

Notes to Table:

7. Table totals may not add due to rounding.
8. Planned investment includes assistance offered.
9. Total offer locations in geographic tables exceed total number of offers, as some projects are located in more than one area.
10. Some of the assistance offered may not be paid if projects are not fully delivered by the client.
11. New Jobs represent the number of jobs expected to be created by the project.
12. Safe Jobs represent the number jobs that would have been lost if the project was not supported.

Inward Investment Visits Facilitated by Invest NI

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the number of inward investment visits facilitated by Invest NI to the Cookstown District and to the Mid-Ulster region, in the last 18 months and any progress made. (AQW 494/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: In the last 18 months, Invest NI facilitated 4 visits by potential investors to the Cookstown District and Mid Ulster Region. Invest NI remains in contact with the

visitors in order to pursue any investment opportunities. However, I am conscious of the impact of the current economic conditions on investment decisions. Furthermore, securing an inward investment project is the end point of an extensive process which may span a considerable period (18 to 24 months) and involve a number of visits to Northern Ireland.

Invest NI's role is to promote "Northern Ireland" as an attractive and viable location for new inward investment opportunities. Whilst Invest NI makes its best efforts to ensure a spread of investment across the region its role is to promote Northern Ireland as an entity. Ultimately, the final location decision rests with the investor. If the investor seeks information on specific areas within Northern Ireland then Invest NI will work with the local stakeholders to best promote the area.

Economic Difficulties

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail any plans she has to tackle the severe economic difficulties being experienced in Mid- Ulster. (AQW 495/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: I am very aware of the economic difficulties being experienced throughout Northern Ireland, including the Mid-Ulster constituency.

In an effort to lessen the impact of the downturn across Northern Ireland a £44.5 million package of measures was announced by the Executive toward the end of last year. These measures included: £15million to help those most vulnerable to fuel poverty; the introduction of a new 10 day prompt payment policy across departments to aid business cash-flow; and further investment in schools and roads, which would have a positive impact on the construction industry.

As DETI Minister, I established sub-groups of the Economic Development Forum which reported to me with a list of recommendations of further steps that could be taken by the Executive to support the economy at this time. I am pleased to say that the majority of the prioritised proposals have been progressed.

In terms of support offered to companies in the Mid-Ulster area, Invest NI made 294 offers of assistance in 2008/09. This was the highest number of offers to any Parliamentary Constituency in Northern Ireland and comprised £6.3million of assistance, which leveraged total investment of £48.2million into the area.

Additionally, Invest NI held a series of seminars across Northern Ireland to provide business advice to companies. One of the first of these seminars was held in Cookstown. This enabled companies from the Mid-Ulster area to discuss their individual business needs in detail, identify key projects to improve performance and access specialist business skills to assist them to implement these projects.

Furthermore, I announced the Short Term Aid Scheme (STAS) in May 2009. This scheme allowed Invest NI to show greater flexibility in the support which could be provided to businesses in difficulty. STAS is open to both Invest NI Clients and the wider business community and has a total of £15million grant support available. To date, over £2.8million of support has been offered to 18 businesses, including businesses located in the Mid-Ulster area, with the value of these offers ranging from £13,000 to over £400,000.

In order to keep all businesses informed of the series of schemes available, my department has produced a guide to the schemes which have been introduced at European, UK and local level, to support businesses through the current economic downturn. This can be accessed on the DETI website.

My Executive colleagues and I will continue to do all that we can to support the local economy through this difficult period.

Competitiveness Programme

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what flexibility there will be in the Competitiveness Programme to address local economic difficulties being experienced in Mid-Ulster and other parts of Northern Ireland. (AQW 496/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The Local Economic Development (LED) measure of the Northern Ireland European Sustainable Competitiveness Programme 2007-2013, Priority 2 Sustainable Enterprise & Entrepreneurship is open to all 26 District Councils. The LED measure aims to provide support for locally identified projects addressing local needs. The measure is flexible in the nature of activity that can be supported and focuses in particular on innovation, entrepreneurship and research and development.

Applications can be made to DETI at any time giving Councils the opportunity to address local needs as they arise. The measure has a total programme value of £50million (£25million European Regional Development Fund matched by £25million Council expenditure) throughout the seven year period of 2007-2013, with a further two year period up to 31 December 2015 for expenditure to be incurred.

Councils in Mid-Ulster have successfully submitted applications focusing on stimulating economic growth and improving competitiveness for their region. In June 2009, the Department in conjunction with Northern Ireland Local Government Association, held a one-day workshop in Cookstown to help Councils identify further opportunities available through the LED Measure. The Department continues to work closely with all Councils including those in Mid-Ulster to ensure future proposals address the specific needs.

Legislation

Mr G Savage asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline any legislation her Department intends to bring before the Assembly before 31 December 2009. (AQW 517/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: A consultation in relation to the Unsolicited Services (Trade and Business Directories) Bill was completed in August 2009. I anticipate bringing this draft Bill before the Assembly before the end of the year. I also anticipate bringing secondary legislation, to add to the list of statutory tourist establishments as set out in article 12(1) of the Tourism (NI) Order 1992, before 31 December 2009.

Land Purchased from Invest NI

Mr P Butler asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) how many companies have asked for land they purchased from Invest NI to be bought back by Invest NI; (ii) how much the land was sold for; and (iii) the reason's why companies have asked for land to be returned to Invest NI. (AQW 575/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Due to the current global economic downturn, a number of Invest NI client companies have been forced to delay or abandon plans to expand or further develop their business. As a result, Invest NI introduced a number of interim policy changes.

One such change has been the introduction of a "land buy back" option which enables Invest NI to re-purchase undeveloped land it had previously sold to client companies. The buy back option is available only to those companies assessed to be in acute hardship as a result of the current economic downturn and it is intended as a short term measure. As such, it is reviewed on a regular basis.

Invest NI has had initial discussions suggesting the potential re-purchase of undeveloped land with seven client companies over the past 12 months. It is not expected, however, that all discussions will result in a buy-back and to date no land has been re-purchased. In terms of the amount originally paid by the client companies for the lands in question the range is from circa £290,000 to circa £1 million per site depending on size and location.

Employment Levels

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what plans she has to change employment levels within her Department in the next 12 months; and how many changes will be made through redundancies. (AQW 594/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment is committed to meeting its 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review targets by achieving a reduction of 47 posts over the 3 year period 2008/2009 to 2010/2011. Many of these efficiencies have already been achieved; the remaining 28 efficiencies are due to be achieved within the next 12 months. We expect to achieve all the staffing efficiencies through redeployment and natural wastage and do not therefore anticipate any redundancies being necessary in the next 12 months.

The above figures include HSENI and reflect the position at 31 August 2009.

Foreign Direct Investment in North Down

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what is the estimated foreign direct investment in North Down, in each of the last five years. (AQW 621/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Table 1 provides information on the amount of foreign direct investment offered support by Invest NI within the North Down Parliamentary Constituency Area (PCA) and the number of jobs promoted or safeguarded as a result during the five-year period 2004/05 to 2008/09. The information in Table 1 represents the estimated total cost of these projects to Invest NI's externally-owned clients and the number of jobs that the projects expect to create or safeguard. The number of projects and the associated assistance offered by Invest NI is also included.

Projects have been split into (i) those where the main focus is on employment creation and (ii) those that are innovation based, including activities such as training, research and development, trade development and technology and process development.

TABLE 1 - INVEST NI ASSISTANCE OFFERED TO EXTERNALLY-OWNED CLIENTS IN NORTH DOWN PCA & JOBS PROMOTED OR SAFEGUARDED (2004/05 - 2008/09)

Type of Assistance	Year	No of Offers	Total Assistance £m	Total Planned Investment £m	New jobs	Safe Jobs
Employment Related	2004/05	2	0.99	5.33	140	147
	2005/06					
	2006/07	1	0.93	4.00	233	0
	2007/08	1	0.75	6.29	63	12
	2008/09	1	6.50	46.54	163	152
	Total		5	9.17	62.17	599
Innovation	2004/05	2	1.19	5.71		
	2005/06	1	0.02	0.02		
	2006/07					
	2007/08	5	0.76	3.09		
	2008/09	6	0.35	0.86		
	Total		14	2.33	9.69	0
Total	2004/05	4	2.18	11.04	140	147
	2005/06	1	0.02	0.02	0	0
	2006/07	1	0.93	4.00	233	0
	2007/08	6	1.51	9.39	63	12
	2008/09	7	6.85	47.40	163	152
	Total		19	11.51	71.86	599

Notes to Table:

13. Table totals may not add due to rounding.
14. Planned investment includes assistance offered.
15. Total offer locations in geographic tables exceed total number of offers, as some projects are located in more than one area.
16. Some of the assistance offered may not be paid if projects are not fully delivered by the client.
17. New Jobs represent the number of jobs expected to be created by the project.
18. Safe Jobs represent the number jobs that would have been lost if the project was not supported.

Invest NI

Mr P Butler asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many jobs Invest NI has created over the last 2 years. (AQW 729/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: During the 2 financial years 2007/08 and 2008/09 Invest NI promoted 11,248 jobs and safeguarded 3,055 existing jobs. This represents the number of jobs that Invest NI clients, both locally and externally-owned, expect to create or safeguard during the lifetime of projects offered assistance during the period under review.

Despite challenging economic conditions Invest NI has made good progress towards achieving the Programme For Government target of securing 6,500 new jobs through inward investment by 31st March 2011. Provisional figures based on offers approved by Invest NI between 1st April 2008 and 31st August 2009 show that 4,879 new jobs have been promoted.

In addition, Invest NI made 5,676 indirect offers through the Northern Ireland Start A Business programme to individuals intending to set up a business. These offers are expected to create almost 6,000 new jobs. This programme is delivered in partnership with Enterprise Northern Ireland and provides support to new businesses, reliant on the local Northern Ireland market.

Fuel Poverty: Social Tariff System

Mrs M O'Neill asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if she will enter into discussions with the Utility Regulator and energy companies to bring forward proposals to introduce a social tariff system to help people who are most susceptible to fuel poverty. (AQO 122/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: I am conscious that one of the Fuel Poverty Taskforce proposals included a recommendation on the feasibility of introducing a social tariff scheme. Such a tariff would be extremely complex and not a panacea to the hardships caused by poverty.

The Regulator's office has nonetheless undertaken work relating to the feasibility of social tariffs and has employed consultants to undertake an analysis of the options for implementing a social tariff in Northern Ireland, including an examination of the likely impact associated with the various options. The work has raised a whole range of difficult issues particularly around targeting and to which sectors such tariffs might apply.

Social tariff charges to try and help the fuel poor could, for example, impact disproportionately on other customers, including businesses. This could ultimately have a negative impact on employment levels and so, perversely, result in increased levels of fuel poverty. Equally, without proper targeting of those most in need, overall numbers of fuel poor could actually be increased.

The next steps in the Regulator's work are likely to include a full public consultation, followed by a recommendation to Ministers on a way forward. This will include the need for any supporting policy action by key Northern Ireland Departments, including legislation.

However, I would stress that the full implications of any social tariff charges will need to be considered carefully by the Executive.

Job Creation

Mr F Molloy asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail how many jobs her Department has created over the last 2 years. (AQO 128/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Although my Department, through Invest NI, promotes jobs associated with the business development projects it assists, ultimately, it is the individual company that creates these jobs.

In the two financial years to 31st March 2009, Invest NI promoted 11,248 jobs and safeguarded 3,055 existing jobs. This represents the number of jobs that Invest NI clients, both locally and externally-owned, expect to create or safeguard during the lifetime of projects offered assistance.

In addition, Invest NI made 5,676 offers, through the Start A Business programme, to individuals intending to set up a business reliant on the local Northern Ireland market. These offers are expected to help create almost 6,000 new jobs.

In total, Invest NI assistance during the period in question promoted approximately 17,000 new jobs, safeguarding a further 3,055 jobs.

Despite challenging economic conditions, Invest NI has made good progress towards achieving the Programme for Government target of securing 6,500 new jobs through inward investment by 31st March 2011. Provisional figures based on offers approved by Invest NI between 1st April 2008 and 31st August 2009 show that 4,879 new jobs have been promoted.

Stream International Call Centre

Mr R McCartney asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to provide an update on Invest NI's work to provide more contracts to secure employment with the international call centre, Stream. (AQO 129/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The redundancies at Stream are extremely regrettable and I fully appreciate the impact on those employees affected.

The securing of new contracts is a matter for Stream and we hope that the company is ultimately successful in this regard. Invest NI has supported the company in the past and will continue to offer support where it is appropriate.

Moreover, I have written to the CEO of the Stream Group, urging him to put additional work into the Londonderry operation. I also hope to meet the CEO when I visit the United States in the autumn.

Invest NI continues to support the company as it tries to break into new markets and in addition, my department, Invest NI and the Department of Employment and Learning, are working closely together to provide practical help to those facing redundancy.

FDI Targets

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on progress in relation to the foreign direct investment targets outlined in the Programme for Government. (AQO 130/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Invest NI's 2008-09 results showed that the agency had considerably exceeded its FDI targets during the year, with supported projects promoting 4,055 new jobs against an original target of 2,200.

Targets for the current year are challenging, especially in the current economic climate. Invest NI continues to actively pursue all available opportunities aggressively in order to secure inward investment projects.

Renewable Energy: Targets

Mr G Savage asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what discussions she has had with the Minister of Finance and Personnel concerning the NI Civil Service estate's role in meeting renewable energy targets, as set out in the Draft Strategic Energy Framework. (AQO 131/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Given its responsibilities for the Government estate and for Government procurement, DFP has an important role in demonstrating Government's lead on sustainable energy.

I have not, as yet, had direct dialogue on this issue with my Ministerial colleague. However, DFP and DETI officials work closely together through a number of formal structures including the Sustainable Energy inter-departmental working group and in all four of its sub-groups. These relate to bioenergy, communications, economic opportunities and energy efficiency. These working groups are aimed at bringing forward a coherent plan to ensure better integration and alignment of sustainable energy policy and activities across all the NI departments.

Inward Investment: Coleraine/Limavady

Mr G Campbell asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, following the loss of 1,000 jobs at Seagate, what inward investment projects have been, or are being, promoted in the Coleraine and Limavady areas. (AQO 132/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Invest NI continues to work hard to promote all of Northern Ireland as an attractive and viable location for inward investment.

In particular, the agency is working closely with local stakeholders to encourage the development of regional sales propositions. One such example is Coleraine Borough Council's 'Invest in Coleraine' initiative, which helps ensure that the product offering for the Coleraine area is maximised to attract visits by potential investors.

Invest NI's ongoing work with those overseas investors already located in Northern Ireland is also essential, both in terms of assisting them to grow and develop and in promoting the benefits of investing in Northern Ireland. This approach has helped cultivate and foster relationships that have secured and promoted investment in East Londonderry by international companies such as Nicobrand, Dairy Produce Packers and Fugro-BKS.

It is also important to emphasise Invest NI's work in assisting indigenous companies to grow and develop by focusing on exploiting export opportunities. In East Londonderry this has helped promote the growth and development of a number of key employers such as Armstrong Medical and Causeway Data Communications.

The purchase of the former Seagate Limavady facility by Limavady Gear Company has also been particularly encouraging. The company operates at the forefront of the renewable energy sector, which a recent Carbon Trust report identified as having the potential to create over 30,000 jobs. Limavady Gear is now well placed to exploit the tremendous opportunities for the growth the sector offers, for the benefit of not only East Londonderry, but Northern Ireland as a whole.

Credit Unions

Mr M McLaughlin asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the progress of legislation to enhance Credit Union services. (AQO 133/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: One of the recommendations included in the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment's report of its inquiry into the Role and Potential of Credit Unions in Northern Ireland was that NI credit unions be permitted to expand their range of services to include, at the very least, those services which credit unions in Great Britain can offer currently. In my response to the report, I endorsed this recommendation.

To enable credit unions in Northern Ireland which wish to expand their current range of services, new legislation will require to be enacted. To progress this matter, along with other recommendations contained in the Committee's Report, my Department has established a team to take forward the legislative changes needed to facilitate this expansion of services.

This requires working closely with Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT) which has also completed a separate Review of the Legislative Framework for Credit Unions and Industrial and Provident Societies in Northern Ireland. The input of the Financial Services Authority (FSA) will also be crucial to the process. A joint project team consisting of HMT, DETI and FSA officials has been established to take forward the legislative and non-legislative recommendations of both Reports. These discussions have proved a useful starting point. Further meetings are planned.

My Department is committed to working to implement the recommendations of the Committee and will take all steps to ensure that this is completed as soon as practically possible. A key next step will be to consult in Northern Ireland and in GB on the detail of the proposals for the reform of the regulatory framework for Northern Ireland credit unions and I am hopeful that this will happen by the end of the year.

Business Start-up Projects

Mrs C Hanna asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the targets her Department set for the Enterprise Development Fund for new business start-ups for last four months; and how many new businesses started during that period. (AQO 134/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Invest NI's Enterprise Development Programmes have a target of 3,800 business start ups per annum. This equates to approximately 1,267 start ups over a four month period.

Interest in the programme to date has been encouragingly high. Between its launch in April 2009 and the end of August, over 3,200 clients had met with an advisor and indicated they wished to participate in the start-up strand of the programme.

In the same period, over 360 start-ups have been recorded on the programme. It is to be expected that this figure will increase significantly in the months ahead as the programme beds in and clients work their way through the options available to them. It is interesting to note that the number of start ups recorded in August 2009 exceeds that of July 2009 by over 55%.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Incinerator on the Ballyutoag Road

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the proposal to build an incinerator on the Ballyutoag Road on the outskirts of Belfast. (AQW 473/10)

Minister of the Environment (Mr E Poots): The proposal to construct an energy from waste plant on the Ballyutoag Road has been designated as an Article 31 major planning application. As this application is likely to come before me for decision it would not be appropriate to offer any assessment at this stage.

Projects in the North Antrim Constituency

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) what projects his Department has funded; and (ii) the amount of money provided by his Department, in the North Antrim constituency, since May 2007. (AQW 536/10)

Minister of the Environment: The table below provides details of my Department's expenditure on projects in the North Antrim constituency since May 2007.

Projects	Expenditure £
Portrush Coastal Zone: Replacement Exhibition	63,382
Dunluce Castle: Cliff stabilisation	356,992
Rathlin Island: Road upgrade and guardrail	38,000
Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage: Management of AONB	232,007
Grants for Listed Building projects	63,379
Total	753,760

Legislation

Mr G Savage asked the Minister of the Environment to outline any legislation his Department intends to bring to the Assembly before 31 December 2009. (AQW 547/10)

Minister of the Environment: The legislation that my Department intends to bring to the Assembly before 31 December 2009, subject to Environment Committee consideration and Executive Committee approval as appropriate, is set out below:

- Wildlife Bill;
- Carbon Reduction Commitment Order;
- Local Government (Boundaries) Order (Northern Ireland); and
- Local Government (Statutory Transition Committees) Regulations (Northern Ireland).

Taxi Enforcement Officers

Rt Hon J Donaldson asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the impact of the twelve additional taxi enforcement officers appointed recently and to confirm any plans he has to recruit further such staff. (AQW 602/10)

Minister of the Environment: I can advise that an additional 10 front line enforcement officers have been recruited by DVA to date in order to bolster up Taxi, Bus and Goods Vehicle Enforcement. Of these, 5 have been assigned to the existing taxi enforcement team based in Belfast, bringing the total compliment of front line staff dedicated to taxi enforcement at present up to 12 officers.

The recruitment of further enforcement officers will be kept under review in the light of our ongoing assessment of their impact and the resources available to the Department.

The impact of having a team of 12 dedicated taxi enforcement officers has been very positive both in terms of improved regionalised deployment and higher volumes of vehicles targeted and checked at the roadside. Between 1 August and 10 September 2009, a total of 32 taxi enforcement operations were conducted across Northern Ireland with 266 taxis checked. The following statistics refer to the geographical areas where operations were mounted and the outcome of those operations:

Areas of Operational Deployment (Period 1/8/09 – 10/9/2009 Incl)	
Antrim	Strabane
Ballymoney	Craigavon
Bangor	Maghera
Belfast	Nutts Corner
Lisburn	Omagh
Londonderry	Newry

Of those vehicles inspected the following detections were made:

Nature of Offence	Number of Offences Detected
No Public Service Vehicle Licence	20
No Valid Taxi Driving Licence	7
No Insurance	6 (13 awaiting production)
Defective Brakes	10
Defective Lights	14
Defective Tyres	19
Other Defects	2
PSV Condition of Licence Breaches	193
Total offences detected	271

Of those detections the following sanctions were applied:

Sanctions	
Defect Notices Issued	14
Immediate Prohibition Imposed	8
Taxi Plates Suspended at Roadside	5
Prosecution Reports Generated	41
Detections pending Licensing Suspension/Revocation Reports	15

Operator Registration Scheme

Rt Hon J Donaldson asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on his plans to introduce an Operator Registration Scheme for taxis by the end of the year; and how the scheme will be implemented.

(AQW 603/10)

Minister of the Environment: Work is on schedule to introduce the registration scheme by the end of the year. Applications for this voluntary scheme, which will be free to operators, will be available from mid October 2009. The scheme will be a forerunner to a permit scheme and then to full operator licensing. New regulations will be required for the permit scheme and full operator licensing, and work will begin once the effectiveness of the voluntary registration scheme has been assessed. It is intended that the permit scheme will be in place by 2011 and full operator licensing by 2013.

Specifications for Taxi Meters

Rt Hon J Donaldson asked the Minister of the Environment what progress has been made on the development of specifications for taxi meters; and when will the fitting of such meters become mandatory.

(AQW 604/10)

Minister of the Environment: Officials have developed a modern specification for the taximeters that all taxis will have to be fitted with in due course, and work is in progress to develop the draft legislation to support the specification. We will be consulting on the specification and draft legislation later this year. Subject to that consultation and the Assembly legislative process we intend to bring new taximeter Regulations into effect by June 2010.

It is proposed that the new Regulations will apply, in the first instance, only to those taxis that already work to regulated fares i.e. Belfast public hire taxis. In many cases their existing taximeters are likely to be acceptable in the short to medium term and there is a lead-in time to allow them to replace any taximeters that will not meet the specification. Other taxi drivers will require taximeters only after the planned Northern Ireland wide taxi fare has been introduced. However, it is intended that the new Regulations will help to inform the industry about what taximeters will be acceptable in the future.

Legislation to Regulate Taxis

Rt Hon J Donaldson asked the Minister of the Environment what plans he has to expedite any of the proposed legislation to regulate taxis, to ensure that the impact of the Taxi Act is in felt before mid 2010.

(AQW 612/10)

Minister of the Environment: When the Taxis Act was enacted it was envisaged that a programme of taxi reform would be implemented progressively over a three to five year period, as resources permitted, and that remains the intention. The first Commencement Order under the Taxis Act is expected to be introduced in October 2009. That will enable the PSNI and the Driver & Vehicle Agency to enforce taxi legislation on Belfast Harbour Commissioners land including major locations for taxis such as Belfast City Airport. My officials met with stakeholders to make them aware of the proposed changes and to help them ensure that they comply with the new requirements. Progress has also been made on some of the measures necessary to underpin future plans. For example, officials have developed a specification for the taximeters that all taxis will have to be fitted with in due course. We will be consulting on this specification later this year. We have also developed a suite of relevant fixed penalty offences; drafting has already begun on amending legislation and it is intended that these will be in place by March 2010. Preliminary discussions have been held about the review of taxi fares that is scheduled to start in 2010. Plans are at an advanced stage for the introduction by the end of this year of an operator registration scheme, with a view to moving progressively to full operator licensing by 2013. Preliminary work is under way to consolidate and modernise the specification for taxi vehicles, and this is on schedule for implementation by 2011.

Driving Licences from Commonwealth or Former Commonwealth Countries

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what consideration is being given to the status of driving licences from Commonwealth or former Commonwealth countries, to ensure that they are recognised in Northern Ireland, as in other parts of the United Kingdom.

(AQW 618/10)

Minister of the Environment: Where a country is assessed as having a driver training, testing and licensing regime which meets the strict standards applied within the United Kingdom, it may be considered for the purpose of driving licence exchange. In practice, the assessment of candidate countries is carried out by the Driving Standards Agency (DSA) in Great Britain following a formal request from the candidate country to enter into an exchange agreement. The assessments take into consideration the quality and depth of the driving test, the robustness of the driver licensing system, security of the driving licence and other facts, such as road traffic accident and mortality rates.

Countries deemed suitable for licence exchange must be designated for such purpose by making a Designation Order. The Department has designated several countries under the Motor Vehicles (Exchangeable Licences) Order (Northern Ireland) 1994.

On 12 October 2009, the Department will bring into force a new Designation Order which will allow for the exchange of driving licences issued in the provinces and territories of Canada, the Falkland Islands, the Faroe Islands, the Principality of Monaco, South Africa and the Republic of Korea. This will mean that the exchange arrangements in Northern Ireland are the same as those throughout the rest of the United Kingdom.

The Department has not been approached by the driver licensing authorities in any other countries to enter into exchange arrangements.

Local Government Review

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 41/10, to detail the expenditure incurred on the Local Government Review, including provisions for the current year and all consultancy fees. (AQW 633/10)

Minister of the Environment: Further to AQW 41/10, the detail of the expenditure incurred on the Local Government Reform is set out in the tables attached.

Table 1 describes reform costs, including consultancy fees/expenses from 2005/2006 up to 31 August 2009. Please note this amount includes an additional £109,357 relating to Transition Committee funding. The table also includes details of the provisions for the current financial year.

Table 2 provides costs associated with the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner.

TABLE 1

Local Government Reform Expenditure	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/10*	TOTALS	2009/2010 (provision)
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Salaries	165,714 (est)	872,728 (est)	918,458	781,778	418,566	3,157,244	1,173,000
General Administrative Expenditure	16,571 (est)	87,272 (est)	78,392	81,562	18,001	281,798	117,000
Taskforce operational expenses	0	111,017	47,806	122,736	49,250	330,809	150,000
NILGA support funding	0	0	26,942	548,567	57,059	632,568	660,000
Modernisation	0	0	0	101,643	0	101,643	0
Review of public expenditure	0	0	0	109,357	157,964	267,321	1,800,000
Consultants' fees	11,666	75,032	126,098	241,071	67,483	521,350	233,000
Total	193,951	1,146,049	1,197,696	1,986,714	768,323	5,292,733	4,133,000

*Expenditure in the 2009/2010 year is up to and including 31 August 2009

TABLE 2

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARIES COMMISSIONER
EXPENDITURE

	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2009/2010 (Provision)
	£	£	£		£
Salaries	273,515	69,892	291,713	78,958	71,950
Other	226,857	56,873	200,164	52,563	53,050
Totals	500,372	126,765	491,877	131,521	125,000
Grand Total				1,250,535	125,000

Taxis Act

Rt Hon J Donaldson asked the Minister of the Environment to provide an update on the first commencement order for the Taxis Act. (AQW 638/10)

Minister of the Environment: I fully appreciate the level of concern over nuisance high hedges, and have just announced my decision to bring legislative proposals before the Executive and the Assembly. Naturally, I intend to consult publicly on these proposals. While I am unable to confirm the precise timetable at this stage, I hope that the legislation can be in place by the time that the new councils are formed in 2011.

Economic Considerations

Mr D O'Loan asked the Minister of the Environment what impact the previous Minister's statement, on the weight to be given to economic considerations, has had on planning decisions. (AQW 641/10)

Minister of the Environment: The previous Minister's statement has provided guidance to my Department on the weight to be accorded to the economic aspects of development proposals when making planning decisions, ensuring the planning system makes a full and positive contribution to the growth of the economy.

