
OFFICIAL REPORT

(HANSARD)

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Tel: 028 9052 1078

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NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Friday 13 November 2009

Written Answers to Questions

OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER

Policing and Justice: Funding

Mr W Irwin asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on negotiations with Her Majesty's Government regarding funding for policing and justice after it is devolved. (AQO 237/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister (Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness): The Prime Minister published his proposals on funding the devolution of policing and justice on Wednesday 21 October. The document is available on www.number10.gov.uk.

North/South Ministerial Council: Aquaculture and Marine

Miss M McIlveen asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when the last meeting of the North South Ministerial Council took place in the Aquaculture and Marine sectoral format. (AQO 324/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The last meeting of the North South Ministerial Council in the Aquaculture and Marine sectoral format took place on 20 July 2009.

A further meeting had been scheduled for 23 October but was postponed until 18 November to allow for full legal scrutiny of the Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Amendment) Regulations 2009 and the Foyle Area and Carlingford Area (Coarse Angling) Regulations 2009.

Departmental Budgets

Mr A McFarland asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an assessment of the potential impact on Programme for Government targets of a reduction in Departments' projected budget allocations or reduced revenue streams. (AQO 326/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Executive has in place a formal monitoring framework for the Programme for Government. Structures and processes have been established across departments to monitor and report on performance in delivering against targets.

Our first delivery report, showing the position as at the end of March 2009 has been made available to Assembly Members and Committees. That report acknowledged that the economic position has radically changed from the time when the PfG was first agreed and endorsed by the Assembly. It also highlights where performance in hitting targets is threatened by the changed economic and financial outlook.

The PfG is ambitious and challenging and the Executive is ever vigilant to any changes that might threaten the promises it makes. The changing financial and economic outlook is difficult. However, to quote from our published Delivery Report "While it may be appropriate in some cases to review our targets, this is not the time to limit ambitions." [Page 12, para 2.4, last sentence]

Child Abuse

Mr D Simpson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the Children's Commissioner requested a meeting with them to discuss the issue of child abuse in care homes. (AQO 327/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Commissioner has not requested a meeting to discuss the issue of child abuse in care homes.

We share concerns about allegations of abuse against children and want to see full investigations into any alleged incidents. We would strongly urge anyone who has evidence of abuses committed within this jurisdiction to bring it to the attention of the PSNI or social services for investigation.

This matter will also be tabled at the next meeting of the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People for Ministerial discussion.

Policing and Justice Powers

Ms J McCann asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to provide an update on the ongoing work regarding the transfer of Policing and Justice. (AQO 328/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: Preparations for the devolution of policing and justice powers have continued to progress in line with the process paper which we made public following our attendance at the Assembly and Executive Review Committee (AERC) on 18 November last year.

Subsequently the AERC published in January 2008 a First Report on arrangements for the devolution of policing and justice matters, and this report was endorsed by the Assembly. Legislative changes have been enacted at Westminster to reflect the recommendations of that report. The AERC has continued to examine a wider range of issues linked to devolution of policing and justice responsibilities.

A Bill was introduced in the Assembly on 14 September to facilitate the future creation of a Department of Justice and make arrangements for the appointment of a Minister of Justice. The Bill has passed its second stage and Committee scrutiny, and Consideration stage. The Bill is preparatory in nature and its commencement provision will ensure that it is only brought into operation on a date determined by us.

One of the essential steps identified in the November 2008 process paper was the satisfactory conclusion to financial discussions involving ourselves, the NIO, the Treasury and the Prime Minister. These discussions have been pursued intensively in recent months. An offer of a financial package to meet the pressures faced by bodies responsible for the delivery of policing and justice functions has now been set out in a letter from the Prime Minister, which he made public on 21 October.

We re-emphasise our commitment to working faithfully through the remaining steps identified in the November process paper, so that devolution can be achieved without undue delay.

Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy

Mr T Lunn asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how long publication of the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy has been delayed and the reasons for the delay. (AQO 330/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The draft Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration was originally meant to have been brought forward before the end of last year. That and subsequent commitments on timing were made in good faith, and it was our expectation that those would be met. However, it was not possible to meet that date. Reaching agreement on the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration strategy (CSI) remains one of the top policy priorities of OFMDFM. We have now agreed a process and officials within OFMDFM are working on a revised draft of the Programme. This process will identify areas of agreement and outstanding areas of contention.

Whilst we continue to work intensively towards an agreed strategy that will benefit all our people now and over the longer term; work to promote community relations and good race relations has continued over the past two years, led and supported by us and the whole Ministerial team.