In line with the previous Minister's statement my Department will take full account of the economic aspects of a planning proposal, including the wider benefits to the regional or local economy, alongside social and environmental aspects, in so far as they are material considerations in the determination of the planning application to which they relate. In cases where the economic benefits of a proposal are significant, substantial weight is afforded to them in the determination of that planning decision.

It should be noted that this statement is now the subject of judicial review proceedings together with a further statement made by the previous Minister on 16 June 2009 on major development proposals and the development plan system. Leave was recently granted by Mr Justice Weatherup in the High Court and he will hear the case on 17 November 2009.

Alleged Damage to Historic Ruins

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on investigations into alleged damage to historic ruins situated at Ringbuoy Point in Cloughey, County Down. (AQW 650/10)

Minister of the Environment: By way of background, a site of archaeological interest has previously been identified on the lands at Ringbuoy Point. My Department does not, however, have any records of upstanding historic ruins of any masonry or earthwork feature at this location and the site of archaeological interest does not have statutory protection under the provisions of the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995.

The Department is currently investigating an alleged breach of planning control in relation to the caravan site at Ringbuoy Point Cloughey, County Down. Unfortunately I cannot provide you with more details at present as any release of information at this stage may prejudice any future potential legal action in relation to this case.

High Hedges and Trees

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of the Environment what plans his Department has to introduce legislation aimed at tackling problems with nuisance high hedges and trees. (AQW 651/10)

Minister of the Environment: I fully appreciate the level of concern over nuisance high hedges, and have just announced my decision to bring legislative proposals before the Executive and the Assembly. Naturally, I intend to consult publicly on these proposals. While I am unable to confirm the precise timetable at this stage, I hope that the legislation can be in place by the time that the new councils are formed in 2011.

Irish Hare Population

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of the latest figures showing the rise in the Irish hare population, if he will consider introducing the Irish hare into the quarry list again. (AQW 667/10)

Minister of the Environment: My Department has undertaken a series of night driven transect surveys of Irish hares in Northern Ireland since 2002. These have indicated that the Irish hare population can be subject to wide annual population fluctuations. The present series is due to be completed in 2010 after which an assessment will be made regarding the general trend of the population.

The 2009 survey indicated a slight fall in the population of Irish hares, although this was not significant. Based on this result I have decided to bring forward another temporary Special Protection Order (SPO) for Irish hares to commence in December 2009.

Irish hares will revert to their original status when the Temporary SPO has expired. The requirement for further protection, whether temporary or permanent, will be assessed when the 2010 survey has been completed and in the light of future proposals within a revised Irish hare Species Action Plan.

Race Tracks at Nutts Corner

Mr M McLaughlin asked the Minister of the Environment if all possible measures are in place to monitor noise from both legal and illegal race tracks at Nutts Corner. (AQW 676/10)

Minister of the Environment: District council's as the statutory regulatory authority have powers under the Pollution Control and Local Government (NI) Order 1978 to investigate, monitor and take enforcement action for noise nuisance from motor sport race tracks. The powers also extend to neighbouring councils to take action against a noise nuisance that arises outside their jurisdiction.

Race Track Sites at Nutts Corner

Mr M McLaughlin asked the Minister of the Environment to list all existing legal race track sites and all illicit sites at Nutts Corner. (AQW 677/10)

Minister of the Environment: There are two approved and lawful motorsport tracks at Nutts Corner. One is the long established Nutts Corner Motorsport Centre at Dundrod Road. The other is a stock car track at Moira Road known as Nutts Corner Raceway.

Currently, there are no illegal tracks at Nutts Corner. However, Planning Service is investigating 4 alleged unauthorised tracks in the Moira Road area of Nutts Corner.

Orange Arches

Mr P Butler asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the number of orange arches that have been erected in each of the last three years which (i) met his Department's planning regulations; or (ii) were not approved by his Department or did not meet planning regulations. (AQW 696/10)

Minister of the Environment: My Department does not receive planning applications for any type of Ceremonial Arches and has no records of the numbers erected.

Historically Planning Service has not required planning applications to be submitted as these are temporary structures ultimately removed in a reasonable timescale. Issues relating to the structural safety of the arch are dealt with by DRD Roads Service under the Roads Order.

Pollution Incidents

Mr W Clarke asked the Minister of the Environment to list all pollution incidents which have occurred in the Shimna River below Fofanny Water Treatment Works in the last three years; and to detail (i) the severity; (ii) the source of the pollution; and (iii) what sanctions were imposed. (AQW 713/10)

Minister of the Environment: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) has confirmed that from 1 January 2006 to date, there has been one report of potential pollution impacting the Shimna River below Fofanny Water Treatment Works.

The pollution incident occurred on 20 September 2009 and was considered as high severity by NIEA officials. The source of the pollution remains under investigation.

Given that the incident investigation remains 'live', no enforcement action has been initiated against any party at this time. However, NIEA normally seeks to carry out an enforcement action for High and Medium Severity water pollution incidents where the polluter is identified. Sanctions are ultimately a matter for the courts.

Marine Bill

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of the Environment why there is a delay in progressing the Marine Bill. (AQW 727/10)

Minister of the Environment: The position on the Northern Ireland Marine Bill remains unchanged from that given to the Assembly on 2 March 2009. I remain committed to introducing legislation to the Assembly in 2011, subject to Executive approval, with a view to its being on the Statute Book in 2012.

The UK Marine and Coastal Access Bill, which contains provisions relevant to Northern Ireland, is expected to receive Royal Assent this autumn.

Unroadworthy Vehicles

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister of the Environment how many joint operations were carried out in the last 12 months by staff from the vehicle test centres and the PSNI to detect unroadworthy vehicles; and what were the findings. (AQW 771/10)

Minister of the Environment: On the road enforcement work by the Driver & Vehicle Agency is undertaken by a specialist team and is not part of the general work of staff based in vehicle test centres.

In the period 1 October 2008 to 30 September 2009, DVA enforcement officers carried out 4 joint enforcement operations with the PSNI. Operations were undertaken at Ballymena, Larne and Newry resulting in 34 vehicles examined of which 30 (88%) were discovered to be unroadworthy.

Those detections resulted in the following sanctions being applied at the roadside:

Defect Notices Issued	Immediate Prohibition Imposed (for serious mechanical defects)	Prosecution Reports Generated
10	11	14

Staff employed by DVA can also operate independently from the PSNI and have a wide range of powers to enable them to stop, inspect, direct, detain vehicles or drivers and if offences are detected proceedings may be initiated for this through the Public Prosecution Service.

Local Government Service Delivery

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the conclusions of the Pricewaterhouse Coopers report on Local Government Service Delivery; and the monetary and non-monetary costs in the economic appraisal of the options. (AQW 776/10)

Minister of the Environment: The PricewaterhouseCoopers report on Local Government Service Delivery is currently under development; this includes the economic appraisal aspects of the options. However, once completed and considered by the Strategic Leadership Board, I will make the report public.

Review of Public Administration

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment how much has been spent by his Department on the Review of Public Administration. (AQW 777/10)

Minister of the Environment: I refer the member to my responses to his previous questions - AQW 41/10 and AQW 633/10.

Fox Predation

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment what steps he intends to take to address the concerns of the Grouse group about fox predation reducing the number of grouse. (AQW 785/10)

Minister of the Environment: A Northern Ireland Species Action Plan for Red Grouse was published in 2008.

The inaugural meeting of the Northern Ireland Red Grouse Species Action Plan Steering Group was held on 21 September 2009. A wide range of interests were represented at the meeting. Predator control was one of many issues discussed.

This Group will advise on the effective delivery of the Action Plan, encourage the implementation of the identified actions and ensure effective outcomes.

Predator control is an issue traditionally dealt with by moorland managers in local areas. However, I will ask the Northern Ireland Environment Agency to keep me informed of the recommendations from the Group as they develop their discussions.

Grouse Project

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of the significant financial contributions made by private benefactors to the Grouse Project; whether grouse numbers can be increased and sustained. (AQW 787/10)

Minister of the Environment: The inaugural meeting of the Northern Ireland Red Grouse Species Action Plan Steering Group was held on 21 September 2009. The aim of the Action Plan is to increase the population of red grouse across Northern Ireland. The Group is chaired by Roger Pollen of the British Association of Shooting and Conservation and a very positive first meeting covered a wide range of issues.

A wide range of interests and stakeholders were represented at the meeting, including the Glenwherry Upland Regeneration Project. This is a moorland habitat improvement project which is showing encouraging benefits for managing red grouse populations and has been supported by a number of private benefactors.

The participation of moorland managers in the grouse group is to be welcomed and their knowledge and experience will be of benefit to the group's aim of achieving increased red grouse numbers.

NI Environment Agency

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment what steps the NI Environment Agency is taking to ensure that the small purple jellyfish population explosion which has invaded that coast of Antrim and Down is contained, to prevent damage to the salmon industry. (AQW 788/10)

Minister of the Environment: The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) Fisheries Division is responsible for issues connected with commercial sea fisheries.

However, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) has a statutory responsibility for marine nature conservation and as such undertakes marine surveillance and monitoring. It can also provide scientific advice on the distribution and extent of jellyfish blooms to other Departments, Agencies and coastal stakeholders.

On 16 September 2009, NIEA informed Glenarm Organic Salmon, DARD Fisheries Division, the National Trust and coastal Councils of the presence of significant numbers of mauve stinger jellyfish off the North Antrim coast. NIEA also advised DARD to request that the Marine and Fisheries Agency of the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs fly over the area in their surveillance aircraft to determine the extent of the infestation.

The mauve stinger is occasionally present in coastal waters but is typically found offshore and in small numbers. Containment of jellyfish blooms at sea is not a feasible option. It is the responsibility of each fishing operator to make contingency plans to protect its interests and to guard against jellyfish blooms.

Brown Hare and the Irish Hare

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment if he is aware that the inter-breeding of the Brown Hare and the Irish Hare is causing concern to naturalists; and what steps he intends to take to control and monitor the problem. (AQW 789/10)

Minister of the Environment: I am aware of the potential impact of hybridisation on the Irish hare.

The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) has raised this with other members of the Irish hare Species Action Plan Steering Group. As a result, a 'Brown hare sub-group' has recently been formed to consider the issue.

NIEA previously funded scientists at Queens University (QUB) to undertake genetic analysis of road kill specimens of both Irish and Brown hares, which subsequently confirmed that hybridisation had occurred between the two species in Northern Ireland. This study has revealed that there is two-way hybridisation taking place; female Irish hares mating with Brown hares and female Brown hares mating with Irish hares. This gives concern for the protection of the 'uniqueness' of our native Irish hare population.

To fully assess the impacts of this hybridisation, NIEA has commissioned QUB to produce a report which will highlight the risks and provide options/recommendations on how to address the problem.

NIEA has requested that the report is assessed and peer-reviewed by a panel of international hare experts from countries where similar 'inter-breeding' has caused concern for native hare populations.

Local Government Boundary Commissioner

Dr S Farry asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the timescale for bringing the final recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commissioner to the Assembly. (AQW 809/10)

Minister of the Environment: The final recommendations of the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner will be given effect, with or without modification, by a Local Government (Boundaries) Order. This is subject to consideration by the Executive. I will lay the Local Government Boundaries Commissioner's Final Recommendations Report in the Assembly, together with a draft Order giving effect to the recommendations, with or without modifications and, if necessary, a statement of the reasons for any modifications at the earliest opportunity after Executive consideration is completed.

Bridleways

Dr S Farry asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the policy of his Department on the (i) protection and (ii) future provision of bridleways. (AQW 810/10)

Minister of the Environment: Responsibility for the assertion, protection and provision of bridleways lies with District councils under the Access to the Countryside (Northern Ireland) Order 1983.

The Northern Ireland Environment Agency, through its Natural Heritage Grants Programme, supports the Countryside Access and Activities Network (CAAN). CAAN's objectives include working with the British Horse Society on the development of off-road horse riding trails for public use.

Bridleways

Dr S Farry asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the provision of bridleways in Northern Ireland compared to other jurisdictions within the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. (AQW 811/10)

Minister of the Environment: The Department does not hold data on bridleways in Northern Ireland as responsibility for their provision lies with District Councils under the Access to the Countryside (Northern Ireland) Order 1983.

Planning Management Board

Mr R Beggs asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 173/10, to detail the number of hours and the estimated cost of legal advice sought by the Planning Management Board. (AQW 812/10)

Minister of the Environment: The time and cost of providing the legal advice in relation to the Aurora Application, as advised by the Departmental Solicitor, was 7.66 hours totalling £1,019.67.

Planning Appeals Commission

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment (i) when the Planning Appeals Commission intends to report its findings on the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan to the Planning Service; and (ii) when the Planning Service intends to publish the final plan. (AQW 918/10)

Minister of the Environment: The Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (BMAP) was published in November 2004. The Public Inquiry commenced in April 2007 and concluded in May 2008.

The Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) is currently considering all the information before it prior to completing its report and making its recommendations to the Department. The PAC has indicated a preliminary timescale for delivery of the report to Planning Service as early summer 2010. Any review of timescales undertaken by the PAC may advance the Report or elements of the Report.

In October 2008, the Department wrote to the PAC and requested the early release of that part of the BMAP Report relating to strategic retail issues, including Sprucefield. The PAC took the view that this was a discrete issue and, as the public sessions of the Inquiry were complete, it could comply with the Department's request. The Commission issued the report to the Department on 21 January 2009, and it is now available to the public on request.

Upon receipt of the remainder of the report, Planning Service will consider the recommendations of the PAC and prepare the Plan for adoption. Although the date of adoption will be dependent on the date that the PAC Report is received, it is unlikely that the Plan will be adopted before 2011.

Planning Application by Rose Energy

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of the Environment when a decision will be made regarding the planning application by Rose Energy to build an incinerator in Glenavy. (AQW 966/10)

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

Following initial consideration of the power plant application, additional environmental information was requested on 11 February 2009 as an Addendum to the Environmental Statement. The Addendum was submitted to Planning Service on 12 June 2009. At the same time Rose Energy also submitted a new separate planning application for the abstraction of water directly from Lough Neagh. The new application for water abstraction is

accompanied by an Environmental Statement. The water abstraction application was designated Article 31 on 11 August 2009 and is being processed in tandem with the power plant planning application.

On 28 August 2009 Rose Energy submitted a further addendum to the Environmental Statement accompanying the power plant application. The addendum comprises an amended Noise Assessment and was submitted voluntarily by Rose Energy. Consultations on the addendum were issued to the relevant consultees on 1 September 2009. Neighbour re-notification in respect of the addendum issued on 7 September 2009 and advertisement took place on 9, 10 and 11 September 2009. Advertisement of the addendum in the Antrim newspapers and in the three daily newspapers will take place on 7, 8 and 9 October 2009. In accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, the public have been given 4 weeks from the date of advertisement to submit representations regarding the environmental effects of the proposals. The 4 week period will end on 6 November 2009.

A number of detailed and technical objection reports were submitted to Planning Service, on behalf of the Communities Against Lough Neagh Incinerator (CALNI), on 18 and 21 September 2009 and the advice of expert consultees has been sought on the content of these reports.

My department is processing both planning applications as quickly as it is possible to do so and I hope to be in a position to take a decision on the way forward in the near future.

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

Quangos

Mr S Moutray asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many quangos and similar bodies are currently operational. (AQW 372/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel (Mr S Wilson): The total number of Northern Ireland public bodies in operation on 14 September 2009 was 74.

All public bodies sponsored by Northern Ireland departments are listed in the annual public bodies report.

The most recent published report is for 2008 and is available in the Assembly library. The 2009 report (position at 31 March 2009) is currently being finalised and will be available in the Assembly Library by the end of October.

F1 and F2 of the Building (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, with reference to F1 and F2 of the Building (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006, what checks does his Department carry out to make sure that (i) building certificates are not being issued without the required air tightness testing certificates; and (ii) those carrying out such tests are suitably accredited and qualified. (AQW 466/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Technical Booklets F1 (for dwellings) and F2 (for buildings other than dwellings) of the Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 (as amended) set out standards and construction methods that, if adhered to, will be deemed to have satisfied the requirements of Part F (Conservation of fuel and power) of the Regulations. Technical Booklets have no force under statute, and there is no obligation to comply with the methods or standards set out in them, however if an applicant decides to deviate from these standards, he must demonstrate to the satisfaction of Building Control that the requirements of the regulations have been met.

If an air tightness test is to be carried out, the tester must be suitably qualified and be registered and approved by an appropriate professional body such as the British Institute of Non-Destructive Testing.

Under Article 11 of the Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) Order 1979 (as amended), district councils have a duty to enforce building regulations in their council area. It is up to each council to determine the appropriate method of enforcement for their council area, and to liaise with other councils to ensure consistency of approach. There is no enforcement role for the Department under this legislation.

F1 and F2 of the Building (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in relation to F1 and F2 of the Building (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 (i) what controls and checks are undertaken by Building Control in each local council area to ensure that air tightness tests are carried out to the required standards as set out in the Air Tightness Testing and Measurement Association's publication 'Measuring air permeability of building envelopes'; and (ii) if he can confirm that the engineers carrying out such tests are suitably qualified and accredited.

(AQW 471/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Technical Booklets F1 (for dwellings) and F2 (for buildings other than dwellings) of the Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 (as amended) set out standards and construction methods that, if adhered to, will be deemed to have satisfied the requirements of Part F (Conservation of fuel and power) of the Regulations. Technical Booklets have no force under statute, and there is no obligation to comply with the methods or standards set out in them, however if an applicant decides to deviate from these standards, he must demonstrate to the satisfaction of Building Control that the requirements of the regulations have been met.

If an air tightness test is to be carried out, the tester must be suitably qualified and be registered and approved by an appropriate professional body such as the British Institute of Non-Destructive Testing.

Under Article 11 of the Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) Order 1979 (as amended), district councils have a duty to enforce building regulations in their council area. It is up to each council to determine the appropriate method of enforcement for their council area, and to liaise with other councils to ensure consistency of approach. There is no enforcement role for the Department under this legislation.

F1 and F2 of the Building (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what assurances each council can provide that Building Certificates are not being issued without air tightness tests being carried out and to the required professional standards under F1 and F2 of the Building (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006.

(AQW 472/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Technical Booklets F1 and F2 set out the standards and methods of construction that, if adhered to, will be deemed to have satisfied the requirements of Part F (Conservation of fuel and power) of the Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 (as amended). There is no legal obligation to adhere to the standards or methods set out in the Technical Booklets, however if a designer decides to adopt an alternative standard or method, he must satisfy the district council that the requirements of the regulations are met.

If an air tightness test is to be carried out, the tester must be suitably qualified and be registered and approved by an appropriate professional body such as the British Institute of Non-Destructive Testing.

Under Article 11 of the Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) Order 1979 (as amended), district councils are tasked with enforcing the regulations within their council area. It is a matter for each council to determine an appropriate level of enforcement of each aspect of the Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000. As the local government function falls within the remit of the Department of the Environment, it would not be appropriate for my Department to dictate how district councils fulfil their enforcement duties.

Land and Property Service

Mr B Armstrong asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what systems are currently in place for the transfer of information, relating to land or property owners, from the Land and Property Service to NI Water.

(AQW 520/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Land & Property Services does not transfer information on land or property owners to NI Water.

Land & Property Services extracts Net Annual Values and related Valuation List information for non-domestic properties from its valuation and rating computer systems, and provides this data to NI Water to enable the calculation of the variable charge in respect of the unmeasured (non-metered) non-domestic properties.

Flooding Incident Line

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many customers has the new Flooding Incident Line dealt with since its inception. (AQW 560/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The Flooding Incident Line has dealt with 1,465 customers since its inception up until 18 September 2009.

1st Quarter (Jan - Mar)	2nd Quarter (Apr - Jun)	3rd Quarter (Jul - Sep*)	2009 to date
292	427	746	1465

*Note: Incomplete quarter; figures for period up until 18 September.

Flooding Incident Line

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what evaluation process has been put in place to assess the effectiveness of the new Flooding Incident Line. (AQW 561/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: There are several processes to assess the effectiveness of the Flooding Incident Line.

Statistics reflecting the number of calls received and the time taken to answer each call are examined on a weekly basis and also after all major incidents.

A report detailing all of the reported incidents from the previous day is circulated to the three Flood Response Agencies on a daily basis to assess the quality and accuracy of the information recorded.

A selection of calls are sampled and listened to for quality assurance purposes.

FIL has a complaints procedure in place should a complaint be received from a caller.

Flooding Incident Line

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if his Department intends to put customer satisfaction surveys in place or carry out customer check ups, in relation to the Flooding Incident Line. (AQW 562/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The Flooding Incident Line (FIL) is operated under the NI Direct Programme. NI Direct is Customer Contact Association (CCA) accredited and regularly runs satisfaction surveys such as "mystery shoppers". The intention is to extend these checks to the FIL now that it has been established. In addition, a sample of callers will also be included in the 2009 DFP Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Employment Levels

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what plans he has to change employment levels within his Department in the next 12 months; and how many of these changes are planned to be made through redundancies. (AQW 599/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: My assessment is that the number of posts in the Department is likely to reduce by up to 75 in the next 12 months.

I expect to achieve this reduction by not filling vacant posts, dispensing with temporary staff, redeployment to other Departments and by natural wastage.

I do not foresee a redundancy situation in the next 12 months.

Recruitment Prospects

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the current recruitment prospects in each Department for (i) males aged 18-24; and (ii) females aged 18-24. (AQW 652/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: It is Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) policy that all eligible persons shall have equal opportunity for employment, training and advancement in the NICS on the basis of their ability and aptitude for the work. All recruitment to NICS Departments is open and fair and in accordance with the NI Civil Service Commissioners Code. All external competitions are advertised in the Belfast Telegraph, Irish News, Newsletter and on www.nicsrecruitment.gov.uk, www.jobcentreonline.com and www.nijobs.com. These competitions are open to all who meet the criteria for the position regardless of gender or age.

Lease Arrangements

Mr P Butler asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) how many 99 year lease arrangements his Department approved in the last three years; (ii) how many 25 year lease arrangements his Department approved in the last three years; and (iii) to list all bodies and organisations operating both 99 and 25 year leases. (AQW 682/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: DFP has not approved any 99 year lease arrangements in the last three years;

DFP has not approved any 25 year lease arrangements in the last three years;

None of DFP's Agencies has a lease over 25 years. DFP itself has one property held on a 125 year lease.

Cold Related Illness

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many people died of a cold related illness in each of the last three winters. (AQW 685/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The following table provides figures for the annual number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland where hypothermia was mentioned on the death certificate for 2006 to 2008.

Number of deaths registered with a mention of hypothermia¹ on the death certificate, Northern Ireland, 2006 to 2008.

	2006	2007	2008(P)
Deaths with mention of hypothermia on death certificate	15	13	18

¹ Deaths with a mention of hypothermia defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) code T68.

(P) 2008 data is provisional

Barnett Formula

Dr S Farry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the conclusions and recommendations in the report by the House of Lords Select Committee on the Barnett Formula, including its consistency with the evidence presented by the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service. (AQW 807/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The conclusions of the House of Lords Select Committee on the Barnett Formula report produced in July 2009 are consistent with the written evidence presented by the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service and the oral evidence given by DFP officials to the Committee.

Northern Ireland officials had expressed concern about the need to have recognition of relative regional need in any funding allocation mechanism that might succeed the Barnett Formula. Officials also stressed the importance of having transparency and independence in any new funding mechanism. Both these issues lie at the heart of the conclusions presented by the Select Committee.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

New IT Systems

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) all new IT systems that were installed in his Department; (ii) the initial budget; (iii) the actual cost; (iv) the estimated start date; and (v) the actual start date, in the last five years. (AQW 259/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Mr M McGimpsey): In addition to the accounting, personnel, records management and infrastructure systems that were installed in all Departments as part of the NICS Reforms Programme, the following IT systems were installed in DHSSPS in the last five years:

System	Initial Budget	Actual Cost	Estimated Start Date	Actual Start Date
Emergency Contact System	£71,000	£73,000	April 2004	September 2004
HPSS Superannuation System	£2,364,000	£2,519,000	October 2007	October 2007

The Emergency Contact System was installed as a means of bringing together teams to respond in the event of an emergency.

The HPSS Superannuation System was a replacement system to administer pensions for ex-employees of the HPSS.

M.E. Service at Belfast City Hospital

Mr K McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he is aware that the M.E. service at Belfast City Hospital has ceased to accept further referrals. (AQW 262/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Belfast Trust has advised that the clinic at Belfast City Hospital was being provided on a voluntary basis by a consultant with a special interest in ME. Due to the pressure of competing priorities that consultant is no longer available to provide this service and no new cases have been referred since 2 July 2009.

As you will be aware, the allocation of resources for specific services is a matter for the Health and Social Care Board. I understand that to date the Board has not received a business case for a fully commissioned service for ME.

However, people suffering from this very debilitating condition continue to have access to appropriate care and treatment, ranging from primary and community care to specialist regional neurology services, depending on their assessed individual needs.

I can also advise that I have commissioned the HSC Board to undertake a full and comprehensive evaluation and report of the effectiveness of the implementation of the recommendations in the 2002 review of neurology services and a report is expected next year.

M.E. Provision at Belfast City Hospital

Mr K McCarthy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he will guarantee that the M.E. provision at Belfast City Hospital, which is the sole Health Service facility, will continue to provide this service. (AQW 263/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Belfast Trust has advised that the clinic at Belfast City Hospital was being provided on a voluntary basis by a consultant with a special interest in ME. Due to the pressure of competing priorities that consultant is no longer available to provide this service and no new cases have been referred since 2 July 2009.

As you will be aware, the allocation of resources for specific services is a matter for the Health and Social Care Board. I understand that to date the Board has not received a business case for a fully commissioned service for ME.

However, people suffering from this very debilitating condition continue to have access to appropriate care and treatment, ranging from primary and community care to specialist regional neurology services, depending on their assessed individual needs.

I can also advise that I have commissioned the HSC Board to undertake a full and comprehensive evaluation and report of the effectiveness of the implementation of the recommendations in the 2002 review of neurology services and a report is expected next year.

Fertility Treatment

Mrs N Long asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he will take to ensure that Belfast Health and Social Care Trust will adhere to NICE guidelines which stipulate that people should receive three courses of fertility treatment. (AQW 264/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Northern Ireland aspires to provide the full three cycles of fertility treatment as recommended by NICE however financial constraints currently make this unachievable. The current provision of one publicly funded cycle of treatment is comparable to many other areas of the United Kingdom.

I have recently announced an additional £1.5m recurrent funding for fertility services. This, in addition to an investment of £800k in a waiting list initiative, means that no patient will now wait more than 12 months for treatment from being placed on a waiting list. It is hoped that it will also be possible to introduce a cycle of Frozen Embryo Transfer in addition to the currently funded stimulated cycle of treatment where this is appropriate.

Transport Entitlements

Mr T Gallagher asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why, in the case of transport entitlements, for people with learning disabilities, the Western Health and Social Care Trust makes distinctions between adults who are in foster care and adults who are adopted; and if such distinctions are part of his Department's policies. (AQW 282/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Access to Trust transport services is provided on the basis of assessed need where an individual is assessed as requiring a Social Care service, using the eligibility criteria established in A Transport Strategy for Health & Social Care Services in Northern Ireland 2007.

The Western Health & Social Care Trust makes no distinction between adults, who were formerly in foster care placements, or adults who were subject to adoption. The needs for Social Care Services and access to transport to facilitate attendance are assessed on an individual case basis, and those needs met within available resources.

The Trust has no responsibility for transport to activities other than those provided directly, or contracted out, by the Trust.

Cosmetic Surgery: Prisoners

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many serving prisoners have had cosmetic surgery funded by the Health Service in each of the last 5 years. (AQW 290/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: This information is not available as the hospital Patient Administration System does not record if patients attending for any type of procedure are serving prisoners for reasons of patient confidentiality.

Cardiac Surgery

Mr M McLaughlin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many inpatients are currently awaiting urgent cardiac surgery and (ii) what is the acceptable waiting time for these patients once they have been accepted by a cardiac surgeon. (AQW 304/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:

- (i) On 14th September 26 patients who had been accepted for cardiac surgery were waiting in hospital. In addition a further 6 patients who had been referred to cardiac surgery were waiting for a decision to treat. All patients who remain in hospital whilst waiting for cardiac surgery can be deemed as urgent.
- (ii) A Clinical Advisory Group has agreed regional guidelines and standards for Trusts including a target that all patients who have been accepted for cardiac surgery and are required to stay in hospital until that surgery is complete should have a date for surgery within 28 days of the decision to treat.

Social Care Trust Staff

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many Health and Social Care Trust staff are currently employed on fixed term contracts; (ii) how many employees have been transferred from fixed term to permanent contracts since April 2009; and (iii) to outline the criteria which apply to such changes in contractual terms. (AQW 322/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information is not available in the format requested. The type of employment contract is a matter for the HSC organisations and my Department could only establish this information at a disproportionate cost.

Primary Carers

Mr J O'Dowd asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many carers are registered; (ii) how many school age children does the Department know, or estimate, to be the primary carer in a household; and (iii) how many people over 60 does the Department know or estimate to be the primary carer in a household in the Banbridge and Craigavon Council areas. (AQW 342/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: It is assumed that this question relates to informal carers. The information is not available in the format requested.

Cardiac Rehabilitation

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what provision is made by (i) his Department; (ii) the Regional Health and Social Care Board; and (iii) by each Health and Social Care Trust to facilitate cardiac rehabilitation. (AQW 350/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:

- (i) In June this year, I launched the Service Framework for Cardiovascular Health and Wellbeing, which sets a standard that "all patients identified as requiring cardiac rehabilitation, in line with regional guidelines, should be offered this service". A baseline audit to establish current levels of access to these services will be carried out by March 2010.
- (ii) A Clinical Advisory Group has agreed regional guidelines and standards for Trusts, which the HSC Board will use to monitor performance against the Cardiovascular Service Framework.
- (iii) Cardiac rehabilitation programmes are currently provided in 16 centres province-wide. Each of the Trusts currently offer cardiac rehabilitation at three different centres, apart from the Northern Trust, which offers the service at four centres.

Cardiovascular Health and Wellbeing Service Framework

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, following the publication of the Cardiovascular Health and Wellbeing Service Framework, if his Department will (i) set targets for its delivery; and (ii) invest in cardiac rehabilitation services. (AQW 352/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:

- (i) Target performance levels for these standards will be determined when all baselines have been established by March 2010. Where there is already a data source in place, the standards are to be fully implemented by March 2010. For the remaining standards, data sources and baselines are to be established by March 2010. The HSC Board will monitor and report to the Department on the achievement of all targets on a six-monthly basis.
- (ii) The current budget for 2008/09 to 2010/11 includes £12million for cardiovascular services, £14million for stroke services, £11million for renal capacity, and a non-recurrent bridging supplement to support the delivery of the Framework, including cardiac rehabilitation.

Dementia

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if Health and Social Care Trusts are obliged to obtain all facts pertaining to people diagnosed with dementia; and if they are further obliged to inform those who prescribe and care for those people diagnosed with dementia of all the facts. (AQW 360/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Every person diagnosed with dementia receives an individual, multi-disciplinary assessment of their needs. This will be conducted by a range of professionals who will consider the service user's physical, psychological and social functioning.

This information is recorded, collated and distributed to authorised persons involved in the ongoing treatment and care of the patient, when appropriate and necessary.

Freedom of Information

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if Health and Social Care Trusts are obliged, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, to supply information in answer to enquiries within twenty working days, or alternatively advise within twenty working days if the requested information is not known. (AQW 361/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Health and Social Care Trusts are compelled by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to inform any person making a request for information, whether it holds the information and if it does, to provide that information, subject to consideration of exemptions afforded to all public authorities by Part 2 of the Act. They must comply promptly and not later than twenty working days after receipt of the request.

Health Service Employees

Mrs M O'Neill asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how the numbers of Health Service employees working in laboratories delivering pathology services have changed in the past five years. (AQW 362/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Please see information requested in the table below

Year	Belfast Trust		Northern Trust		South Eastern Trust		Southern Trust		Western Trust		Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service	
	H/C	WTE	H/C	WTE	H/C	WTE	H/C	WTE	H/C	WTE	H/C	WTE
2004	n.av	534.2	205	176.3	62	53.7	47	46	n.av	n.av	24	23.5
2005	n.av	539.8	209	183.5	64	55.4	50	48	n.av	n.av	24	23.5
2006	n.av	555.4	226	194.9	68	59.7	46	46	n.av	n.av	24	23.5
2007	n.av	531.6	224	206.6	68	60.1	54	51.8	207	152.8	25	24.5
2008	551	510.8	206	188.7	69	61.1	81	74.8	223	180.2	25	24.5

Notes:

- 1 The Northern Trust advises that the drop in numbers for 2007 to 2008 is due to the relocation of the Infection Control Team from Laboratory to Clinical Governance.
- 2 The Belfast Trust can only identify Headcount for 2008 and the decrease in the WTE figures for 2007 – 2008 has been attributed to the amalgamation of the 6 Trusts to the Belfast Trust with the efficiency savings, the MORE project and the Comprehensive Spending Review leading to reprofiling.
- 3 The Western Trust can only provide figures for 2007 and 2008.
- 4 H/C = Headcount, WTE = whole-time equivalent. WTE is calculated by aggregating the total number of hours that staff in a grade are contracted to work, and dividing by the standard hours for that grade.
- 5 n,av = not available.

Health Service Hospital Laboratories

Mrs M O'Neill asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many personnel are employed in Health Service hospital laboratories delivering (i) clinical chemistry; (ii) immunology; (iii) haematology; (iv) coagulation; and (v) blood transfusion services. (AQW 363/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Please see information requested in the table below.

Laboratory	Clinical Chemistry		Immunology ⁴		Haematology/ Coagulation/ Blood Transfusion ¹	
	HC ³	WTE ³	HC	WTE	HC	WTE
Belfast HSC Trust	103	95.5	19	18.8	108	102.6
Northern HSC Trust	39	27.5	n/a	n/a	37	33.6
South Eastern HSC Trust	26	24.2	n/a	n/a	26	22.3
Southern HSC Trust ²	27	26.8	n/a	n/a	28	25.5
Western HSC Trust	30	29.1	17	15.7	27	25.6
NI Blood Transfusion Services	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	74	69.1

Source: Health & Social Care Trusts

Notes:

- 1 Southern Trust figures for this category relate to haematology and coagulation services. NI Blood Transfusion figures relate to all laboratory staff. All other Trust figures relate to all services mentioned in this category and cannot be separately identified.
- 2 Southern Trust are unable to assign their administrative staff to the requested services, therefore not included in this table are a further 29 (24.99 WTE) administrative staff who provide support to all laboratories.
- 3 HC = headcount, WTE = whole-time equivalent. WTE is calculated by aggregating the total number of hours that staff in a grade are contracted to work, and dividing by the standard hours for that grade.
- 4 n/a = not applicable. The Northern, South Eastern, Southern Trusts and NI Blood Transfusion Service do not provide immunology services.

Employees Within Health Service Hospital Laboratories

Mrs M O'Neill asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how the numbers of employees within Health Service hospital laboratories delivering (i) clinical chemistry; (ii) immunology; (iii) haematology; (iv) coagulation; and (v) blood transfusion services have changed in the past five years. (AQW 364/10)

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

FINANCIAL YEAR 2004/05

Trusts	Clinical Chemistry		Immunology		Haematology/ Coagulation/ Blood Transfusion Services	
	H/C	WTE	H/C	WTE	H/C	WTE
Belfast	n.av	93.1	n.av	19.5	n.av	114.9
Northern	52	47.1	n/a	n/a	44	38.2
South Eastern	27	20.0	n/a	n/a	23	15.2
Southern	25	24.0	n/a	n/a	25	24.0
Western	n.av	n.av	n.av	n.av	n.av	n.av
Blood Transfusion Services	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	71	66.3

FINANCIAL YEAR 2005/06

Trusts	Clinical Chemistry		Immunology		Haematology/ Coagulation/ Blood Transfusion Services	
	H/C	WTE	H/C	WTE	H/C	WTE
Belfast	n.av	97.1	n.av	19.5	n.av	109.4
Northern	53	45.4	n/a	n/a	46	40.7
South Eastern	27	15.6	n/a	n/a	23	18.2
Southern	24	24.0	n/a	n/a	22	22.0
Western	n.av	30.6	n.av	17.6	n.av	22.7
Blood Transfusion Services	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	68	63.4

FINANCIAL YEAR 2006/07

Trusts	Clinical Chemistry		Immunology		Haematology/ Coagulation/ Blood Transfusion Services	
	H/C	WTE	H/C	WTE	H/C	WTE
Belfast	n.av	99.6	n.av	20.5	n.av	110.7
Northern	52	50.6	n/a	n/a	46	43.8
South Eastern	29	15.6	n/a	n/a	24	18.7
Southern	28	27.2	n/a	n/a	26	24.5
Western	n.av	27.6	n.av	15.9	n.av	22.6
Blood Transfusion Services	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	67	63.0

FINANCIAL YEAR 2007/08

Trusts	Clinical Chemistry		Immunology		Haematology/ Coagulation/ Blood Transfusion Services	
	H/C	WTE	H/C	WTE	H/C	WTE
Belfast	n.av	101.8	n.av	20.2	n.av	109.8
Northern	50	47.6	n/a	n/a	47	42.0
South Eastern	29	20.4	n/a	n/a	26	19.0

Trusts	Clinical Chemistry		Immunology		Haematology/ Coagulation/ Blood Transfusion Services	
	H/C	WTE	H/C	WTE	H/C	WTE
Southern	27	26.2	n/a	n/a	25	23.5
Western	n.av	26.5	n.av	15.7	n.av	25.2
Blood Transfusion Services	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	69	64.6

FINANCIAL YEAR 2008/09

Trusts	Clinical Chemistry		Immunology		Haematology/ Coagulation/ Blood Transfusion Services	
	H/C	WTE	H/C	WTE	H/C	WTE
Belfast	103	95.5	19	18.8	108	102.6
Northern	39	27.5	n/a	n/a	37	33.6
South Eastern	26	24.2	n/a	n/a	26	22.3
Southern	27	26.8	n/a	n/a	28	25.5
Western	30	29.1	17	15.7	27	25.6
Blood Transfusion Services	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	74	69.1

Notes

1. The Western Trust is unable to provide any figures for 2004/05 and only WTE information is available prior to 2008/09.
2. Haematology, Coagulation figures and Blood Transfusion Services are merged for the Trusts as they cannot be separately identified.
3. Southern Trust figures do not include administrative staff.
4. The Northern Trust advises that the drop in numbers from 2007/08 to 2008/09 is due to the relocation of the Infection Control Team from Laboratory to Clinical Governance.
5. H/C = Headcount, WTE = Whole – Time Equivalent. WTE is calculated by aggregating the total number of hours that staff in a grade are contracted to work and dividing by the standard hours for that grade.
6. n/a = not applicable. n.av = not available.

Anticipated Contractual Cost

Mrs M O'Neill asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what the anticipated contractual cost was for (i) clinical chemistry; (ii) immunology; (iii) haematology; and (iv) coagulation pathology services in (a) 2006; (b) 2007; and (c) 2008. (AQW 365/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The anticipated contractual cost for (i) clinical chemistry; (ii) immunology; (iii) haematology; and (iv) coagulation pathology services across Northern Ireland for the three years 2006/07 to 2008/09 is as follows.

	Year	Clinical Chemistry	Immunology	Haematology	Coagulation Pathology Services
NI Total	2006/07	£11,501,345	£1,339,447	£12,659,009	£206,699
	2007/08	£12,415,498	£1,497,568	£14,046,236	£210,813
	2008/09	£13,962,100	£1,787,323	£15,316,684	£208,316

Contractual Spend

Mrs M O'Neill asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what the actual contractual spend was for (i) clinical chemistry; (ii) immunology; (iii) haematology; and (iv) coagulation pathology services in (a) 2006; (b) 2007; and (c) 2008. (AQW 366/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The actual contractual spend for (i) clinical chemistry; (ii) immunology; (iii) haematology; and (iv) coagulation pathology services across Northern Ireland for the three years 2006/07 to 2008/09 is as follows.

	Year	Clinical Chemistry	Immunology	Haematology	Coagulation Pathology Services
NI Total	2006/07	£11,468,016	£1,490,386	£14,397,631	£230,281
	2007/08	£12,922,530	£1,713,324	£14,285,877	£225,004
	2008/09	£14,983,954	£1,879,825	£15,820,293	£217,927

Heroin Addiction

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are currently being treated for heroin addiction, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust area. (AQW 367/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The table below shows the number of people in contact with substitute prescribing treatment services at 31 March 2009, by Health and Social Care Trust, where heroin is reported as the main problem drug. Eligibility for substitute prescribing treatment is based on the presence of opiate dependency.

Health and Social Care Trust	Numbers in treatment at 31 March 09
Belfast	97
Northern	164
South Eastern	33
Southern	25
Western	35
Total	354

Charitable Donations

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much was paid to hospitals in charitable donations over the last three years, broken down by hospital. (AQW 368/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information is only held by Trust level and not by hospital. The table below shows the amount of voluntary income each Trust has received over the last three years. (The figures for 2008-09 are not yet available).

HSS Trust	2005-06	2006-07	HSC Trust	2007-08
	£'000	£'000		£'000
Belfast City Hospital	1,125	810	Belfast	2329
Royal General Hospital	2,106	1,796		
South & East Belfast	16	43		
North & West Belfast	25	103		

HSS Trust	2005-06	2006-07	HSC Trust	2007-08
	£'000	£'000		£'000
Mater Hospital	43	24		
Green Park	46	72		
Subtotal	3,361	2,848		2,329
Ulster Community Hospitals	247	303	South Eastern	366
Down Lisburn	133	79		
Subtotal	380	382		366
Craigavon & Banbridge	22	25	Southern	943
Craigavon Area	410	424		
Armagh & Dungannon	36	37		
Newry & Mourne	163	132		
Subtotal	631	618		943
Causeway	565	147	Northern	626
Homefirst	58	78		
United Hospitals	545	472		
Subtotal	1168	697		626
Foyle	37	22	Western	446
Sperrin Lakeland	182	166		
Altnagelvin	190	276		
Subtotal	409	464		446
Totals	5,949	5,009		4,710

Source: Charitable Trust Fund accounts for HSC Trusts

Mental Health Issues

Lord Browne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many programmes, established to address mental health issues, are operating in the Greater Belfast area receive funding from his Department. (AQW 385/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My Department funds the Health and Social Care Board which commissions from Belfast Trust a broad range of mental health promotion, primary care, community and inpatient services and programmes to address mental health issues in the Greater Belfast area.

Mental Health Issues

Lord Browne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to provide a breakdown of programmes established to address mental health issues within the Greater Belfast area, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 386/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: It is not possible to give a detailed breakdown of programmes established to address mental health issues within the Greater Belfast area. This could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust is responsible for delivering a broad range of mental health services and programmes in Greater Belfast. These cover mental health promotion, primary care, community mental health provision and inpatient facilities. The Trust also commissions additional support services from the independent sector.

Mental Health Issues

Lord Browne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety who regulates the work, care and/or treatment of programmes established within the Greater Belfast area to address mental health issues.

(AQW 387/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: A dedicated team within the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority is responsible for inspecting and reviewing mental health services across Northern Ireland. Its remit covers:

- Conducting reviews into monitoring and improvement arrangements;
- Carrying out investigations and inspections;
- Recommending actions for improvement; and
- Reporting unacceptable, poor quality or insignificant failings to the Department.

Individual mental health professionals are regulated by their respective professional bodies.

Contact Youth

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 3888/09, (i) what partnerships between Contact Youth and other counselling providers to deliver services in the Foyle constituency were extended after 31 March 2009; (ii) whether any other counselling providers had the opportunity to add their services to the Contact Youth folio at that time; (iii) how many clients have been assisted by Contact Youth since its contract commenced; and (iv) how much public monies have been drawn down as part of that contract to date.

(AQW 394/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: In delivering the “Lifeline” service, Contact Youth has developed partnerships with a number of organisations which provide counselling, mentoring, befriending, and complementary services in the Western Health & Social Care Trust area. With regard to the specific information requested, I can confirm that:-

- (i) Information on partnerships is not held by parliamentary constituency, but is available at Health and Social Care Trust level. Lifeline service provision contracts with Contact Youth were extended after 31 March 2009 with the following organizations in the Western HSC Trust area:- Aisling Centre; Zest; CALMS, Northwest Counselling; Cunamh.
- (ii) Contact Youth held information days for tendering for Lifeline contracted services in February 2008 and June 2008. Information about the tendering process was advertised in the Belfast Telegraph, and placed on the Contact Youth and Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action websites. Contact Youth also addresses gaps in service provision by approaching community based organisations located in areas where there is low support service provision. These approaches are made through the local suicide prevention networks. Two organisations in the Western HSC Trust area expressed an interest in tendering to offer counselling services and were provided with the necessary information to submit a tender. One of these organisations has tendered and a contract will be signed shortly.
- (iii) Lifeline came into operation at the end of January 2008. By the end of August 2009, the service has dealt with 119,208 calls from people seeking help. Over this period, 3,275 callers have been referred to the various support services - 17% of these referrals have been within the Western HSC Trust Area.
- (iv) The draw down of funding for the Regional Crisis Helpline Service is as follows:- £456,000 (2007/08); £3,500,000 (2008/09); £1,867,000 (to date for 2009/10).

Mental Health Issues

Lord Browne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what standards of clinical excellence are applied to programmes established within the Greater Belfast area to address mental health issues. (AQW 395/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Belfast Trust, which is responsible for the provision of healthcare in the Greater Belfast area, delivers mental health assessment, treatment and care programmes in accordance with a range of quality standards laid down by my Department, professional bodies, employers, the Trust itself, legislation and the National Council for Clinical Excellence.

Mental Health Issues

Lord Browne asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what method of assessment has been applied to programmes established to address mental health issues within the Greater Belfast area to evaluate their effectiveness and lasting benefit to the patients. (AQW 396/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Programmes which the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust directly provides to address mental health issues within the Greater Belfast area are subject to clinical governance arrangements, including internal audit, to independent review and inspection by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority and to review and inspection by my Department.

Child Sexual Abuse

Mr D Simpson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQO 6/10 to detail all (i) correspondence; and (ii) meetings he has had since assuming office with (a) the Children's Commissioner; and (b) with the NIO, in relation to child sexual abuse. (AQW 407/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Since assuming office, I have met and corresponded with the Children's Commissioner and the Northern Ireland Office on a number of occasions regarding a wide range of children's issues. Some will have involved direct discussion about policy matters relating to the protection of children including child sexual abuse.

In addition, there continues to be co-operation at official level in both Departments on existing and developing safeguarding policy and at service delivery level particularly between Trusts and the PSNI.

Dates of meetings and correspondence relating to safeguarding issues which have been identified are as follows:

Children's Commissioner Meetings	
28 June 2007	General Issues regarding children and Young People
19 May 2008	O'Neill Inquiry
Children's Commissioner Correspondence	
June 2007	Follow up letter relating to meeting on 28 June 2007
28 August 2009	Participation Policy Statement of Intent
NIO Meetings	
17 September 2007	Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Referral Centre
17 September 2007	Vetting and Barring Arrangements
12 June 2008	Sexual Violence Strategy
NIO Correspondence	
6 July 2007	Remission for Sex Offenders
19 November 2007	Access Northern Ireland
21 November 2007	Sexual Offences Order

NIO Correspondence	
28 November 2007	Access Northern Ireland
17 June 2008	Rehabilitation of Offenders
24 June 2008	Sexual Assault Referral Centre
29 September 2008	Access Northern Ireland
13 October 2008	Public Protection Arrangements Northern Ireland
17 December 2008	Sexual Offences Order
28 November 2008	Domestic Violence
17 December 2008	Access Northern Ireland
17 December 2008	Sexual Assault Referral Centre
22 July 2009	Rehabilitation of Offenders
24 August 2009	Vetting and Barring
3 September 2009	Rehabilitation of Offenders

Child Sexual Abuse

Mr D Simpson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQO 6/10, if he will contact the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland requesting that an investigation into child sexual abuse in environments of trust or care facilities organised or overseen by (i) the Roman Catholic church; (ii) other religious denominations or organisations; and (iii) the state. (AQW 409/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The statutory framework in Northern Ireland requires that where allegations of child abuse come to light these must be reported immediately to PSNI and Social Services for investigation. If such allegations are reported to PSNI then I would expect that a full and thorough investigation will be undertaken.

If anyone has any information regarding any allegations of child abuse they should report these immediately to the statutory authorities for investigation so that perpetrators can be brought before the courts where this is appropriate.

Hoax Phone Calls to Ambulance Depots

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many hoax phone calls were responded to by each ambulance depot in each of the last five years. (AQW 410/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is contained in the following table:

Station or Deployment Point (DP)	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	Total
Altnagelvin	98	129	103	112	63	505
Antrim	33	37	30	26	37	163
Ardoyne	201	185	195	224	160	965
Armagh	38	55	37	61	44	235
Ballycastle	14	12	11	17	19	73
Ballygawley DP	1			2	15	18
Ballymena	55	53	41	43	47	239
Ballymoney	22	14	36	27	29	128

Station or Deployment Point (DP)	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	Total
Ballynahinch					1	1
Banbridge	8	13	30	24	33	108
Bangor	76	92	88	52	53	361
Broadway	334	276	243	170	173	1,196
Carrickfergus	32	19	14	27	17	109
Castleberg	7	3	5	8	5	28
Coalisland DP					4	4
Coleraine	40	38	60	43	44	225
Comber DP					5	5
Cookstown	19	28	26	18	20	111
Craigavon	112	95	104	95	74	480
Derriaghy				36	48	84
Downpatrick	36	34	38	53	40	201
Dromore DP				3	3	6
Dungannon	67	54	64	45	26	256
Enniskillen	35	41	50	30	28	184
Forster Green DP				7	76	83
Glengormley DP				1	11	12
Kilkeel	21	14	12	18	16	81
Larne	51	32	35	34	27	179
Limavady	19	23	27	16	18	103
Lisburn	81	94	119	90	51	435
Lisnaskea DP				1	20	21
Lurgan DP			1	2	18	21
Magherafelt	29	12	32	27	27	127
Mourne Country DP				1	23	24
Newcastle	22	19	23	19	15	98
Newry	121	100	113	94	73	501
Newtownards	70	61	74	61	66	332
NIAS Headquarters		2		3	2	7
Northland Road DP			26	43	44	113
Omagh	30	47	54	52	46	229
Portrush DP					2	2
Purdysburn	70	61	49	46	44	270
Shantallow DP					11	11
Strabane	27	24	27	34	28	140
Bridge, Belfast	99	106	155	200	109	669
Ulster Hospital DP					11	11
Warrenpoint DP				1		1

Station or Deployment Point (DP)	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	Total
Whiteabbey	46	51	29	37	37	200
Total	1,914	1,824	1,951	1,903	1,763	9,355

N.B. The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service records hoax calls under four separate data headings: hoax caller; no case at scene; nothing found at scene; and patient absconded.

Hoax Phone Calls to Fire Stations

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many hoax phone calls were responded to by each fire station in each of the last five years. (AQW 414/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is shown in the table, which indicates that, over the past five years, the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service has reduced the number of hoax call mobilisations by 36%.

Station	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	Total
Knock	76	66	58	71	79	350
Central	105	86	90	61	54	396
Cadogan	125	113	99	92	63	492
Whitla	35	29	21	18	27	130
Westland	95	74	76	97	86	428
Springfield	110	107	75	106	116	514
Ballymena	52	32	38	29	29	180
Kilrea	2	1	3	3	0	9
Cushendall	3	1	0	1	4	9
Carnlough	3	0	4	0	0	7
Larne	34	21	11	11	11	88
Coleraine	64	38	44	18	31	195
Portstewart	4	2	10	3	6	25
Portrush	23	15	5	7	16	66
Ballymoney	9	4	19	4	9	45
Ballycastle	3	6	8	9	5	31
Glengormley	65	56	41	31	33	226
Antrim	31	30	16	21	28	126
Ballyclare	12	5	9	8	3	37
Carrickfergus	15	7	9	9	9	49
Whitehead	2	1	1	1	0	5
Lisburn	24	27	33	11	20	115
Crumlin	5	2	4	3	4	18
Portadown	39	30	15	9	13	106
Armagh	24	22	15	29	12	102
Banbridge	8	5	14	16	11	54
Lurgan	34	27	36	34	35	166

Station	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	Total
Keady	17	12	12	3	8	52
Dromore (D)	1	2	0	1	1	5
Bangor	51	55	25	34	27	192
Comber	7	5	2	2	4	20
Donaghadee	6	5	3	6	5	25
Ballywalter	6	2	2	3	0	13
Holywood	8	2	9	9	2	30
Newtownards	36	21	30	17	16	120
Portaferry	2	2	3	3	0	10
Newry	92	55	48	57	50	302
Crossmaglen	3	0	1	2	2	8
Rathfriland	0	2	2	1	2	7
Warrenpoint	26	15	16	12	11	80
Newtownhamilton	14	5	6	2	4	31
Downpatrick	77	60	43	41	26	247
Kilkeel	11	17	20	23	13	84
Carryduff	8	0	10	2	1	21
Newcastle	24	16	8	7	16	71
Ballynahinch	10	4	4	8	11	37
Crescent Link	53	33	34	32	30	182
Northland	99	91	85	73	64	412
Strabane	21	37	22	49	15	144
Limavady	14	13	9	12	11	59
Dungiven	1	1	1	5	0	8
Omagh	31	29	20	21	5	106
Dromore (T)	1	5	4	0	1	11
Castleberg	3	2	6	3	2	16
Fintona	3	4	1	1	2	11
Newtownstewart	4	6	2	0	0	12
Cookstown	7	18	15	14	6	60
Pomeroy	0	1	0	2	0	3
Maghera	2	3	1	6	4	16
Dungannon	20	28	45	23	29	145
Magherafelt	10	7	9	2	9	37
Enniskillen	37	19	19	16	10	101
Irvinestown	2	4	4	3	3	16
Lisnaskea	3	6	3	3	1	16
Clogher	2	0	1	2	3	8
Other	0	0	0	2	1	3

Station	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	Total
Total	1714	1394	1279	1204	1099	6690

Swine Flu Treatment

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much money has been identified out of the existing health budget to help pay for Swine Flu treatment costs. (AQW 417/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: It is estimated that Swine Flu will cost the Department between £65m and £96m this financial year. The current best estimate predicts costs of £78m.