There are many examples of that commitment:

- We have invested £29m in good relations work in the current CSR period – to build a shared and better future – that is not insubstantial.
- Junior Minister Gerry Kelly and Junior Minister Robin Newton continue to chair the North Belfast Working Group focusing on interface issues in Belfast and across Northern Ireland. We have spent £500,000 this summer on resourcing work on summer interventions programme. Overall, since devolution in 2007, we have spent £1.5m on this intervention work.
- In our District Councils Community Relations Programme we have spent since May 2007 £4.372m and have committed a further £2.759m this financial year.
- In Coleraine we have been working proactively with our key partners both statutory and non-statutory following the death of Mr Kevin McDaid in May and we have provided an additional £23,000 to Coleraine Borough Council for diversionary work on top of the £86,000 awarded to the Council for good relations activities.
- We have also chaired meetings relating to issues in Craigavon and Lurgan.
- Finally, we have provided further funding within the past two weeks for specific intervention work in east and north Belfast.

US Investment

Mr M McLaughlin asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the investments that have been secured following their visits to the United States. (AQO 331/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: We have been lobbying hard in the United States (US) for more investment over the past year. We visited the US in March and September to promote investment opportunities and to support InvestNI in its negotiations with potential investors and leads generated from the US Economic conference.

Our participation at key meetings with prospective investors, and those who influence investment decisions helped strengthen InvestNI's sales message. We used these opportunities to explain the Executive's commitment to growing the economy and to encourage prospective investors to choose here as their preferred European location.

We are pleased with the outcome of our interventions in bringing major film and television projects to Belfast from Home Box Office and Universal Studios. In April, the New York Comptrollers Office also announced a \$30m package to be made available for potential investment by the New York state retirement fund.

During our recent visit to New York on 23rd and 24th September at the invitation of former President Bill Clinton, we attended a seminar on inward investment opportunities at a special session of the Clinton Global Initiative's Annual conference. The event, Chaired by President Clinton, presented us with an unprecedented opportunity to promote investment here to over 350 senior corporate executives from major financial institutions and the media. We also attended a business breakfast, arranged by Declan Kelly and chaired by Don Keough, the former president of Coca Cola. The event attracted 12 highly placed business executives who were able to gain a better understanding of the opportunities of investing here. We also met with a number of other clients of InvestNI to help progress decisions on establishing a presence here.

Declan Kelly also played a key role in organising the US Business Leaders delegation which accompanied Secretary of State Clinton to Belfast.

Over the past two years we have had an ongoing engagement with the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE). We were delighted that we were able to encourage NYSE Technologies to expand its presence in Belfast in creating up to 400 new jobs in a new development facility. The scale and significance of this expansion is a tremendous boost to the growth of our local financial services sector, particularly at a time when global competition for such investment has never been higher.

We were also pleased that following on from our visit to the West Coast in March, the Irish Technology Leadership Group visited here recently with a 15-strong delegation from Silicon Valley. This was an important event in exploring business ventures and assisting us in developing opportunities in the US for our local companies.

Despite the economic downturn, Northern Ireland continues to attract interest from American companies looking for a foothold in Europe. We have been greatly encouraged by the ongoing support and the recent

investment announcements are a reflection of the confidence that major US businesses have in the strength of the NI business model. We will continue to work with InvestNI in promoting our business message to prospective investors in the US.

Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy

Mr D Ford asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the issues that have to be resolved before a consultation document can be finalised on the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy. (AQO 332/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The draft Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration was originally meant to have been brought forward before the end of last year. That and subsequent commitments on timing were made in good faith, and it was our expectation that those would be met. However, it was not possible to meet that date. Reaching agreement on the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration strategy (CSI) remains one of the top policy priorities of OFMDFM. We have now agreed a process and officials within OFMDFM are working on a revised draft of the Programme. This process will identify areas of agreement and outstanding areas of contention.

Whilst we continue to work intensively towards an agreed strategy that will benefit all our people now and over the longer term; work to promote community relations and good race relations has continued over the past two years, led and supported by us and the whole Ministerial team.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Allegations of Harassment or Bullying

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many allegations of harassment or bullying have been reported by staff in her Department in each of the last five years.

(AQW 2289/10)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (Ms M Gildernew): I have set out in the table below the number of allegations of harassment or bullying reported to the Department's Equal Opportunities Unit in each of the last five calendar years:

Year	Harassment	Bullying	Harassment and Bullying	Total
2005	0	2	0	2
2006	2	5	2	9

Year	Harassment	Bullying	Harassment and Bullying	Total
2007	7	2	4	13
2008	2	3	2	7
2009	1	4	0	5

Dairy Cows

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many dairy cows are being kept in factory-farm conditions and not let out to graze. (AQW 2451/10)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: There is no information on the permanent housing of cattle available within the department to provide a response to this question.

Certificate of Competence Test

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what steps she has taken or intends to take to require those wishing to transport livestock to take a Certificate of Competence test in compliance with Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005. (AQW 2568/10)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: As required by Article 6(5) of Council Regulation EC 1/2005 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations from 5 January 2008 every person who drives or acts as an attendant on a road vehicle transporting domestic Equidae or domestic animals of bovine, ovine, caprine or porcine species or poultry, should hold a certificate of competence.

My Department informed all persons who are authorised as transporters under the Council Regulation of the need to have a competence certificate at the time they were awarded the Transporter Authorisation.

Information on these requirements is on the Department's website, together with contacts for arranging assessment.

In addition, letters have been issued to transporters informing them of the requirements. A number of Press Releases have also issued.

My Department requires all persons applying for authorisation to transport livestock or poultry on journeys of over 8 hours to obtain a competence certificate before transporter authorisation is granted.

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, ARTS AND LEISURE

Maze Site

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what involvement his Department has in the Maze site now that the main stadium project has been discontinued. (AQW 2244/10)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (Mr N McCausland): I would refer to my answer to AQO 81/10 on Tuesday 22 September 2009 which sets out my Department's position in relation to the Maze. For convenience I record this below:

“The Department, in conjunction with the Strategic Investment Board, was involved in the development of proposals for a multi-sports stadium to be used by the three main ball sports in Northern Ireland. That included the production of a robust business plan by independent consultants. The Department worked closely with the governing bodies of the three sports- football, rugby and Gaelic games - in finalising and agreeing the business plan for the multi-sports stadium. It was the responsibility of the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, supported by the Strategic Investment Board, to identify a preferred developer for the whole Maze site, including the stadium. In January 2009, the then Minister, Gregory

Campbell, having reviewed all the material available to him, advised the Northern Ireland Executive of his decision not to proceed with the proposed multi-sports stadium at the Maze. My Department has, therefore, no further involvement in the future development of the Maze site.”

Windsor Park

Mr B Armstrong asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what steps he is taking to ensure that a new contract is in place between the Irish Football Association and Linfield FC before any public money is released to modernise Windsor Park, to ensure that the profits from international fixtures held at that venue are shared amongst all Irish League clubs, to allow for a fairer level of competition. (AQW 2302/10)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: I would refer to my answer to AQO 262/10 on Tuesday 20 October 2009 which sets out the position in relation to this issue. For convenience I record this below:

“It has been made absolutely clear to both the IFA and Linfield Football Club that any development at Windsor Park that involves significant public expenditure is conditional on the contractual arrangements being

agreed to the satisfaction of all concerned, and, wherever possible, my Department will facilitate that process. The issue will also feature prominently in the outline business case for regional stadia development

that has been commissioned by Sport NI. It is vital that any new contractual arrangements that are put in place provide a sustainable long-term future for international football in Northern Ireland. As far as the commercial arrangement between the IFA and Linfield Football

Club is concerned, the IFA is, in the first instance, responsible for addressing the concerns of the other football clubs, and I anticipate that that, too, will be a factor when re-examining the present contract arrangements.”

Musical Instruments for Bands Scheme

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what bands had applications rejected for the musical instruments for bands scheme because of a contravention of the good relations commitment in the recent funding round; and to outline how each band contravened this commitment. (AQW 2303/10)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Two Applications from Flute Bands were rejected in the most recent funding round of the Arts Council’s Musical Instruments for Bands Programme.

The applications were rejected on the basis that, at the time of application, websites associated with the bands contained offensive material which was considered to be in breach of the Arts Council’s statutory duty in relation to the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations.

It is not appropriate to name the bands concerned because a cross community project to improve relations in the area involving a range of community groups and local bands is ongoing and I do not want to prejudice these efforts.

GAA and Orange Order Engagements

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to list all (i) GAA; and (ii) Orange Order engagements he has attended, since taking office. (AQW 2337/10)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Since taking up office I have attending the following GAA and Orange Order engagements:

GAA

I attended Gaelic Football 7s at World Police and Fire Games 2009 in Vancouver on 1 August 2009; the Final of 3rd International Police Gaelic Football Competition at Newforge Country Club on 3 October 2009; and I visited Casement Park on 21 October 2009.