The Department has put in place, with considerable difficulty given the budgetary pressures it faces, plans to meet £27m of these costs.

Child Sexual Abuse

Mr D Simpson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what assessment his Department has made of the need for an investigation into child sexual abuse in environments of trust or care facilities organised or overseen by (i) the Roman Catholic church; (ii) other religious denominations or organisations; and (iii) the state. (AQW 419/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The statutory framework in Northern Ireland requires that where allegations of child abuse come to light these must be reported immediately to PSNI and Social Services for investigation. Anyone who has any information regarding any allegations of child abuse should report these immediately to the statutory authorities for investigation so that perpetrators can be brought before the courts where this is appropriate.

Alcohol Addiction

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are currently receiving treatment for alcohol addiction in each Health and Social Care Trust area. (AQW 442/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is not available.

Carers

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many children are currently registered as carers for parents or siblings. (AQW 452/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: It is assumed that this question relates to the number of children who are informal carers for parents or siblings.

The information is not available in the format requested.

Joint Protocol Investigations

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many Joint Protocol Investigations Social Services have undertaken with the PSNI on suspected cases of child abuse, cruelty and/or neglect in the last twelve months. (AQW 454/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information on how many Joint Protocol Investigations Social Services have undertaken with the PSNI on suspected cases of child abuse, cruelty and/or neglect in the last 12 months is not available.

Premium Cost Phone System

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps he is taking to change the present premium cost phone system for contact with GP surgeries as many people with mobile phones cannot afford to ring their doctor. (AQW 460/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My department has previously taken steps to ban the use of premium rate numbers beginning 087, 090 and 091 within the Health Service. Officials will investigate the recent announcement by the Dept of Health that calls to 084 numbers should cost no more than a standard call with a view to taking forward these changes in Northern Ireland.

Projects in the North Antrim Constituency

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) what projects his Department has funded; and (ii) the amount of money provided by his Department, in the North Antrim constituency, since May 2007. (AQW 465/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is not held centrally by my Department and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Swine Flu

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many cases of swine flu have been recorded in North Down. (AQW 468/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is not available.

Drug Addiction

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are currently receiving treatment for drug addiction in each Health and Social Care Trust area. (AQW 474/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information on individuals presenting to treatment services with problem drug use is held on the Northern Ireland Drug Misuse Database (DMD).

The table below shows the number of individuals in treatment for problem drug use between 1st April 2007 and 31st March 2008 by Health and Social Services Board area – the current Health and Social Care Trusts were not in existence until 1st April 2008.

HSSB	Numbers in treatment
Eastern	1,286
Northern	227
Southern	102
Western	221
Prison	148
Total	1,984

The DMD collects information on problem drug users presenting to treatment services for the first time, or for the first time in six months or more. A problem drug user is defined as a person who experiences social, psychological, physical or legal problems (related to intoxication and/or regular excessive consumption and/or dependence) as a consequence of their own use of drugs or chemical substances. It is important to note that being in treatment for problem drug use does not necessarily constitute addiction.

Mental Health Issues

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what programmes on mental health issues have been funded in the East Antrim constituency in each of the last three years. (AQW 475/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: It is not possible to specify these programmes, as the information is not collected on constituency basis and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Alcohol Awareness Issues

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what programmes on alcohol awareness issues have been funded in the East Antrim constituency in each of the last three years. (AQW 476/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Through funding made available via the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs, the former Northern Board commissioned and funded a number of specialist Board wide and locality based substance misuse services in support of Northern Drug and Alcohol Co-ordination Teams 's Action Plan in the three year period 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09.

These services and programmes address both alcohol and drug awareness, reflecting the strategic approach to tackling substance misuse and best practice in regard to alcohol, illicit drugs, prescribed drugs and other substances. Northern Board wide services/programmes were available to residents of East Antrim.

The services available to those in the East Antrim area are set out in the table below:

Type of service/programme	Provider	Locality/Area	Contract period Year of Small Grants Scheme (SGS)
Tier 2/3 counselling, support and mentoring service for 17 years and under	Dunlewey Substance Advice Centre	Former Northern Board wide	1 October '06 – 31 March '09
Community and family support services	Ballymena Family & Addicts Support Group	Former Northern Board wide	1 October '06 – 31 March '09
Cross-sectoral training and awareness programme	Coleraine Rural & Urban Network	Former Northern Board wide	1 October '06 – 31 March '09
Alternative criminal justice options (education and prevention)	Northern Health & Social Care Trust (NHST)	Former Northern Board wide	1 October '06 – 31 March '09
Supported and direct access accommodation	Living Rivers Trust	Former Northern Board wide	1 October '06 – 31 March '09
Tier 4 specialist in-patient services	NHST	Former Northern Board wide	1 October '06 – 31 March '09
How to drug proof your kids	Carrickfergus Community Drug & Alcohol Advisory Group (CCDAAG)	East Antrim	2006/07
Health education and training – drugs and alcohol	ACET (NI) Ltd	Former Northern Board wide	2006/07
Targeted education and prevention programmes with young people	ACET (NI) Ltd	East Antrim	1 May '07 – 31 March '09
Targeted education and prevention programmes with adults	Dunlewey Substance Advice Centre	East Antrim	1 May '07 – 31 March '09
Drug awareness (Monkstown)	Monkstown Community Association	East Antrim	2007/08
Drugs and alcohol awareness 4 Mossley	Monday Night Madness	East Antrim	2007/08

Type of service/programme	Provider	Locality/Area	Contract period Year of Small Grants Scheme (SGS)
Counting the cost of alcohol	Community Direct	Former Northern Board wide	2007/08
Drugs and alcohol awareness 4 Mossley	Monday Night Madness	East Antrim	2008/09
Motiv8	CCDAAG	East Antrim	2008/09
Diversions activities	Dunlewey Substance Advice Centre	Former Northern Board wide	2008/09
Pilot Project	CCDAAG	East Antrim	2007/08
Project Co-ordinator	CCDAAG	East Antrim	2008/09

The former Northern Board also commissioned a comprehensive Addictions Treatment service throughout this period within secondary care (community and in-patient) which was open and accessible to all residents within the Northern Board area including East Antrim - whilst this is a specialist treatment service, alcohol and drug awareness would also be addressed with clients/patients and their families/carers where relevant.

Generic primary/secondary care services in the Northern Board area would also have addressed alcohol and drug awareness with clients/patients and their families/carers where relevant.

Drug Awareness Issues

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what programmes on drug awareness issues have been funded in the East Antrim constituency in each of the last three years (AQW 477/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Through funding made available via the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs, the former Northern Board commissioned and funded a number of specialist Board wide and locality based substance misuse services in support of Northern Drug and Alcohol Co-ordination Teams 's Action Plan in the three year period 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09.

These services and programmes address both alcohol and drug awareness, reflecting the strategic approach to tackling substance misuse and best practice in regard to alcohol, illicit drugs, prescribed drugs and other substances. Northern Board wide services/programmes were available to residents of East Antrim.

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Cross-sectoral training and awareness programme	Coleraine Rural & Urban Network	Former Northern Board wide	1 October '06 – 31 March '09
Alternative criminal justice options (education and prevention)	Northern Health & Social Care Trust (NHSCT)	Former Northern Board wide	1 October '06 – 31 March '09
Supported and direct access accommodation	Living Rivers Trust	Former Northern Board wide	1 October '06 – 31 March '09
Tier 4 specialist in-patient services	NHSCT	Former Northern Board wide	1 October '06 – 31 March '09

Type of service/programme	Provider	Locality/Area	Contract period Year of Small Grants Scheme (SGS)
How to drug proof your kids	Carrickfergus Community Drug & Alcohol Advisory Group (CCDAAG)	East Antrim	2006/07
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Generic primary/secondary care services in the Northern Board area would also have addressed alcohol and drug awareness with clients/patients and their families/carers where relevant.

Swine Flu

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what the spending by the Health Service is on swine flu since the start of the outbreak. (AQW 482/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: £29.7m has been incurred/ committed in dealing with Swine Flu since the start of the outbreak. The majority of costs, £27.5m, are the result of nationally driven initiatives that ensure a level of protection that is consistent across the whole of the UK. This includes the procurement of antiviral drugs, vaccines, antibiotics, consumable stock and Personal Protection Equipment.

It is to be expected, as the situation develops, that costs will continue to increase throughout the health service.

Diabetes UK

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he has had any discussions with Diabetes UK around the issue of people diagnosed with type 2 diabetes being more susceptible to hearing problems and hearing loss; and possible measures to counter these problems or help these people. (AQW 525/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I have met with representatives from Diabetes UK (NI) on a number of occasions and I can confirm that these issues have not been raised in any of these discussions.

Swine Flu Vaccination

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he will give an assurance that the swine flu vaccination does not pose a threat of any danger to young children. (AQW 527/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: At present the swine flu vaccination is awaiting a license from the European Commission and will not be available for use until a license has been granted. Similar types of flu vaccine have already been tested using the H5N1 avian flu strain. The swine flu vaccine simply substitutes the H1N1 strain. Based on years of experience of seasonal flu vaccine the insertion of a new strain should not substantially affect the safety or level of protection offered.

Swine Flu Vaccine

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the current availability of the swine flu vaccine; and how it is being dispensed. (AQW 529/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The swine flu vaccine will not be available for use until it is licensed. The vaccine manufacturers expect to receive a license from the European Medicines Agency in October.

Once the vaccine has received a licence a vaccination programme will be delivered by GPs and supported by Trust staff for the high risk clinical groups. Occupational Health Services will vaccinate frontline health and social care workers.

Histiocytosis

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many children have been diagnosed with Histiocytosis; and (ii) what is the expected life span for patients who receive immunosuppressive drugs and chemotherapy as opposed to patients who do not. (AQW 530/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Histiocytosis is the name for a range of disorders caused by an excess of white blood cells called histiocytes which attack various parts of the body.

It is not known how many children have been diagnosed with the disease; however there have been 65 admissions to hospitals, by 15 individuals, during the last five years.

It is not possible to make comparisons between expected life spans depending on the treatment given, as treatment options vary depending on the location and severity of the disease; however, it should be noted that most patients will survive histiocytosis.

Legislation

Mr G Savage asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline any legislation his Department intends to bring to the Assembly before 31 December 2009. (AQW 531/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: No legislation is planned to be introduced before 31 December 2009.

Employment Levels

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans he has to change employment levels within his Department in the next twelve months; and how many of these changes are planned to be made through redundancies. (AQW 548/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Under CSR 2007 my Department is required to make savings of 5% per annum from 2008/09 to 2010/11. Efficiency targets are being delivered from a number of sources and staffing levels are being considered but have not been quantified. It is therefore not possible to predict what the change in employment levels will be in the next twelve months.

I can confirm that redundancy is not being considered.

Occupational Therapy Services and Aids

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what consideration has been given to increasing the level of funding for occupational therapy services and aids in the North Down area.

(AQW 554/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Health and Social Care Board has agreed additional investment of £178k for occupational therapy services within the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, commencing 2009/10. This additional investment will benefit service users throughout the Trust area including those of North Down. Funding requirements for Occupational Therapy aids remain subject to consideration through local commissioning arrangements.

Low Dose Naltrexone Drug

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what investigations and research have taken place on the Low Dose Naltrexone drug; and what plans there are for clinical trials.

(AQW 573/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Naltrexone is licensed only for the prevention of relapse in patients who were formerly dependant on opioids. No conclusive study has been completed for low dose naltrexone in the treatment or maintenance of any other medical condition.

Details regarding research or clinical trials on specific drug therapies are not held by my Department.

Public Health Agency

Mrs M O'Neill asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail how the newly established Public Health Agency plans to reduce inequalities in health outcomes.

(AQW 586/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Reducing health inequalities is a particular challenge requiring long term co-ordinated effort across government and all sectors. This issue will be a key priority for the new Public Health Agency which will contribute through -

- Strengthening partnership relationships, including for example with local and central government, to focus collective efforts on areas of inequality
- Promoting better co-ordination and integration of services at local level, and enhancing opportunities to share and spread good practice across Northern Ireland
- Joint working with the Regional Health and Social Care Board and its Local Commissioning Groups to embed inequalities and health and well being improvement within the commissioning of health and social services
- Prioritising and targeting resources to interventions and actions with greatest impact to those in greatest need

The new Public Health Agency is currently developing a comprehensive plan to address inequalities at both regional and local levels.

Care Providers from Outside of Northern Ireland

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he can give an assurance that value for money criteria and continuing patient care can be met by employing care providers from outside of Northern Ireland.

(AQW 587/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Health and Social Care Board negotiates and manages contracts with the Independent Sector on behalf of the five Trusts in Northern Ireland. Contracts for the procurement of assessment and/or treatment services are negotiated through a competitive tendering process aimed at ensuring best value for money.

Transfers to the Independent Sector generally cover the immediate assessment and/or treatment of the patient, together with any immediate post operative care, after which patients are transferred back to the care of their GP or local Trust as appropriate.

Northwest Independent Clinic

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) to outline the reasons for the Western Health and Social Care Trust withdrawing patients from pre-planned treatment at the Northwest Independent Clinic as from 29 June 2009; (ii) what arrangements were made to compensate the clinic for the cost of issuing cancellation notifications; and (iii) if these patients have been seen at Altnagelvin or Western Health and Social Care Trust facilities within departmental targets. (AQW 588/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I am advised that the Western Trust is committed to significantly reducing expenditure in 2009/10 and, in that context, is reducing the level of referrals for treatment to the independent sector across a range of specialties.

Issues in relation to specific contracts with independent sector organisations are a matter for the Trust concerned and the Health and Social Care Board.

There has been no change to the waiting times targets for outpatient, inpatient or daycase care which the Trust is required to meet.

Autism Services

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for a breakdown of the costing of the independent review into autism services, led by Ken Maginness. (AQW 589/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The total cost of the Independent Review of Autism Services led by Lord Maginnis of Drumglass was £16,583.25. This comprised of £12,039.77 for Independent Review Members expenses and £4,543.48 on administrative costs.

Ophthalmology Services

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) if he can give an assurance that all providers of ophthalmology treatment on the Western Health and Social Care Trust list of approved service providers were given the opportunity to submit tenders for ophthalmology services now being provided by a private company within the Trust area; (ii) what ophthalmology services have been contracted out to private sector providers; (iii) in what locations treatment is taking place; and (iv) if there is a continuing care package in place for the patients seen by the current care provider. (AQW 590/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Issues in relation to specific contracts with independent sector organisations are a matter for the relevant Trust. I am advised that:

- (i) There is no Western Health and Social Care Trust list of approved independent sector service providers. There is a Select List of approved Independent Sector providers for Northern Ireland and Trusts wishing to initiate new contracts for services must seek tender submissions from a minimum of three providers on the Select List before awarding a contract. Where existing contracts for service are in place with more than one provider each Trust has discretion to transfer patients as operational requirements dictate.
- (ii) The following ophthalmology services have been contracted out to independent sector providers: new outpatient referrals; the treatment consequences of the outpatient consultation; and review consultations required as follow up.
- (iii) Treatment is taking place at Tyrone County Hospital, Roe Valley Hospital and the North West Independent Hospital.
- (iv) The Western Trust has existing contracts for the provision of ophthalmology services with a number of independent sector providers including the North West Independent Hospital and Medinet. The individual contracts will specify the arrangements for consultation, treatment and review.

Front Line Care

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his definition of front line care; and if he has signed off on any efficiency saving proposals which will result in a cut in front line services. (AQW 791/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I define frontline care as the health and social care services provided directly to patients and clients.

I have signed off on efficiency proposals based on assurances from the Trusts that the quality of services for patients and clients will be maintained or improved, that Priority for Action targets and commitments will be delivered and that the implications for staff affected can be managed without recourse to compulsory redundancy. In addition, each Trust has also been asked to ensure that it has the right number and skill levels of doctors, nurses, social workers and other professionals in place at the right time to provide the right service to all those who require health and social services.

All Departments must achieve challenging efficiency savings targets of 3% per annum translating to £700m in the case of DHSSPS and in that, the Executive gave no dispensation to the DHSSPS. That is why I asked the Assembly to exempt the Service from efficiency savings, which it did not do.

Contingency plans containing proposals by Trusts to recover deficits have been submitted to my Department but these are still being considered.

Autism

Ms M Anderson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given that Autistic Spectrum Disorder teams in Health and Social Care Trusts have targets of thirteen weeks in which to assess and diagnose children who may have autism, (i) can he explain why the Western Health and Social Care Trust have a waiting list averaging fourteen months; and (ii) when he expects a reduction in this waiting time. (AQW 818/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Western Health & Social Care Trust has inherited large waiting lists from the legacy Trusts. It has however already reduced waiting times from 4.5 years in 2007.

The Priorities for Action 2009/10 target for autism services states that "By March 2010, ensure that all children wait no longer than 13 weeks for assessment following referral". The Western Health and Social Care Trust is working towards the 13 week target on waiting times and has provided a waiting list reduction plan that shows that it will be 13 week compliant by Sept 2010.

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for the names of those who sit on Belfast Health and Social Care Trust's Executive Management Team. (AQW 820/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: This information is contained in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust's Annual Report a copy of which is available on the Trust's web site.

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Executive Management Team

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) if the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Executive Management Team viewed the proposals concerning cuts of beds; (ii) if so, on what date did this meeting take place; (iii) who was in attendance; (iv) did the proposal go to a vote, and what was the outcome; and (v) when he, or his officials, were made aware of this proposal. (AQW 845/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My understanding from the Trust is that:

- (i) and (ii) a number of proposals to be included in the contingency plan were discussed by the Trust Executive team on 16 September 2009.
- (iii) William McKee, Chief Executive, Wendy Galbraith, Director of Finance, Dr Tony Stevens, Medical Director, Valerie Jackson, Director of Older People, Medicine and Surgery, Nikki Patterson, Acting Director of Nursing, Jennifer Welsh, Director of Specialist Services, Marie Mallon, Director of Human Resources,

Brendan Mullen, Director of Mental Health and Learning Disability, Patricia Donnelly, Director of Clinical Services, Denise Stockman, Director of Planning and Development, Catherine McNicholl, Acting Director of Performance and Planning, Ian Jamison, Head of Patient and Client Support Services, June Champion, Co-director, Risk and Governance.

- (iv) the proposals did not go to a vote- that is not how the executive team works. No decision was taken. The contents of the plan remain proposals and require Departmental approval.
- (v) The Department received the Trust's contingency plan detailing its proposals on 17th September 2009.

Health and Social Care Trusts

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what instructions he has given to officials and Health and Social Care Trusts to ensure that efficiency savings do not result in cuts to front-line care. (AQW 893/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Approval of all CSR efficiency proposals was conditional on assurances from Trusts that the quality of services for patients and clients would be maintained or improved, that Priority for Action targets and commitments would be delivered and that the implications for staff affected could be managed without recourse to compulsory redundancy. Trusts were also advised that they should ensure that they have the right number and skill levels of doctors, nurses, social workers, paramedics and other professionals in place at the right time to provide the right service to all those who require health and social services.

The DHSSPS guidance on contingency plans to address deficits emphasises that proposals with implications for front line care should be avoided where at all possible. My Department has received contingency proposals from the Belfast Trust and these are currently being considered. No decisions have been made and the proposals are still just proposals.

Hospital Beds

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) what action he is taking to address the lack of availability of beds in the Causeway Hospital and Antrim Area Hospital; and (ii) to explain why four patients in the mid-Ulster Hospital were left on trolleys on 28 September 2009. (AQW 1019/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I am advised by the Northern Trust that there are no general bed pressures within either Antrim or Causeway hospitals. There are, however, days where activity can be higher than normal and this can cause some delays.

The Trust has advised that Monday 28 September was an extremely busy day in the 4 A&E Departments in its area. The Trust has also confirmed that, in light of this increased activity, four patients at the Mid Ulster Hospital were appropriately cared for on trolleys whilst awaiting admission. The four patients were subsequently admitted within 1-4 hours of a request for a bed.

DEPARTMENT FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

NI Railways

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development when NI Railways will publish a new timetable for the Londonderry line. (AQW 314/10)

Minister for Regional Development (Mr C Murphy): The new timetable was published on the Translink website on 22 September 2009.

Translink have advised me that the new timetable was issued to stations during the week commencing Monday 21 September and became operational on Sunday 27 September.

Castlerock Railway Station

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development if the completion of repairs to platform 2 at Castlerock railway station is an integral part of the Coleraine to Londonderry track relay scheme planned for 2010. (AQW 315/10)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink has informed me that it plans to undertake necessary works to platform 2 at Castlerock railway station as an integral part of the Coleraine to Derry track relay. The scheme is planned to run from 2011 to 2013/14, subject to the necessary approvals and funding being available.

Passing Loop

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development if he will give an assurance that a passing loop will be an integral part of the Coleraine to Londonderry track relay scheme planned for 2010. (AQW 317/10)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink is currently in the planning stage of the track relay between Coleraine and Derry. The relay work is scheduled to begin in 2011 with an estimated completion date of 2013/14. A passing loop is an integral part of the project and options will be developed further when the economic appraisal is being prepared.

Travel Costs of Northern Ireland Water

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 7298/09, to detail the £1.3 million travel costs of Northern Ireland Water, including (i) the mode of transport used; (ii) whether economy, first class or business class; (iii) the destination; and (iv) the reason for the journey. (AQW 343/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the £1.3 million travel costs for 2007/2008 covers a wide range of journeys and destinations and the information requested could only be provided at disproportionate cost. However, the overall travel cost is summarised in the table below:

Area of Travel	£000s
Within the North	1.265
To Britain	66
Total	1.331

The mode of transport within the North is mostly private vehicles used by staff undertaking the normal day-to-day duties associated with operating a widely dispersed network of water and sewerage installations. The mode of transport for travel to the mainland is mostly air for staff attending meetings and other events.

NIW does not pay for first class or business class so all travel is at economy or equivalent.

Roads Service Schemes

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what Roads Service schemes are planned for the Victoria area of Donaghadee over the next five years. (AQW 345/10)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that there are currently no schemes planned for the Victoria area of Donaghadee over the next five years.

Roads Service Schemes

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what Roads Service schemes are planned for the Cypress area of Donaghadee over the next five years. (AQW 346/10)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that some of the street lighting columns may be replaced in the Cypress area of Donaghadee over the next five years. Roads Service has no other schemes planned for this area.

Business Service Unit in Downpatrick

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister for Regional Development to explain his decision to centralise jobs from the Business Service Unit in Downpatrick to Belfast; and to detail any discussions he or his Department held with Trade Unions or others prior to the centralisation being agreed. (AQW 351/10)

Minister for Regional Development: As you will be aware, Account NI, a reform project centralising all Government Departments' financial processing units, is a NICS-wide reform project, and all decisions in relation to the location of the Shared Service centre were considered and implemented by Department of Finance and Personnel. The Account NI contract for services was signed in 2006.

On 6 July 2009, transaction processing activities within my Department's Roads Service transferred to Account NI as part of the reform programme. These activities were previously undertaken by a team of fifteen staff based in Downpatrick.

A random selection exercise was undertaken to identify staff to fill posts at AO grade in the Downpatrick area. This resulted in eleven staff at AO grade being selected for existing posts and a further five staff at AO grade were identified as surplus. The Department is actively pursuing alternative posts for these staff, within reasonable travelling distance from their homes.

In addition to staff at AO grade, there was also one surplus post at SO grade. A suitable post has now been found which the member of staff has agreed to transfer to.

This process has been carried out in accordance with the general principles of redeployment, as set out in the staff handbook, and TUS have been kept informed at each stage of the process.

Traffic Congestion

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development what action he has taken to reduce traffic congestion on the approach roads to Ballykelly, particularly during rush hour and weekends. (AQW 380/10)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it has readjusted the timings on the traffic signals at the junction of Main Street, Ballykelly with Glenhead Road and Duke's Lane. The time previously allowed for traffic exiting the Ministry of Defence facility has now been allocated to through traffic and as a result, congestion on the approach roads to Ballykelly has been reduced.

In the longer term, the Investment Delivery Plan for Roads contains a scheme for the section of the A2 between the City of Derry Airport and Limavady, this being, a dual carriageway bypass of Ballykelly, of approximately 6 km in length. The construction of a bypass would remove strategic traffic from the village, thereby improving journey times, reducing congestion at peak periods, and improving both safety and the environment in Ballykelly. Roads Service would anticipate completion of this scheme towards the end of the Delivery Plan period.

Coach Car Park Contract

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to the coach car park contract between Roads Service and Banbridge District Council, to detail (i) the length of the contract; (ii) if the performance of Banbridge District Council is to be reviewed; and (iii) the cost of this contract to Roads Service per annum since the inception of the contract. (AQW 406/10)

Minister for Regional Development: In replying to your question I have made two assumptions. Firstly, that your reference to the coach car park is the public car park at Church Square, Banbridge, known by some as The Coach car park, because of its proximity to "The Coach" nightclub. The second assumption is that the contract between Roads Service and Banbridge District Council, to which you refer, is in relation to the cleaning of this car park.

I should explain that Church Square car park is, like other non-charged car parks in Banbridge District Council area, cleaned by the District Council on behalf of Roads Service.

Roads Service has advised that the agreement between it and Banbridge District Council, to clean the non-charged car parks within Banbridge District, is made annually. Similarly, the performance of this agreement is also reviewed on an annual basis.

The arrangement, which is for the cleaning of all non-charged car parks within the Banbridge District, has been in place since November 1988. Roads Service's costs since the inception of this arrangement are detailed below.

COST TO ROADS SERVICE FOR CLEANING ALL NON CHARGED CAR PARKS PER ANNUM IN BANBRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA

Financial year	Cost
1988/89	£2,100.00
1989/90	£5,616.00
1990/91	£6,160.87
1991/92	£6,561.42
1992/93	£6,856.68
1993/94	£6,993.82
1994/95	£7,273.56
1995/96	£7,419.03
1996/97	£7,641.60
1997/98	£7,870.00
1998/99	£7,870.00
1999/00	£7,870.00
2000/01	£7,870.00
2001/02	£7,870.00
2002/03	£7,870.00
2003/04	£8,077.00
2004/05	£8,360.00
2005/06	£8,560.00
2006/07	£8,834.00
2007/08	£9,213.00
2008/09	£9,489.00

AQW 406/10

Background

- It is assumed that Mr Savage MLA is referring to the car park adjacent to “The Coach”, a popular nightclub in Banbridge town centre which would be particularly busy on Wednesday and Saturday nights.
- Banbridge District Council currently sweep/litter-pick the non-charged car parks in the district daily.
- Roads Service could not currently provide an equivalent service at this cost.
- Section Office have checked the complaints register back to the start of 2006 and have not received any litter-related complaints regarding this car park in that time.
- Off-street car parking is proposed to transfer to the new Council as part of RPA.

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NI Water: Consultancy

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Regional Development how much NI Water has spent on consultancy, in respect of construction and otherwise; and to list all the consultancy companies and individuals and how much they received in payment, in each of the last three years. (AQW 408/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the associated fees and other payments to consultancy firms employed by Northern Ireland Water from 1 April 2007 to 31 August 2009 are as detailed below. The costs are exclusive of VAT.

Capital Consultancy	Year Ending 31 March 2008 £	Year Ending 31 March 2009 £	5 Months Ending 31 August 2009 £
Adjust Procurement Solutions Ltd	6,250	-	-
Aecom	-	-	462,887
Aj Mccann Consultants Ltd	5,166	8,748	-
Alaris Consulting Ltd	-	25,850	40,933
Alexander Hr Ltd	7,971	6,397	-
Appliance Technology Limited	-	21,178	5,600
Archaeological Development Services Ltd	5,826	733	1,999
Arco Industrial Supply	64	-	-
Asidua Limited	-	373,432	53,269
Atkins Limited	58,152	1,200,281	320,437
Bdo Stoy Hayward	-	26,050	7,500
Belfast Harbour Commissioners	374	-	-
Bespoke Performance Management Limited	11,504	130,198	11,855
Bhb Fire And Specialist Training Consultants	255	-	-

Capital Consultancy	Year Ending 31 March 2008 £	Year Ending 31 March 2009 £	5 Months Ending 31 August 2009 £
Bic Systems Ltd		695	
Biwater Graham Joint Venture	178,718	347,707	-
Biwater Treatment Ltd	222,914	5,706	-
Biznet Solutions	-	3,000	
Black & Veatch Ltd	284,127	102,826	-
Blue Print Appointments	31,601	-	-
Bravosolution Uk Limited	-	-	27,846
British Telecommunications Plc.	2,295	14,367	-
Bsg Civil Engineering Limited	351,959	84,331	-
Bt Plc	-	545	-
Bt Training Solutions	-	4,803	-
Btw Shiells	-	-	850
Building Design Partnership Limited	209,624	268,894	88,950
Burdens	-	5,204	907
Business & Scientific Services Ltd	-	89,984	23,051
Campbell / Quinn J V Ltd	-	25,564	-
Capita Symonds Ltd	669,143	931,741	567,413
Ccs Surveying	-	7,789	10,709
Ceco Flooring Ltd	-	644	-
Chandler Kbs	31,742	32,465	21,668
Changing Chains Limited	-	12,697	-
Chubb Fire Limited	-	18,153	-
Construction Consultancy Services	496,411	898,180	293,775
Construction Supervisory Services Limited	83,139	100,414	36,103
Contractauditline	1,397	-	-
Cssp	-	37,571	12,904
Damien Mckay Ltd	-	-	1,500
Dawson-Wam Ltd	116,916	69,306	2,959
Deloitte Mcs Limited	-	-	7,708
Dla Piper Rudnick Gray Cary Uk Llp	31,358	-	-
Doran Consultant	409,113	167,067	15,601
Earth Tech Engineering Ltd	197,668	205,731	86,288
Ec Harris & Partners	11,403	-	-
Ec Harris Llp	38,000	31,875	16,087
Entec	11,223	22,920	24,500
Ewan Group Plc	83,440	1,490	-
Excite Exhibition & Display	928	1,142	1,142
Faber Maunsell Ltd	465,430	1,769,877	312,461
Fujitsu Services Ltd	-	50,647	167,398

Capital Consultancy	Year Ending 31 March 2008 £	Year Ending 31 March 2009 £	5 Months Ending 31 August 2009 £
Geda Construction Co Ltd	-	141,986	149,700
Glen Contracts	-	-	141,578
Glover Site Investigation	2,444	13,914	8,899
Grontmij Ltd	-	28,756	7,286
Halcrow Management Sciences Limited	81,856	-	-
Halcrow Water Services	403,095	201,701	-
Himsley Meter Revenue Services Ltd	-	7,935	7,785
Holemasters (Ni) Ltd	-	1,800	-
Hyder Consulting Limited	324,420	727,557	356,265
I B M United Kingdom Ltd	1,200	8,269	-
Ian M Parker	-	-	3,925
Ics Consulting Ltd	-	29,831	-
Intapeople Ltd	5,880	-	-
Intra Consulting	15,540	18,750	4,100
It Project Recovery Limited	14,615	125,031	-
Itconsult (Mcr) Ltd	-	286	379
Jacobs Engineering Uk Ltd	-	751,620	661,408
Jacobs Uk Ltd	654,684	35,678	-
Jet Pr	-	7,887	-
John Graham (Dromore) Ltd	36,091	-	-
Magdalene Ltd	-	-	21,625
Mcadam Design	2,116,078	2,440,041	1,209,375
Mcauley & Browne	17,000	28,738	-
Mckibbin Commercial	-	-	1,000
Menicholas Construction Co Ltd	10,448	-	2,673
Mmc Associates	6,150	9,470	13,321
Morrow Contracts Ltd	-	40,285	1,817
Mouchel Limited	44,739	568,188	330,752
Mouchel Parkman Services Limited	210,654	-	-
Mulholland & Doherty	1,337,925	373,857	4,541
Mwh Uk Ltd	1,017,419	1,539,904	1,209,930
Nicholas O Dwyer & Partners	315,814	439,006	216,142
Nie Plc	1,265	66,654	-
Northern Archaeological Consultancy Ltd	-	7,464	-
Northgate Info Solutions	-	-	53,400
Novosco	-	15,150	-
Ollave Ltd	33,375	19,575	-
Oracle Corporation Uk Ltd	-	31,042	-
Orion Engineering Services Limited	30,852	26,315	9,510

Capital Consultancy	Year Ending 31 March 2008 £	Year Ending 31 March 2009 £	5 Months Ending 31 August 2009 £
Pentagon Solutions Ltd	-	147,725	-
Perceptive Insight Market Research Ltd	-	32,320	-
Peter J Graham Consultancy Ltd	14,813	-	-
Pipeline Services	-	802	-
Pipeline Simulation Ltd	480	2,725	-
Pricewaterhouse Coopers Llp	954,345	287,231	112,701
Purac Brand	252,607	297,351	481,288
Queens University Of Belfast	-	-	3,038
R Robinson And Sons	319,931	282,663	204,524
Rps Consulting Engineers	-	21,518	-
Rps Kirk McClure & Morton (Rps Kmm)	1,769,642	1,240,149	500,797
Rps Water Services Ltd	70,403	99,243	-
Safety Advice Centre	4,645	-	-
Scott Wilson	578,696	597,652	100,205
Scott Wilson Ltd	-	-	157,924
Scotts Electrical Services Limited	820	1,350	-
Serck Controls Ltd	-	2,142	-
Service & System Solutions (Sx3) Ltd	6,000	-	-
Seven Technologies (UK)	-	4,164	-
Shearwater Consortium	-	35,000	-
Sonet Communications Ltd	-	2,650	-
Stratex	-	2,644	-
Sureskills	-	7,620	-
T Oconnell & Sons	-	12,208	-
Tes (Ni) Ltd	-	21,939	-
The Dp Group	-	6,750	-
The Event-Ful Consultancy Ltd	300	-	-
The Sanzar Partnership	-	20,000	9,500
Vector Resourcing Ltd	-	181,791	61,000
Veolia Water Outsourcing Ltd	-	-	29,897
Vista Photographic	4,038	5,478	2,159
Waterpeople Limited	4,575	11,700	-
Wdr & Rt Taggart	366,379	404,243	252,500
White Young Green	698,354	843,623	382,837
Williams Ind Services Ltd	84,146	35,315	23,459
Wj Mcdowell&Partners	304,731	293,902	46,946
Woodside Distribution Ltd	-	329	-
Wrc Plc	34,422	111,501	13,833
Ws Atkins Consultants Ltd	3,265,198	3,609,744	1,436,797

Capital Consultancy	Year Ending 31 March 2008 £	Year Ending 31 March 2009 £	5 Months Ending 31 August 2009 £
Total	19,440,176	23,436,364	10,859,112

Other Consultancy	Year Ending 31 March 2008 £	Year Ending 31 March 2009 £	5 Months Ending 31 August 2009 £
Achievers	-	495.00	-
Adjust Procurement Solutions Ltd	4,671.79	-	-
Air Energy	960.00	-	-
Aj Mccann Consultants Ltd	4,043.62	-	-
Alexander Hr Ltd	372.00	32,258.10	-
Alvarez & Marsal Europe Limited	10,934.20	70,642.35	-
Andrew J McGuinness	600.00	-	-
Anna Shiels	-	7,057.77	1,417.97
Asm Horwath	-	9,760.00	-
Atkins Limited	28,641.79	-	-
Austin Hunter	800.00	-	-
Av Browne - Advertising Ltd	-	3,780.00	-
Being Communication Limited	50,000.00	-	-
Bespoke Performance Management Limited	24,070.82	-	-
Best Property Services	-	250.00	-
Bill Mccrum Consulting	-	-	10,500.00
Bill Morrison	600.00	-	-
Black & Veatch Ltd	22,383.26	35,097.42	-
British Telecommunications Plc.	895.00	675.00	-
Bt Training Solutions	695.00	-	-
Btw Shiels	8,500.00	15,700.00	-
Business & Scientific Services Ltd	-	499.00	3,250.00
Business Publication Company (N.I.) Ltd	56,705.50	1,855.00	-
Capita	13,194.50	9,847.00	-
Changing Chains Limited	-	50,114.12	-
Cjjm Partnership	-	130,455.04	7,250.00
Cln Solutions Ltd	-	167,611.56	68,324.31
Consult Nbl Limited	14,850.00	-	-
Contracting Out Llp	222,598.91	182,463.88	155,114.63
Deloitte & Touche	-	-	37,735.71
Dla Piper Rudnick Gray Cary Uk Llp	195.00	-	-
Dundas & Wilson Cs Llp	407,719.57	90,746.92	85,062.10
E McMullan Ltd	1,400.00	-	-
Ec Harris Llp	-	41,111.85	97,591.71
Eim	-	49,618.20	-

Other Consultancy	Year Ending 31 March 2008 £	Year Ending 31 March 2009 £	5 Months Ending 31 August 2009 £
Eleven Thirty Design	-	990.00	-
Emap Communications	-	359.00	-
Empathy Rating Syndicated Research - Uk Water Industry	4,200.00	7,120.00	-
Ernst & Young Llp	79,838.00	29,976.50	76,746.25
Frontier Economics Ltd	66,753.10	98,353.84	71,909.00
Gardiner & Theobald Llp	-	-	19,374.00
Glen Water	33,320.00	-	-
Halcrow Management Sciences Limited	148,762.41	-	-
Hcl Communications	1,390.00	-	-
Himsley Meter Revenue Services Ltd	760.00	7,024.96	11,029.07
Hippo The Water Saver	11,860.00	-	-
Independent Occupational Health Limited	54,215.80	28,415.65	-
Insidedge	45,000.00	-	-
Interim Management Assignments (Ni) Ltd	166,050.65	25,000.00	-
It Project Recovery Limited	39,706.95	41,983.95	73,818.66
Jack Mccann & Son	-	250.00	-
Jacobs Engineering Uk Ltd	-	75,416.94	3,187.10
Jacobs Uk Ltd	12,977.61	-	-
John Fawell	122.13	-	-
John W Smith	23,758.61	19,531.44	2,875.00
Johnston Publishing	2,400.00	-	-
Katalis Limited	-	-	30,000.00
Kirkwood Management Consultants Ltd	47,250.00	19,000.00	-
Love Pr	4,270.00	-	-
Macmillan Media	1,300.00	-	-
Martin Cowley Media	-	26,320.00	-
Martin Walsh	1,045.00	-	-
Maura O'brien	-	-	1,345.00
Mcadam Design	333,777.99	214,559.24	58,056.92
Mcg Services (Ni) Ltd	-	31,500.00	-
Media Watch Ltd	1,309.50	-	-
Mercer Human Resource Consulting	88,268.10	35,399.00	11,161.00
Misco	-	79.77	-
Mott Macdonald Group	1,183,802.02	1,391,048.83	134,293.54
Mott Macdonald Ltd	-	-	95,456.91
Mwh Uk Ltd	-	297,728.89	100,398.30
Neopost Limited	-	4,000.00	-
Neueda	77,572.80	51,398.52	-

Other Consultancy	Year Ending 31 March 2008 £	Year Ending 31 March 2009 £	5 Months Ending 31 August 2009 £
Nick Owen Associates Ltd	1,921.55	-	-
Nimms	232.00	-	-
North Time & Data Limited	17,500.00	-	-
Northern Ireland Computing Ltd	-	5,513.60	-
Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency	18,043.29	-	-
Ntuition Ltd	65,656.31	46,800.00	-
Ollave Ltd	-	4,218.75	24,660.00
Pathway Resourcing Ltd	-	32,584.94	-
Peter J Graham Consultancy Ltd	5,400.00	-	-
Pierce	-	11,702.19	-
Practical Planning Limited	71,240.00	8,320.00	-
Pricewaterhouse Coopers Llp	5,250,604.03	3,063,699.82	1,824,303.00
Prime Transformation Ltd	-	4,500.00	-
Ricoh Uk Limited	284.66	-	-
Rms Enterprises Ltd	-	16,400.00	-
Road Safety Contracts Ltd	148.94	-	-
Rospa Enterprises Limited	17,025.00	19,580.00	-
Sacker & Partners	28,918.50	3,412.00	-
Scott Electromech Ltd	277.46	-	-
Somerwood Consultancy Services	-	-	1,693.93
Stakeholder Communications Ltd	690.00	35,785.00	6,587.50
Strategic Planning	8,000.00	3,600.00	-
Supplies Team Northern Ireland	687.54	-	-
The Event-Ful Consultancy Ltd	11,143.10	24,529.23	7,324.00
University Of Ulster	-	-	2,640.00
W Martin	-	210.00	-
W R Jenkinson & Co	-	400.00	-
Water Uk	798.01	-	-
Waterpeople Limited	9,000.00	2,700.00	-
Weber Shandwick	52,770.00	-	-
Yorkshire Water	161.88	-	-
Total	8,897,279	6,589,450	3,023,106

Roads Service Schemes

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what Roads Service schemes are planned for the Churchill area of Millisle over the next five years. (AQW 411/10)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that at present, it has no schemes planned for the Churchill area of Millisle over the next five years.

However, the works programme is constantly kept under review and if schemes are identified, they are implemented on a scheme priority basis.

I would remind the Member that information on the completed and proposed roads schemes can be found in Roads Services' Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from the Roads Service internet site at the following web address:

www.roadsni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-council_reports.htm

Roads Service is currently compiling their Autumn Reports to Councils

Roads Service Schemes

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what Roads Service schemes are planned for the Groomsport area over the next five years. (AQW 412/10)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that at present, it has no schemes planned for the Groomsport area over the next five years.

However, the works programme is constantly kept under review and if schemes are identified, they are implemented on a scheme priority basis.

I would remind the Member that information on the completed and proposed roads schemes can be found in Roads Services' Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from the Roads Service internet site at the following web address:

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Roads Service Schemes

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what Roads Service schemes are planned for the Cotton area over the next five years. (AQW 413/10)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that at present, it has no schemes planned for the Cotton area over the next five years.

However, the works programme is constantly kept under review and if schemes are identified, they are implemented on a scheme priority basis.

I would remind the Member that information on the completed and proposed roads schemes can be found in Roads Services' Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from the Roads Service internet site at the following web address:

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Roads Service Schemes

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what Roads Service schemes are planned for Hollywood over the next three years. (AQW 424/10)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the following schemes are planned for the Hollywood area over the next three years:

Footway Resurfacing

- Rannoch Road, Hollywood
- Lochinver Avenue, Hollywood
- Torgrange, Hollywood

Carriageway Resurfacing

- Seapark Road, Holywood
- Dunlady Road, Holywood
- Ballymenoch Park, Holywood

This programme may be subject to change, as the resurfacing works programme is constantly kept under review, and implemented on a scheme priority basis. Commencement of the works will be dependant upon the availability of finance and other competing priorities.

I would remind the Member that information on the completed and proposed roads schemes can be found in Roads Services' Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from the Roads Service internet site at the following web address:

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Roads Service is currently compiling their Autumn Reports to Councils

Roads Service Schemes

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development what Roads Service schemes are planned for Bangor over the next three years. (AQW 425/10)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the following schemes are planned for the Bangor area over the next three years:

Footway Resurfacing

- Newtownards Road, Bangor
- Henderson Road, Bangor
- Cranley Road, Bangor

Carriageway Resurfacing

- Downshire Road, Bangor
- Beverley Hills, Bangor
- Beverley Drive, Bangor
- Ashley Drive, Bangor

This programme may be subject to change, as the resurfacing works programme is constantly kept under review, and implemented on a scheme priority basis. Commencement of the works will be dependant upon the availability of finance and other competing priorities.

I would remind the Member that information on the completed and proposed roads schemes can be found in Roads Services' Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from the Roads Service internet site at the following web address:

www.roadsni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-council_reports.htm

Roads Service is currently compiling their Autumn Reports to Councils

Sewerage Pumping Station in Saintfield

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development on how many occasions the sewerage pumping station in Saintfield has failed or required maintenance in the last year. (AQW 427/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the wastewater pumping station in Saintfield required maintenance work on 12 occasions during the past year. This was as a result of equipment failure or for operational maintenance.

‘Long Meadow’ at Comber Road, Killyleagh

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister for Regional Development, in light of the serious road accidents taking place at the area known locally as the ‘Long Meadow’ at Comber Road, Killyleagh, what steps he is taking to improve road safety at this location as a matter of urgency. (AQW 436/10)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department’s Roads Service has advised that full details of the recent tragic accident at this location have not yet been received, and it would, therefore, be premature to indicate what measures, if any, may be provided at this location.

When the full details have been received from the PSNI, Roads Service will carry out an assessment. I have asked Roads Service to forward the results of this assessment to you, when they are available.

Defacing Kerbstones, Road Signs and Street lights

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development what discussions he has held with the PSNI in relation to the prosecution of individuals or groups involved in defacing kerbstones, road signs, street lights and other property belonging to his Department or agencies. (AQW 447/10)

Minister for Regional Development: Issues associated with graffiti are operational matters and are dealt with by my Department’s Roads Service officials. I have had no personal involvement in discussions with the PSNI.

Sectarian Graffiti on Kerbstones, Road Signs and Street Lights

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline his policies in relation to the removal of sectarian graffiti on kerbstones, road signs, street lights and other public property owned by his Department and agencies; and how these policies have been applied in Garvagh and Articlave, County Derry. (AQW 448/10)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department’s Roads Service has advised that they will remove sectarian graffiti from its property if it is considered to be offensive or compromise public safety. However, experience has shown that sectarian graffiti removal is often counter productive unless there is over whelming local support. Without this support, repainting generally occurs very quickly and is often more extensive than the original graffiti.

Following a £300,000 refurbishment and reconstruction scheme on Main Street, Garvagh in 2004, extensive painting was carried out during July 2005. Roads Service removed the painting at the request of community representatives, however, painting of kerbs and other Departmental property reoccurs each year. It is considered that any further intervention at this stage would be counter productive.

Kerbstones throughout Articlave village are also painted each July and any attempt to remove the paint would not have the support of the local community and would be counter productive.

Translink

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the total budget expended by Translink for the promotion of rail travel; and (ii) the budget specifically targeted at the Belfast to Derry inter-city service, in each of the last three years. (AQW 449/10)

Minister for Regional Development: The table below shows the amount spent by Translink NI Railways to promote local and cross border rail travel respectively for the relevant periods. The table also details spend which is specific to the Belfast to Derry inter-city service. Most marketing spend is on general local rail services. However due to the introduction of new services from Ballymena and Coleraine in 2007/08 and the upgrade work and line closure in 2009/10, the Derry line has benefited from specific advertising campaigns. Thus specific marketing activity for the Belfast to Derry rail service has been greater than that of the other local lines.

NI RAILWAYS LOCAL RAIL MARKETING SPEND

2007/08	2008/09	2009/10 to date
£202,232	£98,386	£81,540

NI RAILWAYS DERRY LINE SPECIFIC MARKETING SPEND

2007/08	2008/09	2009/10 to date
£29,415	£0.00	£15,000

The figures above do not include marketing spend for cross border services as set out below.

NI RAILWAYS CROSS-BORDER MARKETING SPEND

2007/08	2008/09	2009/10 to date
£90,500	£68,663	£36,390

Compensation Paid Due to Poor Road Maintenance

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to compensation paid due to poor road maintenance, to detail (i) the number of claims; (ii) the total amount paid; and (iii) the number of claims still outstanding, in each of the last five years. (AQW 450/10)

Minister for Regional Development: The number of public liability, personal injury and vehicle damage compensation claims made against the Department for Regional Development arising from defects in the roadways and footways in each of the last five financial years is shown below. The amount of compensation paid to date and the number of claims still outstanding are also listed against each figure below –

		Number of Public Liability New Personal Injury & Vehicle Damage Claims Received	Total Public Liability compensation paid so far for the Personal Injury & Vehicle Damage Claims Received	Public Liability Personal Injury and Vehicle Damage Claims that are still outstanding
2008/09	Footway	429	£97,999.61	50
	Roadway	1,844	£162,569.97	125
	Total	2,273	£260,569.58	175
2007/08	Footway	494	£257,857.38	52
	Roadway	1,627	£308,939.73	36
	Total	2,121	£566,797.11	88
2006/07	Footway	501	£349,443.04	71
	Roadway	1,594	£320,610.91	32
	Total	2,095	£670,053.95	103
2005/06	Footway	571	£409,104.50	45
	Roadway	1,308	£323,365.13	29
	Total	1,879	£732,469.63	74
2004/05	Footway	586	£851,636.56	32
	Roadway	1,012	£407,451.59	20
	Total	1,598	£1,259,088.15	52

Projects in the North Antrim Constituency

Mr D McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) what projects his Department has funded; and (ii) the amount of money provided by his Department, in the North Antrim constituency, since May 2007. (AQW 459/10)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service does not hold information on schemes on a constituency basis. However, information on schemes completed and proposed schemes can be found in Roads Service's Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from the Roads Service internet site at the following web address:

www.roadsni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-council_reports.htm

Roads Service is currently compiling their Autumn Reports to Councils.

My Department's Ports and Public Transport Division have funded the following projects within the North Antrim Constituency since May 2007:

Project	Total
Bulk storage tank - Ballymena	£80,000
Ballymena to Belfast infrastructure capacity study	£62,000
Ballymoney Station Roof replacement	£198,000
Track remedial works Ballymena to Derry	£10,733,000
User Worked Crossing telephones Ballymena to Coleraine	£3,000
Bridge refurbishment Antrim to Coleraine	£200,000
Bridge waterproofing Ballymena to Coleraine	£124,000
Disability Discrimination Act and New Rail Vision compliance rail	£1,222,000
Fuel tank Ballycastle	£41,000
Trackside fencing	£277,000
Ballymena Permanent Way store	£72,000
Underline bridges Ballymena to Coleraine	£49,000
McWhirter's crossing	£99,000
Ballymoney Footbridge	£11,000
Bridge replacement - Coleraine to Antrim	£621,000
Bridge refurbishment - Coleraine to Antrim	£78,000
Total	£13,870,000

I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that it has invested over £48 million in water and sewerage projects in the North Antrim Constituency since May 2007. Details of these projects are provided in the table below:

Project	Total
Tardree Zone Watermain Improvements	£300,000
Old Ballybracken Road, Barnish Road, Kells - Replacement Watermain	£242,000
Ballymena North Zone Watermain Improvements	£10,000
Cashelton Zone Watermain Improvements	£1,718,000
Cargan Zone Watermain Improvements	£2,235,000
Reservoir Rehabilitation Northern Area Phase 1	£502,000
Northern Key Transport Corridor, Ballymena Watermain Scheme	£1,017,000

Project	Total
Main Street - Broughshane - Watermain Replacement	£155,000
Gortgole Road, Portglenone - Watermain Extension	£16,000
Knockanully Road, Martinstow - Watermain Extension	£7,000
Old Ballymoney Road, Ballymena - Replacement Watermain	£25,000
Kildowney Hill, Glarryford - Replacement Watermain	£58,000
Reservoir Rehabilitation Northern Area - Phase 2	£111,000
Dungonnell Command Service Reservoir Extension	£50,000
Carnlough Road, Broughshane - Watermain Replacement	£231,000
Frys Road, Ballymena - New Watermain	£253,000
Loan Command Service Reservoir - Inlet Watermain	£45,000
Aughnahoy Road, Portglenone - Watermain Extension	£9,000
Old Portglenone Road, Portglenone - Watermain Trunk	£210,000
Tullaghans Service Reservoir, Dunloy - New Reservoir	£50,000
Altnahinch Zone Watermain Improvements	£2,092,000
Altnahinch and Seagahan Water Treatment Works Residual Sludge Disposal	£3,175,000
Tullaghans Rd. Rasharkin – Replacement Watermain	£10,000
Portballintrae Zone Watermain Improvements	£5,470,000
Ballycastle Zone Watermain Improvements	£1,750,000
Ballynahone Zone Watermain Improvements	£4,270,000
Loughguile Zone Watermain Improvements	£2,817,000
Rasharkin Zone Watermain Improvements	£1,303,000
Toberkeagh Road Bushmills - Watermain Extension	£3,000
Ballinlea Road, Stranocum - Replacement Watermain	£139,000
Lisheegan Road, Rasharkin - Watermain Extension	£23,000
Newbridge Road, Ballymoney - Replacement Watermain	£26,000
Newbridge Road, Ballymoney - Watermain Extension	£48,000
Lisboy Road Dunloy - Watermain Extension	£2,000
Gortahar Road, Rasharkin - Watermain Extension	£3,000
Glenlough Service Reservoir, Ballymoney - New Service Reservoir	£55,000
Altnahinch Water Treatment Works, Ballymoney - New Clear Water Basin	£50,000
Ballynarry Road, Derrykeighan - Watermain Extension	£21,000
Cushendall Road, Ballycastle - Watermain Extension	£12,000
Reservoir Rehabilitation Programme Phase 3	£90,000
Service Reservoirs Enhanced Security	£3,055,000
Reservoir Rehabilitation South East Area Phase 2	£50,000
Reservoir Rehabilitation South East Area Phase 2	£35,000
Small Wastewater Treatment Works Priority Upgrades	£8,170,000
Portglenone Wastewater Treatment Works Part 2	£40,000

Project	Total
Tullaghan Wastewater Treatment Works Phase 2	£68,000
Ballymacvea Wastewater Treatment Works Rationalisation	£14,000
Cargan Wastewater Treatment Works	£40,000
Ballymena Area Sewers	£2,000
Ballymena Sewage Pumping Station Replacement, Tullygarley	£35,000
Old Portglenone Road Ahoghill - Foul Sewer Extension	£9,000
Caherty Road, Broughshane - Watermain, foul and storm sewer extension	£166,000
Broughshane Road, Ballymena - Foul Sewer Extension	£15,000
Ballycastle Sewerage Scheme	£640,000
Ballybrakes & Glenstall Wastewater Treatment Works	£2,128,000
Loughguille Wastewater Treatment Works	£367,000
Ballybogey Wastewater Treatment Works	£520,000
Ballymoney Sewerage Improvements	£105,000
Bushmills & Portballintrae Wastewater Treatment Works	£3,100,000
Rasharkin Flood Alleviation and Sewer Extension	£895,000
Ballymoney/Coleraine Sewers	£21,000
Anticur Rd/Carrowadoon Road, Dunloy Sewerage Scheme	£13,000
Castlecatt Road, Dervock - Storm Sewer extension to serve new development	£78,000
Frocess Road, Ballymoney - Foul Sewer	£52,000
Church Road, Rasharkin - Storm Sewer Extension	£208,000
Station Road, Dervock - Foul Sewer	£46,000
Knock Road, Ballymoney - Foul & Storm Sewer Extension	£18,000
Bravallan Road, Ballymoney - Storm Sewer	£42,000
Mounthamilton, Cloughmills - Sewage Pumping Station Replacement	£68,000
McClelland Park, Dunloy - Flood Alleviation	£47,000
Middlepark Road, Cushendall - Relief Sewer	£70,000
Drumavoley Park, Ballycastle - Foul Sewer.	£16,000
Total	£48,736,000

Sewerage Treatment and Disposal Scheme

Mr R Beggs asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the difference between the sewerage treatment and disposal scheme referred to in AQW 1049/09 and the scheme modelled by NI Water and presented to NI Environment Agency in July 2009. (AQW 484/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the proposal presented to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) in July 2009 differs from that outlined in AQW 1049/09 in that the existing treatment facility at Ballycarry will be retained and its residual effluent will be combined with screened effluent from Ballystrudder and Whitehead. The effluent will be discharged to sea via a marine outfall which has now been extended from 350 metres to 500 metres.

This new proposal is acceptable to the NIEA and the modelling has been independently verified by the Water Research Council.

Roads Service Schemes

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development what Roads Service schemes are planned in the East Antrim constituency over the next 12 months. (AQW 490/10)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service does not hold information on schemes on a constituency basis. However, information on completed and proposed schemes can be found in the Roads Service's Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from the Roads Service internet site at the following web address:

http://www.roadsni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-council_reports.htm

Road and Footpath Schemes

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what road and footpath schemes are planned for the Whitehill Estate, Bangor, over the next five years. (AQW 491/10)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that, at present, it has no schemes planned for the Whitehill Estate, Bangor, over the next five years.

However, the works programme is constantly kept under review and if schemes are identified, they are implemented on a scheme priority basis.

I would remind the Member that information on the completed and proposed roads schemes can be found in Roads Services' Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from the Roads Service internet site at the following web address:

www.roadsni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-council_reports.htm

Roads Service is currently compiling their Autumn Reports to Councils

NI Railway

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost of taxis paid for by NI Railway in the last year (i) for each NI Railway station; and (ii) including the reason for the taxi hire. (AQW 506/10)

Minister for Regional Development: The tables below detail the cost of taxis paid for by Northern Ireland Railways in the last financial year by railway station, for taxi hire (staff and passenger).

2008/2009 TAXIS COSTS BY LOCATION

Location	Value £
Ballymena	718.44
Bangor	1348.14
Belfast Stations	53,607.11
Carrickfergus	821.90
Coleraine	4,142.86
Larne	15.00
Lisburn	568.00
Londonderry	1,533.00
Lurgan	191.50
Newry	415.50
NIR HQ	4,891.66
Portadown	6,640.00

Location	Value £
Total:	74,893.11

Taxi costs, relate to fares for security alerts, line closures, train failures, train cancellations and accidents and passenger transfers. This includes providing disabled passenger assistance. Employee taxi hire costs are also included as taxis are sometimes required to move crews between depots (inter depot working). Inter-Depot working allows for major depots to cover smaller country depots without the requirement for localised overtime.

Employee taxi hire arises on some occasions when train crews are required to be transferred from one location to another. Some staff may not drive or have access to a car. Likewise, there may not be appropriate public transport links to where they need to go at the time of day they require to travel, i.e. early starts/late finishes. Some depots/sign-on points are not located on main arterial bus routes, such as Larne Harbour.

Translink: Seating Capacity

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development if Translink will increase seating capacity on the 16.08, 16.55 and 17.23 services on the Belfast Central to Londonderry line to prevent passengers having to stand for extended periods of time. (AQW 507/10)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink normally operates 3-car trains on these services and the only way to increase individual train capacity is to increase 3-car to 6-car by joining 2 trains together. However, all suitable 3-car trains are already in service across the network.

A revised rail timetable took effect from 27 September which increased commuter capacity by 25% by rescheduling 5 trains to depart Belfast Central at 16:10, 16:40, 17:10, 17:40 and 18:10 hours in place of the present 4 trains which currently depart at 16:10, 16:57, 17:25 and 18:05 hours.

The additional peak time service has been achieved by compressing an off peak service into the peak commuter period i.e. the present 15:30 ex Belfast moves to 16:10 ex Belfast. There is no overall change in the number of services over the course of the week day.

Translink expect to be in a position to operate additional trains and/or larger trains from 2012 after delivery of the next batch of new trains during 2011/2012.

Legislation

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline any legislation his Department intends to bring before the Assembly before 31 December 2009. (AQW 516/10)

Minister for Regional Development: The legislation which my Department intends to bring before the Assembly before 31 December 2009 is as follows:

1. Water and Sewerage Services (Amendment) Bill (introduced 21 September 2009)
2. Draft Lissue Level Crossing Order (Negative Resolution)
3. Train Driver Licensing and Certification draft Regulations (Negative Resolution)
4. Draft River Bann Navigation Order (Affirmative Resolution)

All legislation is subject to consultation with the Regional Development Committee and agreement by the Executive, where appropriate.

Bills for Water Rates

Mr B Armstrong asked the Minister for Regional Development how many errors in customer bills for water rates have been recorded, as a result of incorrect information being passed to NI Water by the Land and Property Services in 2009. (AQW 528/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that, from April 2009, over 16,500 unmeasured bills have been issued to customers based on a Net Annual Value provided by Land and Property Services.

NIW does not keep records that identify amended water bills resulting from incorrect data supplied by Land and Property Services, and is therefore unable to provide the details sought.

Road and Footpath Schemes

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what road and footpath schemes are planned for the Strand area of Holywood over the next five years. (AQW 543/10)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that at present, it has no schemes planned for the Strand area of Holywood, over the next five years.

However, the works programme is constantly kept under review and if schemes are identified, they are implemented on a scheme priority basis.

I would remind the Member that information on completed and proposed roads schemes can be found in Roads Service's Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from the Roads Service internet site at the following web address:

www.roadsni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-council_reports.htm

Roads Service is currently compiling their Autumn Reports to Councils.

Road and Footpath Schemes

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what road and footpath schemes are planned for the Redburn area of Holywood over the next five years. (AQW 544/10)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that at present, it has no schemes planned for the Redburn area of Holywood, over the next five years.

However, the works programme is constantly kept under review and if schemes are identified, they are implemented on a scheme priority basis.

I would remind the Member that information on completed and proposed roads schemes can be found in Roads Service's Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from the Roads Service internet site at the following web address:

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Employment Levels

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans he has to change employment levels within his Department in the next 12 months; and how many of these changes are planned to be made through redundancies. (AQW 564/10)

Minister for Regional Development: Within the next 12 months, employment levels in DRD will be reduced by 44 full time equivalent posts as a result of ongoing Northern Ireland Civil Service reform initiatives. The Department aims to achieve these efficiencies without the use of redundancies and will seek to redeploy any surplus staff in accordance with the agreed procedures.

In addition to these specific plans, my Department has to deliver cash releasing efficiencies of £3.1m in 2009/10 and £5.4m in 2010/11. In realising these efficiencies consideration will be given to staffing levels across my Department. Again it is expected that any further reduction in staffing levels will be achieved without the use of redundancies.

Roads Service and NI Water

Mr T Burns asked the Minister for Regional Development what work is planned to be carried out by Roads Service and NI Water, in the South Antrim constituency, in September 2009. (AQW 569/10)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the following work will be undertaken in the South Antrim Constituency during September 2009:

- **Motorway Maintenance:** grass cutting, weed control treatments, sweeping, emergency telephone and communications cabinet cleaning, and safety fence replacement on the M2 and M22.
- **Street Lighting Replacement:** Templepatrick Road / Mill Road, Ballyclare; and Manse Walk, Rise, Court, New Mossley.
- **Carriageway Resurfacing:** Dublin Road, Antrim, Church Road, Randalstown, Kilbegs Road, Antrim, and Admiralty Estate, Antrim.
- **Traffic calming:** Rathenraw Estate Antrim; and Toome village.
- **Footway provision:** Barnish Road, Randalstown.

The works programme is constantly kept under review and implemented on a scheme priority basis; all of the above work is therefore subject to the availability of financial resource.

I would remind the Member that information on completed and proposed roads schemes can be found in Roads Service's Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from the Roads Service internet site at the following web address:

www.roadsni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-council_reports.htm

Roads Service is currently compiling their Autumn Reports to Councils.

NI Water has advised it plans to carry out the following capital works in the South Antrim Constituency during September 2009:

- Bellahill, Ballycarry: Replacement of watermain.
- A2, Shore Road: Upgrading of existing watermains, sewers and pumping main.
- Whiteabbey Lower: Replacement of watermains.
- Moyra Road, Brookfield, Doagh: Foul sewer extension.
- Victoria Road, Ballyclare: Maintenance and replacement of small sewers.
- Joymount Drainage Area Plan: Replacement of existing shaftesbury pumping station with combined storage pump. New and upgraded storm pipework and desilting work.
- Newtownabbey, Manse Road, Camross Park: Combined Sewer Overflow cleaning and repairs to storm system.
- Various Locations: Upgrading of small Wastewater Treatment Works.

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

Road and Footpath Schemes

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what road and footpath schemes are planned for the Craigtlet Hills area of North Down over the next five years. (AQW 595/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I can confirm that my Department's Roads Service has prioritised the resurfacing of the carriageway at Dunlady Road, Holywood, which is programmed to be carried out within the next three years.

The resurfacing programme is kept under review and implemented on a scheme priority basis, subject to the availability of financial resource.

I would remind the Member that information on completed and proposed roads schemes can be found in Roads Service's Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from the Roads Service internet site at the following web address:

www.roadsni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-council_reports.htm

Roads Service is currently compiling their Autumn Reports to Councils.

Road and Footpath Schemes

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what road and footpath schemes are planned for the Breezemount estate area of Bangor over the next five years. (AQW 597/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I can confirm that my Department's Roads Service has no schemes planned for the Breezemount Estate area of North Down over the next five years.

Whilst there are no plans to carry out any footway or carriageway reconstruction or resurfacing schemes in this area, the works programme is kept under review and implemented on a scheme priority basis, subject to the availability of financial resource.

I would remind the Member that information on completed and proposed roads schemes can be found in Roads Service's Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from the Roads Service internet site at the following web address:

www.roadsni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-council_reports.htm

Roads Service is currently compiling their Autumn Reports to Councils.

Road and Footpath Schemes

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development what road and footpath schemes are planned for the Loughview area of Holywood over the next five years. (AQW 598/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I can confirm that my Department's Roads Service has no schemes planned for the Loughview area of Holywood over the next five years.

Whilst there are no plans to carry out any footway or carriageway reconstruction or resurfacing schemes in this area, the works programme is kept under review and implemented on a scheme priority basis, subject to the availability of financial resource.

I would remind the Member that information on completed and proposed roads schemes can be found in Roads Service's Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from the Roads Service internet site at the following web address:

www.roadsni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-council_reports.htm

Roads Service is currently compiling their Autumn Reports to Councils.

Level Crossing Road/Rail Junctions

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail each level crossing road / rail junction in each constituency and the number of times per day each is closed. (AQW 625/10)

Minister for Regional Development: Please see attached table provided by Translink.

Border to Belfast						
Milepost	Location	Constituency	Daily	Saturday	Sunday	Weekly total
63.00	Meigh	Newry & Armagh	12	12	8	80
77.00	Poyntzpass	Newry & Armagh	18	18	10	118
92.50	Lurgan	Upper Bann	90	78	36	564
93.00	Lake Street	Upper Bann	90	78	36	564
93.25	Bell's Row	Upper Bann	90	78	36	564
97.25	Drumbane	Lagan Valley	90	78	36	564
98.00	Moirra	Lagan Valley	90	78	36	564
98.75	Trummery	Lagan Valley	90	78	36	564
100.00	Damhead South	Lagan Valley	90	78	36	564

Border to Belfast						
Milepost	Location	Constituency	Daily	Saturday	Sunday	Weekly total
102.50	Maze	Lagan Valley	90	78	36	564
102.75	Lissue	Lagan Valley	90	78	36	564
108.50	Dunmurry	Lagan Valley	118	78	36	704

Belfast Central to Larne Harbour						
Milepost	Location	Constituency	Daily	Saturday	Sunday	Weekly total
5.25	Jordanstown	East Antrim	74	60	20	450
8.00	Trooperslane	East Antrim	74	60	20	450

Bleach Green Junction to Coleraine						
Milepost	Location	Constituency	Daily	Saturday	Sunday	Weekly total
11.25	Kingsmoss East	South Antrim	28	18	10	168
11.50	Kingsmoss West	South Antrim	28	18	10	168
11.75	Kingsbog Crossing	South Antrim	28	18	10	168
15.25	Ballymartin	South Antrim	28	18	10	168
17.25	Kilmakee	South Antrim	28	18	10	168
21.75	Antrim	South Antrim	28	18	10	168
22.50	Springfarm	South Antrim	28	18	10	168
23.00	Niblock	South Antrim	28	18	10	168
23.75	Carngranny	South Antrim	28	18	10	168
25.00	Drumsough	South Antrim	28	18	10	168
26.75	Aughalish	South Antrim	28	18	10	168
27.75	Magherabeg	South Antrim	28	18	10	168
28.75	Kellswater South	North Antrim	28	18	10	168
29.25	Kellswater North	North Antrim	28	18	10	168
31.25	Slaght	North Antrim	28	18	10	168
35.00	Galgorm	North Antrim	22	18	10	138
36.00	Cullybackey South	North Antrim	22	18	10	138
36.25	Cullybackey North	North Antrim	22	18	10	138
36.50	Cullybackey Station	North Antrim	22	18	10	138
37.50	Broughdone	North Antrim	22	18	10	138
41.25	Glarryford	North Antrim	22	18	10	138
43.50	Killagan	North Antrim	22	18	10	138
46.25	Dunloy	North Antrim	22	18	10	138
47.00	Galdanagh	North Antrim	22	18	10	138
50.50	Ballyboyland	North Antrim	22	18	10	138

Bleach Green Junction to Coleraine						
Milepost	Location	Constituency	Daily	Saturday	Sunday	Weekly total
54.50	Coldagh	North Antrim	22	18	10	138
55.50	Balnamore	North Antrim	22	18	10	138
57.00	Macfin	North Antrim	22	18	10	138
58.75	Damhead North	East Londonderry	22	18	10	138
61.75	Coleraine	East Londonderry	58	48	34	372

Coleraine to Portrush						
Milepost	Location	Constituency	Daily	Saturday	Sunday	Weekly total
62.00	Artillery Road	East Londonderry	40	32	24	256
67.25	Dhu Varren	East Londonderry	40	32	24	256

Coleraine to Londonderry						
Milepost	Location	Constituency	Daily	Saturday	Sunday	Weekly total
66.50	Barmouth	East Londonderry	18	16	10	116
67.50	Castlerock	East Londonderry	18	16	10	116
69.00	Downhill	East Londonderry	18	16	10	116
70.25	Umbra	East Londonderry	18	16	10	116
72.00	Magilligan	East Londonderry	18	16	10	116
73.00	Clooney	East Londonderry	18	16	10	116
73.50	Duncrun East	East Londonderry	18	16	10	116
73.75	Duncrun West	East Londonderry	18	16	10	116
75.00	Bellarena	East Londonderry	18	16	10	116
76.00	Carrowreagh	East Londonderry	18	16	10	116
79.00	Myroe	East Londonderry	18	16	10	116
81.75	Ballykelly	East Londonderry	18	16	10	116
87.75	Eglinton	Foyle	18	16	10	116
89.00	Lock	Foyle	18	16	10	116
90.00	DuPont	Foyle	18	16	10	116

Road Damage Repairs

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister for Regional Development how many pothole and road damage repairs have been carried out by his Department since 2007; and the cost of these repairs, for each constituency.

(AQW 627/10)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service does not maintain a central register of the information that you have requested on a constituency basis. However, I am able to provide you with the total number of defects repaired, which includes potholes, at Roads Service Divisional level, and the total expenditure incurred on repairing all defects in the last two financial years.

TABLE 1

Roads Service	2007 - 2008		2008 - 2009	
	Number of defects repaired ¹	Expenditure ² £k	Number of defects repaired ¹	Expenditure ² £k
Northern Division	46332	4731	44848	4756
Southern Division	50623	5021	62146	5466
Eastern Division	60281	5650	62636	6166
Western Division	48295	5309	58180	6013

1. Total number of recorded defect repairs (including potholes) in relation to carriageway and footway surfaces.
2. Recorded patching expenditure in relation to carriageway and footway surfaces.

Footpath from Ballymena to Cullybackey

Mr D McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the completion of the footpath from Ballymena to Cullybackey; and whether it will be completed by 2010. (AQW 654/10)

Minister for Regional Development: Further to my response to the Member's Assembly Question, AQW 5411/09, Roads Service has advised that detailed design of the remaining 0.8 kilometres of footway, required to connect to the existing footway network in Cullybackey, is still ongoing.

The provision of the remaining footway link, which may have to be carried out in two stages, is currently included in the draft works programme for the 2010/11 financial year. However, delivery of this link will be subject to the successful acquisition of land and the availability of funding at that time.

NI Railways

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development when the return fares scheme for Half Fare Smart Pass holders on NI Railways will commence. (AQW 688/10)

Minister for Regional Development: Half Fare SmartPass holders have been able to purchase two single tickets on NI Railways services since 30 March 2009.

Half Fare Smart Pass Scheme

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development if he will undertake an Equality Impact Assessment on the expanded Half Fare Smart Pass Scheme, given that it now includes the purchase of return fares. (AQW 689/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I can confirm that the Department's policy of permitting the purchase of two single tickets on train journeys by Half Fare SmartPass holders has undergone an equality screening analysis. This screening concluded that there was no negative impact on any of the section 75 groups and that a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

Average Travel Times

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of trains each day and the average travel times (i) from Ballymena to Derry; and (ii) from Derry to Ballymena. (AQW 733/10)

Minister for Regional Development: The NIR timetable indicates the following number of trains between Ballymena and Derry with associated average travel times.

	Number of trains from Ballymena to Derry	Average Travel Times	Number of trains from Derry to Ballymena	Average Travel Times
Week days	9	1 hr 28 min	9	1 hr 26 min
Saturday	7*	1 hr 23 min	8	1 hr 23 min
Sunday	5	1 hr 22 min	5	1 hr 20 min

* includes direct through trains only

Travel Time

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development what steps he is taking to reduce the travel time for rail passengers between Derry and Belfast (i) in the short term; and (b) in the longer term. (AQW 734/10)

Minister for Regional Development: The track renewal/track life extension project between Ballymena and Coleraine, which is nearing completion, has permitted a return to full line speed of 70mph over that section of track. New timetables introduced in September 2009 have seen the majority of services in both directions operating with reduced running times of between 3 and 15 minutes. Some journeys now operate from Derry to Belfast Central in two hours.

In the medium-term future the Department has earmarked £75m to fund a project to completely re-lay and re-signal the track between Coleraine and Derry including the construction of a new passing loop. This work is scheduled to commence in 2011 and complete in 2013/14. Completion will coincide with the arrival of a second fleet of new trains which will enable 2 additional trains to be brought into service on the Derry line. Both measures will permit more regular train services, reduce existing journey times between Coleraine and Derry and most importantly will allow trains to operate into Derry before 08:00 and 09:00am.

In the longer term, there are proposals to further improve frequency, however further infrastructure development is required, i.e. additional passing loops to support hourly frequency services between Belfast and Derry.

Belfast to Derry Train

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to the Belfast to Derry train, to detail (i) the journey time for the first week-day train; (ii) the average speed in miles per hour; and (iii) how the current timetable compares to the previous one. (AQW 735/10)

Minister for Regional Development: The following table presents, for the first week day train from Belfast to Derry, the current and previous timetables, journey times and average speeds.

	Current Timetable	Journey Time Between Each Journey Stage	Average Speed Between Each Journey Stage	Previous Timetable	Journey Time Between Each Journey Stage	Average Speed Between Each Journey Stage
Belfast Central	6.20	-		6.55	-	
Ballymena	7.06	46 min	42.4 mph	7.31	36 min	54.2 mph
Coleraine (arrive)	8.00	54 min	31.4 mph	8.19	48 min	35.3 mph
Coleraine (depart)	8.15	-	-	8.20	-	-
Derry	9.00	45 min	44.7 mph	9.10	50 min	40.2 mph

Parking in Older Housing Estates

Mr W Irwin asked the Minister for Regional Development if he has plans to improve parking in older housing estates where green space exists additional to that required for amenity space, which could be utilised to provide extra parking, in turn alleviating the congestion of access routes and improving safety for pedestrians. (AQW 797/10)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service is currently reviewing the policy for providing parking in housing estates.

Roads Service has previously contributed towards the cost of improved parking provision within some housing estates. However, such contributions have been restricted to routes where traffic was experiencing significant progression problems, or where road safety was compromised. In all other cases, the provision of additional parking facilities is the responsibility of the landowner.

Roads Service expenditure decisions are directed by the Sub-Regional Transport Plan (SRTP), the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) and current policy. Neither the SRTP nor the BMTP address the provision of car parking in housing estates. Therefore, until the current review of the policy has been completed and agreed, Roads Service will not be making any decisions in relation to funding to improve parking in older housing estates.

Commuters Opting for Rail Travel

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development if he has plans to reopen or construct new halts to accommodate the increasing numbers of commuters opting for rail travel. (AQW 798/10)

Minister for Regional Development: Whilst I have aspirations to provide further halts, this is not likely in the near future unless additional funding or developers' contributions can be secured. There are no definitive plans to reopen or construct new halts within Translink's current Corporate Plan. However, as part of the introduction of 20 New Trains between 2011 and 2013 and in order to increase passenger capacity, NIR are planning to lengthen 50 platforms to allow 6 car train sets to stop at selected stations and halts. The expected completion date is Summer 2012.

I have asked Translink, in liaison with my department, to develop 10 year and 25 year capital plans which can be considered as part of future Investment Strategies through the Executive subject to budget availability.

Fofanny Water Treatment Works

Mr W Clarke asked the Minister for Regional Development how many discharges there has been from the Fofanny Water Treatment Works in the last three years. (AQW 827/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the only discharges from Fofanny Water Treatment Works during the past three years were intermittent discharges on 19 and 20 September 2009, which related to operational issues within the Works.

Belfast-Londonderry Railway Line

Mr D Ford asked the Minister for Regional Development why the first train each morning on the Belfast-Londonderry railway line now takes 2 hours 40 minutes to reach Derry, rather than 2 hours 15 minutes on the previous timetable which was changed at his request. (AQW 828/10)

Minister for Regional Development: To make the most of the benefits of the investment in the track between Coleraine and Ballymena, Translink proposed timetable changes to reduce passenger journey time where feasible. As you indicate my intervention should result in the first train now arriving in Derry at 9.00 am. This is 10 minutes earlier than the old timetable and 30 minutes earlier than in the revised timetabled initially proposed by NIR. However the main benefit of the timetable change should be to reduce journey times on the journey between Derry and Belfast.

To ensure the first train arrives in Derry at 9.00am the first week day train to Derry from Belfast currently departs at 6.20 am rather than the previous 6.55 am. As you indicate the overall journey time has increased from 2 hours 15 minutes to 2 hours 40 minutes for this individual train. Clearly this is not an ideal solution.

Based on information provided by Translink this appears to be unavoidable in the short term and is caused by train stops which are necessary to allow trains travelling in the opposite direction to pass.

Current infrastructure, with lengthy sections of single track and limited opportunities for passing, mean that some difficult choices are required. As you are aware in the longer term capital investment is planned to address this issue.

In respect of the current Belfast to Derry 6.20am train, I understand that Translink will continue to review timetables on the Derry line in the context of the whole network and will seek to deliver further improvements in running times, where feasible, in the near future.

Portaferry-Strangford Ferry Service

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the outcome of the question and answer survey carried out in relation to the Portaferry-Strangford ferry service. (AQW 832/10)

Minister for Regional Development: The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) carried out a customer satisfaction survey on the Strangford Lough Ferry Service, on behalf of my Department's Roads Service, during the week 14–20 September 2009.

NISRA is currently analysing the survey sheets at present. However, I have asked John Humphreys, Acting Head of Roads Service Consultancy, to provide you with the main findings of the survey, once the outcomes have been considered by Roads Service.

NI Railway

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development if he will undertake an immediate and second intervention with NI Railway, to protect the passengers on the Londonderry line from timetable changes which impact adversely on their travelling times. (AQW 865/10)

Minister for Regional Development: You raised the issue of the time of the first train arriving in Derry in AQW 196/10.

I replied that my intervention resulted in the first train now arriving in Derry at 9.00 am. This is 10 minutes earlier than the old timetable and 30 minutes earlier than in the revised timetabled initially proposed by NIR.

The new timetable also allows for a reduced journey time for passengers travelling from Derry and Coleraine to Belfast (of between 10 and 15 minutes).

Any further changes to the timetable are problematic in the short term and could bring us back to the original revised NIR timetable and back to the problems with the time of arrival of the first train to Derry. Translink have argued that, because of operational and infrastructure constraints, not every journey can gain immediately from the reduced times. This is despite recent track investment between Coleraine and Ballymena.

Specifically to ensure the first train arrives in Derry at 9.00am the first week day train to Derry from Belfast currently departs at 6.20 am rather than the previous 6.55 am. The overall journey time has increased from 2 hours 15 minutes to 2 hours 40 minutes for this individual train. Clearly this is not an ideal solution.

Based on information provided by Translink this appears to be unavoidable in the short term and is caused by train stops which are necessary to allow trains travelling in the opposite direction to pass.

My understanding is that for the vast majority of travellers on the Derry line travel times have reduced as a result of the recent investment in track between Coleraine and Ballymena, but continued infrastructure issues with lengthy sections of single track and limited opportunities for passing, mean that some difficult choices are required. As you are aware in the longer term capital investment is planned to address this issue.

For these reasons I do not believe that there is any value in an immediate and second intervention, but in respect of the current Belfast to Derry 6.20am train I understand that Translink will continue to review timetables on the Derry line in the context of the whole network and will seek to deliver further improvements in running times where feasible.

NI Railway

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the increase of 25 minutes travelling time in the first morning NI Railway service from Belfast to Londonderry, considering the investment into the rail network. (AQW 866/10)

Minister for Regional Development: To make the most of the benefits of the investment in the track between Coleraine and Ballymena Translink proposed timetable changes.

My intervention resulted in the first train now arriving in Derry at 9.00am. This is 10 minutes earlier than the old timetable and 30 minutes earlier than in the revised timetabled initially proposed by NIR.

Specifically to ensure the first train arrives in Derry at 9.00am the first week day train to Derry from Belfast currently departs at 6.20am rather than the previous 6.55am. As you indicate the overall journey time has increased by 25 minutes from 2 hours 15 minutes to 2 hours 40 minutes for this individual train. Clearly this is not an ideal solution but needs to be considered in the context of all journeys undertaken on the line.

My understanding is that for the vast majority of travellers on the Derry line travel times have reduced as a result of the recent investment in track between Coleraine and Ballymena.

In respect of the current Belfast to Derry 6.20am train, I understand that Translink will continue to review timetables on the Derry line in the context of the whole network and will seek to deliver further improvements in running times, where feasible, in the near future.

Water Pipes in Main Street, Greyabbey

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister for Regional Development when NI Water will install the water pipes in Main Street, Greyabbey; and if his Department will then carry out urgent total resurfacing work rather than patchwork repairs. (AQW 889/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that it has no plans to lay water pipes in Main Street, Greyabbey, but is proposing to commence construction work in Autumn 2010 to lay new sewers. The arrangements for road reinstatement will be agreed with Roads Service nearer the commencement of the scheme.

DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Egan Internal Audit Report

Mr B Wilson asked the Minister for Social Development, given that the Egan Internal Audit Report of October 2007 stated that only 37 percent of call outs were due to misunderstanding or misuse, to outline why call outs for maintenance under the Egan contract have doubled. (AQW 257/10)

Minister for Social Development (Ms M Ritchie): Since 2001/02, the first year of response maintenance under the major Egan heating contracts, some 25,300 heating systems have been replaced with more energy efficient gas and oil heating systems within Housing Executive dwellings systems as part of their programme of Improvement schemes. The greater complexity of these systems necessitates more regular servicing and this is reflected in the increase of repair jobs from some 26,300 to 51,000 during the period referred to in the report.

Housing Executive Egan Contract

Mr B Wilson asked the Minister for Social Development why the cost of maintenance response increased from £1.46 million in 2002/03 to £3.5 million in 2005/06 in the Housing Executive Egan contract for maintenance. (AQW 258/10)

Minister for Social Development: The expenditure in 2002/03 was £1.46m for some 26,300 jobs at a unit cost of £55.54. This had risen in 2005/06 to £3.43m for some 51,000 jobs at a unit cost of £67.15. The contracts have increased in value by some 21% to reflect the increase in cost of materials and labour.

The costs of heating maintenance have increased every year as the Housing Executive has installed more energy efficient gas and oil heating systems as part of their programme of Improvement schemes. However due to their complexity these schemes are more expensive to maintain than their solid fuel room heaters predecessors.

New IT Systems

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) all new IT systems that were installed in her Department; (ii) the initial budget; (iii) the actual cost; (iv) the estimated start date; and (v) the actual start date, in the last five years. (AQW 260/10)

Minister for Social Development: The information requested is set out in the tables below, along with a brief description of the purpose of each system. In addition to the systems listed, a number of projects were run from within the Department of Finance and Personnel during this period to implement systems in all NICS Departments, namely: for accounting (Account NI); personnel (HR Connect); records management (Records NI); and wide-area networking (Network NI).

TABLE 1: IT SYSTEMS INSTALLED IN THE SOCIAL SECURITY AGENCY WITHIN THE LAST 5 YEARS AS PART OF THE MODERNISATION

PROGRAMME.

Name of IT System	Purpose of IT System	Initial budget	Actual Cost	Estimated start date	Actual start date
Local Payment Services	Production of cheque payments which would have been issued clerically and allow direct payments to be made into a bank, building society or post office card account.	£0.843m	£0.395m	July 05	Nov 05
Customer Case Management	A system to provide detailed supporting guidance for Disability & Carers Service Decision Makers	£0.249m	£0.217m	Sept 06	Sept 06
Compensation Recovery Unit/ Digital Office Infrastructure	Administers refunds from insurance companies of benefit paid in specific circumstances	£0.729m	£0.466m	Jan 07	Jan 07
Customer Information System	Consolidates all customers' personal and benefit data in a single data repository	£1.508m	£0.423m	Mar 05	Mar 05
Debt Management System	Administers the recovery of benefit overpayments.	£5.298m	£2.270m	Oct 06	Nov 06
Employment and Support Allowance	Benefit administration and payment system for Employment Support Allowance	£12.320m	£5.477m	Oct 08	Oct 08
Pensions Customer Account Management	Customer account management and workflow for State Pensions and State Pensions Credit	£27.21m	£25.19m	May 08	May 08
Cheque Reconciliation	Cheque reconciliation system which compares cheque issues against encashments and identifies discrepancies	£0.519m	£0.537m	July 08	Oct 08

TABLE 2: NON-MODERNISATION PROGRAMME IT SYSTEMS INSTALLED IN THE DEPARTMENT & SOCIAL SECURITY AGENCY WITHIN THE LAST 5 YEARS.

Name of IT System	Description of IT System	Initial budget	Actual Cost	Estimated start date	Actual start date
Government Funding Database	Provides a system for coordinating and tracking the allocation of public sector funds to the voluntary and community sector	£0.275m	£0.274m	April 04	Sept 04
Case Management System	Computerised case management system in The Appeals Service	£0.310m	£0.522m	March 06	Jan 08
Learning Assessment Tool	Dynamic Examination Tool to establish the % knowledge gained from Training Events	£0.033m	£0.032m	Sept 08	Sept 08
Quality Checking Database	Release of Makerfield Accuracy Database to record checks on Income Support and Job Seekers Allowance.	£0.005m	£0.006m	Sept 08	Sept 08
Error Recording & Reporting System	The system records and reports on checks and errors carried out in local offices and central benefit branches	£0.022m	£0.024m	Apr 09	Apr 09
Doctors Database	The system records cases that have been referred to doctors for medical reasons	£0.018m	£0.033m	Apr 04	Nov 04
Web STAR	The purpose of the system is to control the movement of case papers within an office and throughout Districts.	£0.039m	£0.048m	May 05	May 07
IT Services Configuration Management Database	Designed to support the business by registering all Digital Office Infrastructure equipment in one location, so that it can be monitored, reported upon and located easily.	£0.010m	£0.010m	Feb 09	Apr 09
Medical Admin Information Database – Employment Support Allowance	A web-based database system to track the various medical forms associated with the Work Capability Assessment process of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).	£0.026m	£0.028m	Oct 08	Oct 08
Computer Support Officer Activity Database	The system records the activity of Computer Support Officers and produces management information.	£0.010m	£0.008m	Sept 09	Sept 09
Incapacity Benefits Branch STAR	The purpose of the system is to control the movement of case papers within Incapacity Benefits Branch.	£0.005m	£0.005m	Sept 05	Sept 05
Decision Making and Appeals Case Recorder	Computer release on the Employment Support Allowance application to record decision making and appeals.	£0.002m	£0.002m	Sept 2009	Sept 2009

NI Housing Executive Homes in Fermanagh and South Tyrone

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development how many NI Housing Executive homes in Fermanagh and South Tyrone are awaiting renovation or modernisation before being allocated to tenants.

(AQW 272/10)

Minister for Social Development: There are currently 12 Housing Executive properties in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone Districts which are awaiting renovation or modernisation before being allocated to tenants.

NI Housing Executive Tenants

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development how many NI Housing Executive tenants were evicted from their homes for anti-social behaviour in each of the last three years. (AQW 274/10)

Minister for Social Development: The table below details the number of properties recovered by the Housing Executive by District Office administrative area on the grounds of anti social behaviour for the last three years.

District Office	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Belfast West	2	1	3
Belfast East	0	1	0
Belfast North	3	1	1
Belfast South	1	0	0
Belfast Shankill	0	0	0
Bangor	0	1	2
Newtownards	1	1	0
Castlereagh	0	0	1
Lisburn 1	3	3	7
Lisburn 3	0	0	0
Downpatrick	0	0	4
Banbridge	0	0	0
Newry	1	0	3
Armagh	1	0	1
Lurgan/Brownlow	0	2	2
Portadown	1	1	0
Dungannon	2	3	0
Fermanagh	2	5	1
Ballymena	0	2	1
Antrim	0	0	0
Newtownabbey 1	0	0	1
Newtownabbey 2	0	0	2
Carrickfergus	0	0	1
Larne	0	0	1
Ballycastle	0	0	0
Ballymoney	0	0	0
Coleraine	0	2	0
Waterloo	0	0	0
Waterside	0	0	2
Collon	0	3	1
Limavady	0	0	2
Magherafelt	0	0	2
Strabane	0	0	0
Omagh	0	5	2

District Office	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Cookstown	0	2	3
Total	17	33	43

Housing Executive Schemes

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what Housing Executive schemes are planned for the Victoria area of Donaghadee over the next five years. (AQW 338/10)

Minister for Social Development: The Housing Executive is unable to confirm details of its programmes of activity beyond the current financial year and cannot therefore advise when individual schemes are likely to go on site in subsequent years.

The Housing Executive will review its programmes when budgets have been confirmed as the delivery of these programmes is dependent on the availability of finance in any given year.

Details of the Housing Executive's programmes of activity are included in their District Housing Plans which are reviewed annually and presented to local councils. The Ards District Housing Plan is available at www.nihe.gov.uk.

Housing Executive Schemes

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what Housing Executive schemes are planned for the Cypress area of Donaghadee over the next five years. (AQW 339/10)

Minister for Social Development: The Housing Executive is unable to confirm details of its programmes of activity beyond the current financial year and cannot therefore advise when individual schemes are likely to go onsite in subsequent years.

The Housing Executive will review its programmes when budgets have been confirmed as the delivery of these programmes is dependent on the availability of finance in any given year.

Details of the Housing Executive's programmes of activity are included in their District Housing Plans which are reviewed annually and presented to local councils. The Ards District Housing Plan is available at www.nihe.gov.uk.

Housing Executive Schemes

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what Housing Executive schemes are planned for the Cottown area over the next five years. (AQW 340/10)

Minister for Social Development: The Housing Executive is unable to confirm details of its programmes of activity beyond the current financial year and cannot therefore advise when individual schemes are likely to go onsite in subsequent years.

The Housing Executive will review its programmes when budgets have been confirmed as the delivery of these programmes is dependent on the availability of finance in any given year.

Details of the Housing Executive's programmes of activity are included in their District Housing Plans which are reviewed annually and presented to local councils. The Ards District Housing Plan is available at www.nihe.gov.uk.

Repair and Maintenance of Houses in the Village Redevelopment Area

Mr B Wilson asked the Minister for Social Development how much money has been spent by the NI Housing Executive on repair and maintenance of houses in the Village redevelopment area in the past 10 years.

(AQW 384/10)

Minister for Social Development: The total figure for Housing Executive spend on repair and maintenance on houses in the Village redevelopment area in the past 10 years is £1,332,129.

This can be broken down as follows:

Planned Maintenance-Housing Executive homes	Response Maintenance-Housing Executive homes	Home Improvement grants- Private Homes
£331,000	£483,516	£517,613

Cost to Process the Sale of the One House Sold in the Newtownards Area

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 8905/09, how much it cost to process the sale of the one house sold in the Newtownards area in 2008/09; and how this compared to other council areas. (AQW 398/10)

Minister for Social Development: The information is not available in the format requested because the Housing Executive cannot disaggregate the costs for each house sale application received. However, the Housing Executive estimates that for the financial year 2008/09, for each house sale application received it incurred an average processing cost of £174. This figure refers to the total costs incurred through the processing of 919 house sales applications received by the Housing Executive in 2008/09 financial year across Northern Ireland only 54 of which proceeded to completion stage.

Home Improvement Schemes

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what Housing Executive home improvement schemes are earmarked for the Groomsport area over the next five years. (AQW 418/10)

Minister for Social Development: The Housing Executive is unable to confirm details of its programmes of activity beyond the current financial year and cannot therefore advise when individual schemes are likely to go onsite in subsequent years.

The Housing Executive will review its programmes when budgets have been confirmed as the delivery of these programmes is dependent on the availability of finance in any given year.

Details of the Housing Executive's programmes of activity are included in their District Housing Plans which are reviewed annually and presented to local councils. The North Down District Housing Plan is available at www.nihe.gov.uk.

Home Improvement Grants

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development how many home improvement grants in Fermanagh and South Tyrone are currently suspended. (AQW 428/10)

Minister for Social Development: Since 1 April 2009, 1030 applications in Fermanagh, and 390 applications in Dungannon have been cancelled or refused because of the budget restrictions.

Community and Voluntary Groups

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Social Development to detail all funding given to community and voluntary groups by her Department in the East Antrim constituency in each of the last three years. (AQW 439/10)

Minister for Social Development: The Department for Social Development has provided funding to voluntary and community groups within East Antrim through a range of funding programmes in each of the last three years as listed below.

	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
Areas at Risk	1,839.78	121,459.71	119,514.96
Community Investment Fund		115,479.27	122,359.42
Community Support Programme	231,191.00	333,780.00	340,081.00
Local Community Fund	74,972.47	88,505.69	65,611.26
Modernisation Fund	6,048.00	72,876.00	
Volunteer Bureau Initiative	155,126.00	149,828.00	154,119.00
Neighbourhood Renewal	114,192.00	92,445.00	56,497.00
Totals	£583,369.25	£974,373.67	£858,182.64

Projects in the North Antrim Constituency

Mr D McKay asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) what projects her Department has funded; and (ii) the amount of money provided by her Department, in the North Antrim constituency, since May 2007. (AQW 463/10)

Minister for Social Development: I have listed below all projects within the North Antrim Constituency under the Areas At Risk and Neighbourhood Renewal programmes that have been funded since May 2007. With regard to Town Centre Regeneration we do not hold this information in a way that would allow us to answer your question but we have included a list of projects that were approved since May 2007 but some of the funding may not all have been spent in some cases:

Project Name	Amount
Areas at Risk - Dunclug & Doury Road	
Dunvale Environmental Improvement Scheme	£333,804.87
Residents' Association W5 Day Trip	£382.48
PAKT Corrymeela Residential	£6,029.76
Northend United Football Club 2007/08 Football Season	£2,396.47
Dunclug Partnership Media Skills	£21,000.00
Dunclug Partnership Analysis of Minority Ethnic Communities Report	£12,617.19
Dunclug Partnership Shared Future Concert II	£2,166.88
Northend United FC Easter Tournament to Preston	£5,000.00
Dunclug College/St Patrick's Booster Clinic	£11,373.54
Dunclug Drugs Awareness Events	£1,407.25
PAKT/Youth Service Corrymeela Programme	£15,384.12
Residents Association Fire Service LIFE project	£2,600.00
Dunclug Park/Gardens Upgrade of Street Lighting/Footpath Repairs	£818,000.00
Residents Association Cross Community Christmas Event	£811.00
Community Centre Refurbishment	£138,000.00
Doury Road Street Lighting Upgrade	£80,320.00
Northend United FC Scotland Cup International Festival	£7,590.00
Dunclug Schools Sports Programme	£22,998.71
NEELB/Dunclug Youth Summer Programme	£19,113.00

Project Name	Amount
Dunclug Citizenship & Employability Project	£54,789.00
Dunclug Play Park	£112,128.00
Ballymena Neighbourhood Renewal Area	
B.E.A.T NI Ltd	£13,378.92
Ballykeel Community Development Officer	£5,686.24
Youth Service	£16,685.09
BRAID ABC	£1,641.36
Traffic Calming Ballykeel	£26,000
E.I Ballykeel P.S	£10,260
Ballee After Schools	£6,787.80
Ballee Pre Schools	£5,965.52
Getting IT Together	£3,722.04
BB Community Transport	£5,850
Ocean Youth	£1,426.28
Community Sport Programme	£12,952.20
C.H.I.P.S 2	£29,870.96
B.E.A.T.NI Ltd	£166,539.01
Ballykeel Community Development Officer	£87,688.38
BRAID ABC	£32,243.46
E.I. @ Skye Park	£44,652
Ballykeel Playing Fields	£21,740.50
Ballee Childcare Facility	£205,831.50
Ballee After Schools	£124,036.93
Ballee Pre Schools	£163,363.01
School of Music	£7,456
Handrails @ Lanntara	£32,084
Technical Assistance	£5,169.68
Community Learning Chest	£4,583.33
Getting IT Together	£18,064.20
Community Sports Programme	£89,878.68
Adopt A School (BHS)	£6,000.00
P.7's Into Business 2008	£2,250.00
Challenging Anti Social Behaviour	£1,000.00
Improving English and Maths	£5,337.00
Lanntara Hand Rails Ph2	£12,000.00
Security Fence Kincora	£16,000.00
CHIPS Feasibility Study	£5,000.00
Be Safe At Home	£2,000.00
Rock Challenge (BHS)	£2,500

Project Name	Amount
Grass Roots Football	£58,860.50
Ballee Learning Support	£3,480.00
Ballee Visual Art	£1,606.00
Ballykeel Mature Adults Luncheon Club	£17,000.00
Ballee Entrance Features	£56,318.88
Town Centre Regeneration	
Projects Approved Since May 2007*	
Technical Services Consultancy Assignment IRO St Patrick Barracks, Ballymena	£13,000.00
Consultancy assignment to produce a detailed masterplan for Ballymena town centre	£51,086.25
Consultancy assignment to produce a detailed masterplan for Ballymena town centre	£10,000.00
Transport Assessment for Ballymena	£50,000.00
Ballymena Town Hall Environmental Improvement Scheme	£238,006.45
Project Officer - Ballycastle	£94,752.00
Ballymoney Town Centre EI Scheme	£381,259.06

* Funding may not all have been spent to date

Housing Executive Schemes

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to outline what Housing Executive schemes are planned for the Conlig village area of North Down over the next five years. (AQW 479/10)

Minister for Social Development: The Housing Executive is unable to confirm details of its programmes of activity beyond the current financial year and cannot therefore advise when individual schemes are likely to go onsite in subsequent years.

The Housing Executive will review its programmes when budgets have been confirmed as the delivery of these programmes is dependent on the availability of finance in any given year.

Details of the Housing Executive's programmes of activity are included in their District Housing Plans which are reviewed annually and presented to local councils. The North Down District Housing Plan is available at www.nihe.gov.uk.

Housing Executive Schemes

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to outline what Housing Executive schemes are planned for the Whitehill Estate, Bangor over the next five years. (AQW 480/10)

Minister for Social Development: The Housing Executive is unable to confirm details of its programmes of activity beyond the current financial year and cannot therefore advise when individual schemes are likely to go onsite in subsequent years.

The Housing Executive will review its programmes when budgets have been confirmed as the delivery of these programmes is dependent on the availability of finance in any given year.

Details of the Housing Executive's programmes of activity are included in their District Housing Plans which are reviewed annually and presented to local councils. The North Down District Housing Plan is available at www.nihe.gov.uk.

Town Centre Regeneration

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development to provide details of the review of her Department's policy on the provision of funding for town centre regeneration, including all existing and potential delivery mechanisms. (AQW 483/10)

Minister for Social Development: My Department's policy on town centre regeneration is currently being reviewed as part of a wider review of urban regeneration policy and within the context of proposals for the Reform of Public Administration, which will see responsibility for delivery of urban regeneration transferring to local councils. This review process, which is at an early stage, will be informed by the Social Development Committee's ongoing review of town centre regeneration, and will consider all existing and potential delivery mechanisms.

Hostels in South Belfast that House Sex Offenders

Mrs C Hanna asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the number of hostels in south Belfast that house sex offenders; (ii) the number of sex offenders in each hostel; and (iii) a breakdown, by category, of the sex offenders in each hostel. (AQW 497/10)

Minister for Social Development: I am unable to answer this question as this information falls under Policing and Criminal Justice which is a reserved matter and can only be dealt with by the Northern Ireland Office

Projected Income

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the projected income for her Department for the previous twelve months, and the actual income received; and (ii) the total amount of projected income for her Department over the period of the CSR, and the actual income to date. (AQW 500/10)

Minister for Social Development: The Department's primary source of income is from house and land sales, for which the information requested, broken down by financial year, is set out in the table below.

	2008-09 £m		2009-10 £m		2010-11 £m
	Budget	Actual	Budget	To Date	
Departmental House & Land sales	82.3	10.3	71.9	7.8	197.4

The Member will note that projected income levels are not fixed and the position is monitored continuously and adjustments reflected during the in-year monitoring round process. For example, various interventions were necessary to cope with the drastic fall in receipts in 2008-09. Year to date receipt levels for 2009-10 reflect the position at 31 August 2009.

NI Housing Executive Renovation

Mr D Kennedy asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the criteria used to define "special circumstances" in determining applications for NI Housing Executive renovation, repair, replacement and disabled facilities grants. (AQW 502/10)

Minister for Social Development: Disabled Facilities Grant applications supported by an Occupational Therapist's recommendation are mandatory. When a discretionary renovation, repair or replacement grant applicant has submitted all the documentation necessary to comply with Article 36 of the Housing (N.I.) Order 2003 (documents complete stage), the Housing Executive Grants Manager will review the application under the following criteria:

- Is the application for a discretionary grant (Renovation or Home Repairs Assistance) being processed simultaneously with an application for a Disabled Facilities Grant and are the works under the Renovation/Home Repairs application necessary to enable the adaptation works to proceed?
- Is there an imminent and significant health and safety risk?
- Is there a serious risk from the structural stability of the property?

d) Any there any other circumstances which the Grants Manager considers to be exceptional?

Where the Grants Manager considers that exceptional circumstances might exist, the application will be referred to the Assistant Director, Private Sector Improvement Services, with a recommendation listing the grounds upon which the decision is based. A committee, consisting of the Assistant Director, senior officers and senior technical officers, assesses the referred cases and decides if grant aid may be approved.

The committee meets regularly to consider referred cases as quickly as possible. Where it agrees that exceptional circumstances exist, the committee may decide to allow only those work items that address the specific circumstance. Any decision made by the committee is reported to the Grants Manager immediately with an appropriate recommendation.

Customer First Programme

Mr G Savage asked Minister for Social Development (i) when the decision was taken to stand down the central tenet of the Customer First programme and the Customer Access Phones initiative; (ii) why these decisions were taken; and (iii) if she approved the decision. (AQW 512/10)

Minister for Social Development: No decision has been made to stand down any of the central tenets of the Customer First Programme. It has however been decided jointly by the Social Security Agency and the Department for Employment and Learning Project to stand down the Customer Access Phones (CAPS). This decision was taken for two reasons, firstly given then current economic downturn, the space required to house CAPS was not available and the Public Consultation process highlighted limited support for people queuing in local offices to access a telephone service. I had previously indicated that I would also find this unacceptable, however the matter was for the CAPS project and my approval was not required.

Decontamination Project

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the decontamination project for parts of the Fort George site in Derry. (AQW 519/10)

Minister for Social Development: It is believed that there may be significant contamination present on the Fort George site dating back to its previous uses as shipyard, port, timber treatment yard and military base. It is estimated that the costs of remediation work could be up to £9 million. In acquiring the site in 2005, the Department for Social Development took care to ensure that previous owners, including the Londonderry Port & Harbour Commission and the MOD, provided indemnities in respect of the costs of such remediation works.

The Department and ILEX are seeking to ascertain the full nature and extent of the contamination and to resolve the complex legal issues arising from the question of who is responsible for the contamination and therefore liable to pay for remediation.

Ilex will meet MoD representatives next month to review the issues relating to contamination.

Housing Executive Schemes

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to outline what Housing Executive schemes are planned for the Strand area of Holywood over the next five years. (AQW 522/10)

Minister for Social Development: The Housing Executive is unable to confirm details of its programmes of activity beyond the current financial year and cannot therefore advise when individual schemes are likely to go onsite in subsequent years.

The Housing Executive will review its programmes when budgets have been confirmed as the delivery of these programmes is dependent on the availability of finance in any given year.

Details of the Housing Executive's programmes of activity are included in their District Housing Plans which are reviewed annually and presented to local councils. The North Down District Housing Plan is available at www.nihe.gov.uk.

Housing Executive Schemes

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to outline what Housing Executive schemes are planned for the Redburn area of Holywood over the next five years. (AQW 523/10)

Minister for Social Development: The Housing Executive is unable to confirm details of its programmes of activity beyond the current financial year and cannot therefore advise when individual schemes are likely to go onsite in subsequent years.

The Housing Executive will review its programmes when budgets have been confirmed as the delivery of these programmes is dependent on the availability of finance in any given year.

Details of the Housing Executive's programmes of activity are included in their District Housing Plans which are reviewed annually and presented to local councils. The North Down District Housing Plan is available at www.nihe.gov.uk.

Business and Resource Centre in Rathenraw

Mr T Burns asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 592/09, AQW 3640/09 and AQW 6966/09, to provide an update on the project to build a Business and Resource Centre in Rathenraw, Antrim. (AQW 555/10)

Minister for Social Development: Construction of the new family and resource centre has progressed well since the appointment of a new contractor in January 2009. I anticipate that the project will be completed during October 2009.

Living Over the Shops Scheme

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development to outline what steps her Department is taking to fulfil the five year commitment given in 2006 to Cookstown District Council, to ensure that Cookstown remains a successful Living Over the Shops scheme, and meets the demands of property owners and tenants to convert existing town centre property into affordable, high quality housing stock. (AQW 563/10)

Minister for Social Development: The Living over the Shops initiative is an important regeneration tool which breathes new life and vitality into town centres by converting under used retail space into housing. Since 2006 approval has been given for 25 properties under the Living Over the Shops scheme in the Cookstown area. The continuation of this scheme will provide much needed additional housing in areas of high housing need.

I am pleased to confirm that the additional £500k I have allocated to this initiative will allow the Housing Executive to continue this work within the 23 Town Centre Living Initiative Areas already designated, including Cookstown.

Town Centre Regeneration

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the criteria her Department uses to support and assist Town Centre Regeneration in towns and cities; and if this criteria is equitable and effective in addressing the needs and requirements of town centres that are struggling to survive. (AQW 568/10)

Minister for Social Development: I have published my criteria for prioritising regeneration projects in Vital and Viable, DSD's good practice guide for breathing new life into cities and towns, and I have placed a copy of this in the Assembly library. My Department works towards the creation of prosperous, sustainable towns and cities via the detailed criteria, which I am content are effective and equitable.

With the reorganisation of the Local Councils post 2011, local structures will have greater responsibility for development in their respective areas, enabling regeneration plans to further promote the unique character of our towns and cities.

Locally Owned Independent Retailers

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development, given the decline in footfall and increasing retail vacancy levels, to outline how her Department is supporting key towns with a high proportion of locally owned independent retailers, which are not located in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas. (AQW 570/10)

Minister for Social Development: I have published my criteria for town centre regeneration projects in Vital and Viable, DSD's good practice guide for breathing new life into cities and towns, and I have placed a copy of this in the Assembly library. My Department works towards the creation of prosperous, sustainable towns and cities via these published criteria, which identify the retail offering as one of the key priorities for successful regeneration.

Ring Fencing

Ms C Ní Chuilín asked the Minister for Social Development to explain the decision to remove ring fencing for north and west Belfast, and the north west region, given that the Equality Impact assessment of the strategic guidelines has yet to be completed. (AQW 576/10)

Minister for Social Development: The mechanics for distributing the Social Housing Development Programme must be responsive to the places and people where housing need is greatest. More especially when more public housing is needed to meet growing levels of housing need; and there is such a significant shortfall in the housing budget.

In 2008 in the light of the inexorable growth in housing need, coupled with the collapse in housing capital receipts, the Housing Executive approved the immediate application of new Strategic Guidelines. These included the removal of ring fencing from all areas and the distribution of the Social Housing Development Programme on the basis of an area's proportionate share of total housing stress. Importantly, this distribution is also weighted to reflect the length of time applicants wait before being rehoused.

A preliminary Equality Impact Assessment showed that these new guidelines were robust, fair and equitable. This will be finalised in the coming months and if necessary the policy adjusted to take into account any adverse impacts identified in the final Equality Impact Assessment.

Housing Benefit Claims

Mr P Butler asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, to detail (i) the length of time it takes to process housing benefit claims; (ii) what steps her Department has taken to address long delays in processing claims; and (iii) if delays in processing claims are a result of the reorganisation within the Housing Executive under the Modernising Services programme. (AQW 579/10)

Minister for Social Development: The Housing Executive currently has a target of processing 90% of all new Housing Benefit claims within 14 days of all necessary information being supplied by the claimant. The current performance is detailed in the table.

Service Centre	%
Belfast Private HB Unit	100%
Belfast Public HB Unit	97%
South East	90%
South	92%
North East	89%
West (Derry)	94%
West (Omagh)	96%
NIHE Overall	94%

Following reorganisation, under the Modernising Services programme, Housing Benefit claims are now processed at seven Service Centres across Northern Ireland. The Housing Executive considers that this offers a more efficient delivery of service. However, due to the current economic situation there have been significantly higher numbers of Housing Benefit transactions including new claims and higher numbers of changes in circumstances. In view of this increase in demand, the Housing Executive increased Housing Benefit staffing resources. This has resulted in a significant improvement in the overall service over recent months despite the continuing increase in demand.

Housing Need

Mr R McCartney asked the Minister for Social Development which area has the greatest housing need. (AQW 580/10)

Minister for Social Development: The table below details the number of applicants on the waiting list by Housing Executive geographical area, as at 30 June 2009.

NIHE Area	Housing Applicants	Housing Stress
West	4889	2312
Belfast	9953	5774
North East	7765	3761
South	6819	3315
South East	8810	4881

Social Housing

Mr R McCartney asked the Minister for Social Development how many people are on the list for social housing in Derry City. (AQW 581/10)

Minister for Social Development: At the 30 June 2009 there were 2425 applicants on the waiting list in the Derry City Council area.

Social Housing

Mr R McCartney asked the Minister for Social Development how many people are on the list for urgent social housing in Derry City. (AQW 582/10)

Minister for Social Development: At the 30 June 2009 there were 2425 applicants on the waiting list in the Derry City Council area of which 1411 were in housing stress.

Social Houses

Mr R McCartney asked the Minister for Social Development how many social houses will be started in Derry City by year ending March 2010. (AQW 584/10)

Minister for Social Development: There are currently 4 schemes and 240 units programmed to start in Derry city by year ending March 2010.

Housing Executive Schemes

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Social Development to outline what Housing Executive schemes are planned for the Craigantlet Hills area of North Down over the next five years. (AQW 591/10)

Minister for Social Development: The Housing Executive is unable to confirm details of its programmes of activity beyond the current financial year and cannot therefore advise when individual schemes are likely to go onsite in subsequent years.

The Housing Executive will review its programmes when budgets have been confirmed as the delivery of these programmes is dependent on the availability of finance in any given year.

Details of the Housing Executive's programmes of activity are included in their District Housing Plans which are reviewed annually and presented to local councils. The North Down District Housing Plan is available at www.nihe.gov.uk.

Employment Levels

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister for Social Development what plans she has to change employment levels within her Department in the next 12 months; and how many of these changes are planned to be made through redundancies. (AQW 596/10)

Minister for Social Development: There are no plans to change employment levels within the Department for Social Development for the financial year 2009/10. Within the Department, the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division is funded for work carried out on behalf of the Great Britain Child Support Agency. Staffing levels are dependent on the level of funding provided. As funding levels have reduced for 2009/10, fewer staff will be allocated to this work, with the reduction handled through vacancy management.

As budgets have not yet been finally agreed for 2010/11 the Department is not in a position to comment on employment levels from April 2010.

There are, at this stage, no planned redundancies.

Disability Living Allowance Appeal Tribunals

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister for Social Development what steps she is taking to prevent the deferral of Disability Living Allowance appeal tribunals due to non-availability of GP records. (AQW 611/10)

Minister for Social Development: For every Disability Living Allowance appeal received The Appeals Service ask the appellant for permission to obtain their General Practitioner records. Where consent is given, a letter is issued to the doctor's surgery three weeks before the hearing to request the records.

If the records have not been received one week before the hearing date a letter is issued to the appellant advising them of the non receipt and suggesting they contact their doctor to ensure the records are available for the Tribunal hearing.

If the surgery refuses to release the records a letter is issued to the appellant advising them of the refusal and suggesting they contact their doctor to make alternative arrangements to ensure the records are available for the Tribunal hearing.

On the day of the hearing the Tribunal is advised of the steps taken by The Appeals Service to obtain the records.

Any subsequent decision to adjourn due to the non availability of records is an independent judicial decision over which The Appeals Service has no influence.

Hunger Strike Memorial

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development what action she intends to take to remove the hunger strike memorial erected illegally on Housing Executive land in Newtownbutler. (AQW 614/10)

Minister for Social Development: It is understood that a memorial was erected on Housing Executive land within the Galloon Gardens area of Newtownbutler without the agreement, involvement or knowledge of the Housing Executive. The Housing Executive is currently consulting with a range of local representatives with a view to resolving this issue.

Child Maintenance Payments

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development (i) to detail how much has been outstanding in child maintenance payments in each of the last 5 years from individuals resident in the Irish Republic; and (ii) to outline the measures in place with authorities in the Irish Republic to assist in recovering these payments.

(AQW 616/10)

Minister for Social Development:

- (i) It is important to note that the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division has no jurisdiction either to:
- make a new determination of child maintenance liability, or
 - continue with an existing child maintenance liability

where the Non Resident Parent is deemed to be habitually resident outside Northern Ireland or Great Britain.

Individual cases do exist in which Non Resident Parents failed to pay child maintenance liabilities when they were habitually resident in Northern Ireland but payment cannot be enforced as those Non Resident Parents are now habitually resident in the Republic of Ireland.

Cases where maintenance payments are outstanding in these circumstances are not counted separately. However this debt is not “written off”: the Division suspends recovery action until such times as the individual’s circumstances change and it will continue to make strenuous efforts to recoup this outstanding maintenance of behalf of Parents with Care.

- (ii) Reciprocal agreements are not in place, either with the Republic of Ireland or any other jurisdiction outside Northern Ireland and Great Britain, to recover arrears of payments arising from non payment of child maintenance liabilities calculated by the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division.

The Republic of Ireland is, however, a signatory to the Reciprocal Enforcement of Maintenance Orders which is an international convention. Maintenance orders made by the courts on behalf of Great Britain and Northern Ireland residents can be registered and enforced by courts or other authorities in other countries against people resident there.

A resident of Great Britain or Northern Ireland who wishes to apply to obtain Child maintenance from a person outside the jurisdiction should approach:

- Their local magistrates court if they have an existing court order for maintenance,
- Their local magistrates court if there is no existing court order.

Backlog Within the Employment and Support Allowance Branch

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Social Development to give details of any backlog within the Employment and Support Allowance Branch, including the reasons for this backlog. (AQW 626/10)

Minister for Social Development: There are no backlogs in the benefit processing teams within the Employment and Support Allowance Branch, the outstanding work is well within acceptable levels. There are currently 627 appeals outstanding and this is more than the acceptable number. The backlog is due to more people than expected being disallowed Employment and Support Allowance because they are found not to have a limited capability for work following the Work Capability Assessment.

Employment and Support Allowance Branch

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Social Development how many (i) desktop computers; (ii) laptop computers; (iii) fax machines; and (iv) telephones are utilised within each section of the Employment and Support Allowance Branch. (AQW 629/10)

Minister for Social Development: The information requested is provided in the table below.

Section	Desktop Computers	Laptop Computers	Fax Machines	Telephones
Accuracy & Medical	32	0	0	33

Section	Desktop Computers	Laptop Computers	Fax Machines	Telephones
Decision Making & Appeals	37	0	0	37
Processing	76	0	1	77
Operational Support	37	2	1	42
Telephony	71	0	1	73
Total	253	2	3	262

North East Quarter Masterplan

Mr J Spratt asked the Minister for Social Development, (i) for an update on the current status of the North East Quarter Masterplan for Belfast city centre; (ii) what stage the process is currently at; (iii) to outline any steps still to be taken; and (iv) the time-scale for completion. (AQW 632/10)

Minister for Social Development: My Department's adopted masterplan for the North East Quarter of Belfast city centre was published in August 2005. A development brief for the area was subsequently issued and in March 2006 the North East Quarter was selected as the next area for a major retail-led regeneration scheme in the city centre, on the basis of proposals submitted by Leaside Developments Limited for the Royal Exchange scheme.

My Department is currently finalising the Development Agreement for the scheme which provides the legal contract for the statutory planning, commercial and funding requirements for the scheme. The Development Agreement will set out the timetable for the scheme and I will make an announcement about this as soon as the Agreement has been finalised with the developer.

Benefit Fraud

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development (i) to outline her Department's policy on the naming and shaming of those found guilty in the courts of benefit fraud; and (ii) if the names of people guilty of benefit fraud have ever been published by her Department or the Social Security Agency. (AQW 635/10)

Minister for Social Development: I am fully committed to minimising social security fraud. My Department has a robust counter fraud strategy but does not have a policy on "naming and shaming." Until recently personal details of individuals convicted of benefit fraud were included in the regular bulletins published on the Department's website. Whilst publication of personal details was viewed as a potential deterrent to those individuals who might commit benefit fraud, it was not considered to be a 'naming and shaming' exercise.

The content of the Department's website is continually reviewed and updated. Increasingly the website is focusing on the strategic messages that I wish to communicate about the work of my Department. Although the personal details of individuals convicted of benefit fraud will no longer be published on the website, details will still be issued to the local media by way of press releases. In addition, the regular bulletins on the website about the Department's success in tackling social security benefit fraud will continue.

Housing Maintenance

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development how much of the £20 million promised to be released immediately for housing maintenance in the June monitoring round has been released to date. (AQW 636/10)

Minister for Social Development: The £20 million to be released to EGAN contractors in the June Monitoring Round was not a promise made by me but a unilateral condition the Executive placed on the £20 million capital funding allocation for Private Sector Grants (£15 million) and Disabled Adaptations (£5 million). The funding for the EGAN contracts was to be found from within the existing revenue resources already allocated to my Department.

However Housing was facing a £100 million shortfall before the June Monitoring Round and the £20 million allocation, while welcome, was needed to meet the existing commitment in relation to Private Sector Grants. To

release funding to the EGAN contractors the Housing Executive will have to postpone other maintenance and related works, including suspending asbestos removal and change of tenancy repairs which will affect hundreds of smaller contractors.

The Housing Executive is continuing to investigate the possible options and ramifications of releasing the required funding.

Since June 2009 the Housing Executive has released £8 million to Egan contractors.

Tenants in Social Housing

Mr D O'Loan asked the Minister for Social Development if she has given consideration to the fact that many tenants in social housing have no contents insurance; and to state what plans she has to address this matter. (AQW 637/10)

Minister for Social Development: I am aware that many people, both in social and private housing, have no contents insurance. This is a matter for the individuals themselves, the Government cannot compel tenants to have this insurance. However, Supporting Communities Northern Ireland, an independent province wide voluntary organisation, have arranged a contents insurance scheme with Royal and Sun Alliance Plc, which offers a weekly payment scheme for Housing Executive Tenants. The scheme does not operate on a post code basis which means that all Housing Executive tenants can avail of the same rates. In addition replacement of glass, which many other insurers will not accept for tenants, is available through the scheme.

I have asked the Housing Executive and Housing Associations to continue to advise their tenants of the benefits of being adequately insured.

Vandalism on Housing Executive Property

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Social Development how much has been spent by her Department cleaning or repairing acts of vandalism on Housing Executive property in each of the last five years. (AQW 642/10)

Minister for Social Development: The table below details the Housing Executive's expenditure through remedial works associated with damage caused by vandalism for the period requested.

Financial Year	Expenditure £k
2004/05	703
2005/06	733
2006/07	716
2007/08	376
2008/09	415
Total	2,943

Employment and Support Allowance Branch

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Social Development, within the Employment and Support Allowance Branch (ESAB), how many cases have been delayed due to the loss of documents received by ESAB. (AQW 657/10)

Minister for Social Development: The information requested is not available. The Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) Centre receives around 3000 medical certificates and 4500 envelopes containing other documentation every week. In view of the large volumes involved it is almost inevitable that some documents may, on occasion, be mislaid. Every effort is made to obtain the right documentation to ensure that benefit payments are not delayed.

Employment and Support and Allowance Branch

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Social Development (i) for her assessment of the effectiveness of the Employment and Support and Allowance Branch (ESAB); (ii) whether ESAB is fit for purpose; and (iii) how often it has attained its Key Performance Indicators targets. (AQW 658/10)

Minister for Social Development: The information requested is set out below.

(i) & (ii) Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) has been the most significant change in the benefit system in years and the transition has been a very positive one. The introduction of the new benefit would have been challenging at any time but with the current economic downturn the task was made more difficult. Not only is ESA a new benefit, but it introduced new working practices for staff including taking claims by telephone and for the first time, the ability to process a signatureless claim. There has been a marked improvement in the performance of the ESA Centre in recent months, due to the hard work and commitment of staff and management, thus demonstrating its' effectiveness and supporting the view that it is fit for purpose.

(iii) While there is no official target for processing ESA claims, the average actual clearance time for an ESA claim has improved from 23.4 days in May to 17.5 days in August. The number of outstanding claims is well within acceptable levels and telephony performance has been excellent over recent months.

Employment and Support Allowance Branch

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Social Development if her Department has any plans to transfer more staff into the Employment and Support Allowance Branch. (AQW 659/10)

Minister for Social Development: Staffing levels in the Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) Centre are monitored on an ongoing basis and when necessary, reviewed, to ensure they reflect variations in workloads. At present there are 8 vacancies in the Centre and new recruits are being identified to fill these posts.

Employment and Support Allowance Branch

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Social Development if her Department has any plans to expand the role and remit of the Employment and Support Allowance Branch. (AQW 660/10)

Minister for Social Development: The Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) Centre is responsible for processing, maintaining and paying claims for all ESA clients. There are currently no plans to change this.

Employment and Support Allowance Branch

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Social Development for a breakdown of the annual budget of the Employment and Support Allowance Branch. (AQW 661/10)

Minister for Social Development: The allocated budget for the ESA Centre for 2009/10 is currently £4,107,000. A breakdown of this allocation is provided in the table below.

Business Area	Budget
Wages and Salaries	£4,016,000
General Administrative Expenditure	£91,000
Total	£4,107,000

Development of the Mullacreevie Site

Mr C Boylan asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 3166/09, (i) for an update on the development of the Mullacreevie site, including zoning and open space provision; (ii) if a planning application has been submitted in relation to the 22 houses in the Mullacreevie Phase 1 development in Armagh city. (AQW 662/10)

Minister for Social Development: Fold Housing Association has been nominated to develop the Mullacreevie Phase 1 scheme. They have carried out a feasibility study and are working towards submitting an application for planning approval which will include details of the open space provision as well as the number of homes they hope to build.

NI Housing Executive Homes

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many NI Housing Executive homes in North Down are awaiting renovation or modernisation before being allocated to tenants. (AQW 666/10)

Minister for Social Development: There are 43 properties in North Down awaiting renovation, which will subsequently be allocated.

Social Housing

Mr M McLaughlin asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the specified targets for social housing in (i) Crumlin; (ii) Randalstown; (iii) Toome; and (iv) Antrim, for the next twelve months. (AQW 681/10)

Minister for Social Development: The table below details the planned social housing starts within Antrim Borough Council area for 2009/10. There are schemes planned for Crumlin (5 units), Randalstown (25 units), and Antrim (18 units). Currently there are no schemes planned to start during 2009/10 in Toome.

Scheme	No. of units	Client Group
Neilsbrook Phase 1 Randalstown	25	General Needs
Cunningham Way, Antrim	12	General Needs
51 Main Street, Crumlin	5	General Needs
Castle Park, Antrim	6	General Needs

Employment and Support Allowance Branch

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Social Development, since its inception, how many complaints have been received by the Employment and Support Allowance Branch from (i) individual claimants; (ii) Citizens Advice Bureau staff; (iii) solicitors; and (iv) elected representatives such as councillors, MLAs or MPs. (AQW 698/10)

Minister for Social Development: The information requested is set out in the table below.

Origin of complaint	Number of complaints
Individual claimants	220
Citizens Advice Bureau staff	7
Solicitors	3
Elected Representatives	94

Employment and Support Allowance Branch

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Social Development if there is a dedicated call handling section in the Employment and Support Allowance Branch. (AQW 699/10)

Minister for Social Development: The Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) Centre has a dedicated call handling section. The section has two dedicated telephone lines: the freephone claim line handles calls from customers who want to make a claim to ESA or want information about the benefit; the enquiry line handles calls from customers (or their representatives) with an existing claim who want to report a change of circumstances or have a general enquiry about a claim.

Employment and Support Allowance Branch

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Social Development if staff with responsibility for processing in the Employment and Support Allowance Branch are also manning telephones whilst engaged in day to day duties. (AQW 700/10)

Minister for Social Development: Telephone duties are carried out by processing staff as they regularly have to contact customers and other operational business areas to progress claims.

Employment and Support Allowance Branch

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Social Development how many staff within the Employment and Support Allowance Branch are tasked on a daily basis with tackling benefit fraud. (AQW 701/10)

Minister for Social Development: The Employment and Support Allowance Centre has two trained Fraud Liaison Officers. Fraud awareness training has been delivered to operational staff in the Centre. A continuous awareness programme is in place throughout the year. All staff are aware of their responsibility to report any suspected cases of fraud to the Fraud Liaison Officers.

Disability Living Allowance Branch

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Social Development how many staff are employed in the Disability Living Allowance Branch. (AQW 702/10)

Minister for Social Development: There are 229.52* staff employed administering Disability Living Allowance.

This number is based on whole time equivalents and will include a number of part time staff.

NI Housing Executive Bungalows

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Social Development what the starting date is for the renovation and repair of the NI Housing Executive bungalows for pensioners and disabled people at Millburn, Coleraine. (AQW 712/10)

Minister for Social Development: A Housing Executive Multi Element Improvement scheme for the bungalows in the Millburn estate was initially scheduled to start during the 2008/09 financial year. However due to the current budgetary constraints this start date was deferred. Currently the Housing Executive is unable to confirm when this scheme will start.

Complaints Lodged Against Examining Medical Practitioners

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of complaints lodged against Examining Medical Practitioners regulated through the medical support services, about claims for (i) Disability Living Allowance; and (ii) Attendance Allowance, in each of the last three years. (AQW 720/10)

Minister for Social Development: The total number of complaints received following a domiciliary visit by an Examining Medical Practitioner for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Attendance Allowance (AA) are provided in the table below.

Year	Domiciliary Visits	No of DLA Complaints	No of AA Complaints
April 2006 – March 2007	9813	93	NIL
April 2007 – March 2008	9713	85	NIL
April 2008 – March 2009	9640	71	NIL

Disability Living Allowance Branch

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Social Development to list (i) the sections within the Disability Living Allowance Branch; and (ii) the number of staff in each section. (AQW 765/10)

Minister for Social Development: The information requested is set out in the table below.

Staff employed within Disability Living Allowance Branch by Section.

Section	Number of Staff
Operational Support	13.81
Contact Centre & Customer Maintenance Team	70.58
Document Handling Centre	27.74
Disability Appeals	44.76
Decision Making Team	72.63
Total	229.52 *

*These numbers are based on whole time equivalents and will include a number of part time staff

Disability Living Allowance Branch

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Social Development how many (i) desktop computers; (ii) laptop computers; (iii) fax machines; and (iv) telephones are utilised within each section of the Disability Living Allowance Branch. (AQW 766/10)

Minister for Social Development: The information requested is provided in the table below.

DLA Section	Desktop Computers	Laptop Computers	Fax Machines	Telephones
Operational Support	14	1	1	12
Contact Centre & Customer Maintenance Team	71	0	0	70
Document Handling Centre	28	0	0	10
Disability Appeals	45	0	0	30
Decision Making Team	73	0	0	63
Totals	231	1	1	185

Disability Living Allowance Branch

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Social Development how many active cases are currently being dealt with by the Disability Living Allowance Branch. (AQW 767/10)

Minister for Social Development: Disability Living Allowance Branch is currently dealing with 180,451 active cases, figures correct at 5 September 2009.

Disability Living Allowance Branch

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Social Development to give details of any backlog within the Disability Living Allowance Branch, including the reasons for this backlog. (AQW 769/10)

Minister for Social Development: There are no backlogs of work within Disability Living Allowance Branch; the outstanding work is well within acceptable levels.

Co-ownership Scheme

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many applications for the Co-ownership Scheme have been received from people in the North Down constituency in each of the last three years; and how many have been accepted. (AQW 801/10)

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	Accepted
2006/07	131	89
2007/08	305	180
2008/09 ¹	42	43
2009/10 ²	99	28

1. 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.
2. The number of applications received during 2009/10 are currently being processed. Therefore, the number of successful applications may increase.

Housing Section Staff

Mr B Armstrong asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the rationale behind transferring Housing Section staff from James House to the Lighthouse Building. (AQW 819/10)

Minister for Social Development: Housing Division staff were relocated from James House to the Lighthouse Building for business efficiency reasons. To assist in delivering against my priority of investing in housing and addressing the housing crisis I consider it is essential for me to have ready access to the management and staff who work in the Housing Division of my Department, which has been facilitated by this move.

Housing Executive

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister for Social Development if she can explain why the Housing Executive cannot receive data from banks and building societies on tenants who have accumulated arrears in their accounts, given that they share this information with other organisations. (AQW 823/10)

Minister for Social Development: All matters relevant to data protection and data sharing are the subject of a submission by the Department of Finance and Personnel to the Public Accounts Committee following its recent hearing on "The Management of Social Housing Rent Collection and Arrears". This will be made widely available in due course.

NI Housing Executive

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister for Social Development how many houses have been allocated by the NI Housing Executive in (i) Strangford; and (ii) Ards, in each of the last three years. (AQW 826/10)

Minister for Social Development: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not record allocations by parliamentary constituency.

The table below details the total annual housing allocations for the Housing Executive's Newtownards, Downpatrick and Castlereagh District Office areas, which contain the areas within the Strangford constituency boundary.

	2007	2008	2009
Ards District	290	335	286

	2007	2008	2009
Down District	177	184	219
Castlereagh District	259	259	316

Motability Vehicles

Mr W Irwin asked the Minister for Social Development to list the approved accident repair companies tasked by her Department to repair Motability vehicles damaged in accidents. (AQW 840/10)

Minister for Social Development: Motability is an independent voluntary organisation and is responsible for the administration of the Motability contract hire scheme. Whilst my Department facilitates the operation of the scheme by diverting payments of disability living allowance to meet contract hire payments, it is not directly involved in the administration of the scheme. Further information about the scheme can be obtained directly from Motability.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Social Development what the average time is to process a Disability Living Allowance claim. (AQW 876/10)

Minister for Social Development: Against a Public Service Agreement target of 41 days the average clearance time for a claim to Disability Living Allowance is 39.2 days. These figures relate to August 2009, the last month for which there are full figures available

Disability Living Allowance Branch

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Social Development if her Department has any plans to expand the role and remit of the Disability Living Allowance Branch. (AQW 880/10)

Minister for Social Development: Disability Living Allowance Branch is responsible for processing, maintaining and paying claims for all Disability Living Allowance customers. There are currently no plans to change this.

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REVISED WRITTEN ANSWERS

Friday 2 October 2009

(AQW 248/10)

Last year, 2008/09, £10m was allocated under the Multi Sports Stadium budget line. The full amount was declared as an easement in the Monitoring Round process.

This year, 2009/10, £28.92m was allocated. £1.979m was declared as an easement in the June Monitoring round and £1.1m is being declared as an easement in September Monitoring. As permitted under the acceleration and slippage arrangements in the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (ISNI), it is proposed at this point in the year to reallocate the remaining £25.841m as detailed in the attached table. This proposed reallocation will be regularly reviewed throughout the year and adjustments made where necessary.

This proposed reallocation is subject to the September Monitoring process which is scheduled to be considered at the Executive meeting on 24th September.

PROPOSED INTERNAL RE-ALLOCATION OF MULTI SPORTS STADIUM BUDGET 09/10

Project Title	2009/2010
House of Sport	1,000
North Belfast Learning	21
2012 Sports Facilities/Elite	7,907
SCNI Capital	101
50 Metre Pool	654
Soccer Strategy	2,367
Tollymore	2,592
Sports Strategy Implementation	11,199
Multi Sports Stadium	(25,841)

(AQW 253/10)

Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) is responsible for the development of sport in Northern Ireland including the distribution of funding. The attached list provides an overview of the number of athletes who have received funding from SNI over the last three financial years broken down by sport and representation/team.

2007/2008

Sport	Representation/Team				
	Northern Ireland	Great Britain	GB & NI	Ireland	Elsewhere
Badminton	0	0	0	1	0
Boxing	0	0	0	1	0
Canoeing	1	0	0	0	0
Cycling	0	0	0	3	0
Equestrian - Showjumping	0	0	0	1	0
Golf	1	0	0	0	0
Gymnastics	0	0	0	1	0

Sport	Representation/Team				
	Northern Ireland	Great Britain	GB & NI	Ireland	Elsewhere
Ice Skating	0	1	0	0	0
Judo	0	0	0	1	0
Karate	1	0	0	0	0
Karting	1	0	0	0	0
Motorcycling	3	0	0	0	0
Rowing	0	0	0	2	0
Sailing	0	0	0	7	0
Shooting	3	0	0	0	0
Surfing	0	0	0	1	0
Swimming	0	1	0	3	0
Table Tennis	3	0	0	2	0
Ten Pin Bowling	0	0	0	0	0
Waterskiing	0	0	0	1	0
Total	13	2	0	24	0

2008/2009

Sport	Representation/Team				
	Northern Ireland	Great Britain	GB & NI	Ireland	Elsewhere
Athletics	0	0	0	8	0
Badminton	0	0	0	5	0
Bowls (Men's & Ladies)	0	0	0	19	0
Boxing	0	0	0	1	0
Canoeing	0	0	0	1	0
Cricket	0	0	0	7	0
Cycling	0	0	0	5	0
Equestrian - Eventing	0	0	0	1	0
Fencing	0	0	0	1	0
Ice Skating	0	3	0	0	0
Motorcycling	3	0	0	0	0
Netball	0	0	0	0	0
Rowing	0	1	1	0	0
Sailing	0	2	0	4	0
Shooting	5	1	0	0	0
Snow Skiing	0	1	0	0	0
Squash	0	0	0	1	0
Swimming	0	0	0	9	0
Table Tennis	0	0	0	2	0
Tennis	3	0	0	2	0

Sport	Representation/Team				
	Northern Ireland	Great Britain	GB & NI	Ireland	Elsewhere
Triathlon	0	0	0	2	0
Waterskiing	0	1	0	2	0
2008 Commonwealth Youth Games Team	12	0	0	0	0
Total	23	9	1	70	0

2009/2010

Sport	Representation/Team				
	Northern Ireland	Great Britain	GB & NI	Ireland	Elsewhere
Archery	1	1	0	0	0
Association Football	22	0	0	0	0
Athletics	0	0	0	6	0
Badminton	0	0	0	5	0
Basketball (Wheelchair)	0	2	0	0	0
Bowls	1	0	0	20	0
Boxing	0	0	0	9	0
Canoeing	7	0	0	1	0
Car Clubs	5	0	0	0	0
Cricket	0	0	0	9	0
Cycling	0	0	0	11	0
Fencing	0	0	0	1	0
Golf	1	0	0	12	0
Gymnastics	0	2	0	2	0
Hockey	0	2	0	11	0
Ice Skating	0	2	1	0	0
Judo	0	1	0	2	0
Karting	1	0	0	0	0
Motorcycling	9	0	0	0	0
Netball	16	0	0	0	0
Rowing	0	0	0	1	0
Sailing	0	2	0	7	0
Shooting	6	2	0	0	0
Snow Skiing	0	1	0	0	0
Squash	0	0	0	1	0
Surfing	0	0	0	1	0
Swimming	0	1	0	13	0
Table Tennis	0	0	0	2	0
Tennis	0	0	0	1	0

Ten Pin Bowling	1	0	0	0	0
Triathlon	0	0	0	3	0
Waterskiing	0	1	0	2	0
Wrestling	1	0	0	0	0
Total	71	17	1	120	0

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