Orange Order

I attended the launch of Orangefest 2009 at Spectrum Centre on 3 July 2009; I hosted a reception for 43rd Imperial Orange Council at Parliament

Buildings on 10 July 2009; and I visited Cairncastle Orange Hall on 15 October 2009.

Funding from the Arts Council

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to list all bands that received funding from the Arts Council, in each of the last five years; and how much each band received. (AQW 2339/10)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Funding for bands for the five years from 2005/06 to 2009/10 is summarised in the table below. Individual awards also listed in the attached document. Details of the Arts Council's grants are available on the Arts Council's website at www.artscouncil-ni.org/funding/recentawards.

Scheme	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	Total
Musical Instruments for Bands	-	141,915	155,002	149,311	104,822	551,050
Small Grants /Awards for All	67,540	29,920	42,565	16,020	18,750	174,795
Equipment	153,104	-	-	-	-	153,104
Total	220,644	171,835	197,567	165,331	123,572	878,949

ARTS COUNCIL FUNDING FOR BANDS

2009-2010 TO DATE

Type	Finance Year	Decision date	Name	Project Title	Grant
Small Grants Programme	2009-2010	08/07/2009	Pride of the Orange and Blue Flute Band	'A Band Play'	10,000
Small Grants Programme	2009-2010	04/06/2009	Armagh Old Boys Silver Band	Brass series in Armagh	4,000
Small Grants Programme	2009-2010	13/05/2009	Upper Crossgare Pipe Band	Teaching Programme & 1 week long Summer Scheme	2,250
Small Grants Programme	2009-2010	01/04/2009	Upper Falls Protestant Boys	(Flute) Band Development	2,500
Musical Instruments	2009-2010	07/07/2009	Schomberg Fife and Drum Band	Purchase Musical Instruments	2,741
Musical Instruments	2009-2010	07/07/2009	Closkelt Highland Pipe Band	Purchase Musical Instruments	3,663
Musical Instruments	2009-2010	07/07/2009	Ulster Grenadiers Flute Band	Purchase Musical Instruments	4,266
Musical Instruments	2009-2010	07/07/2009	Garvary Flute Band	Purchase Musical Instruments	5,000
Musical Instruments	2009-2010	07/07/2009	Tobermore Loyal Flute Band	Purchase Musical Instruments	3,735
Musical Instruments	2009-2010	07/07/2009	South Down Defenders Flute Band	Purchase Musical Instruments	5,000
Musical Instruments	2009-2010	07/07/2009	Megargy Accordion Band	Purchase Musical Instruments	4,866
Musical Instruments	2009-2010	07/07/2009	Ballykeel Conservative Flute Band	Purchase Musical Instruments	4,845
Musical Instruments	2009-2010	07/07/2009	Upper Falls Protestant Boys	Purchase Musical Instruments	4,658

Type	Finance Year	Decision date	Name	Project Title	Grant
Musical Instruments	2009-2010	07/07/2009	Fifes and Drums Historical and Musical Society	Purchase Musical Instruments	4,878
Musical Instruments	2009-2010	07/07/2009	Omagh Protestant Boys (Melody) Flute Band	Purchase Musical Instruments	5,000
Musical Instruments	2009-2010	07/07/2009	Blackhill Flute Band	Purchase Musical Instruments	2,477
Musical Instruments	2009-2010	07/07/2009	Crossmaglen Youth Band	Purchase Musical Instruments	5,000
Musical Instruments	2009-2010	07/07/2009	Ulster Volunteer Flute Band	Purchase Musical Instruments	4,583
Musical Instruments	2009-2010	07/07/2009	Ballylesson Old Boys' Flute Band	Purchase Musical Instruments	4,889
Musical Instruments	2009-2010	07/07/2009	Upper Crossgare Pipe Band	Purchase Musical Instruments	5,000
Musical Instruments	2009-2010	07/07/2009	Magheraglass Flute Band	Purchase Musical Instruments	4,557
Musical Instruments	2009-2010	07/07/2009	Loughinsholin Cultural Music Group	Purchase Musical Instruments	4,984
Musical Instruments	2009-2010	07/07/2009	Lisbellaw Accordion Band	Purchase Musical Instruments	5,000
Musical Instruments	2009-2010	07/07/2009	Eden Accordion Band & Concert Music Society	Purchase Musical Instruments	5,000
Musical Instruments	2009-2010	07/07/2009	Wattlebridge Accordion Band	Purchase Musical Instruments	5,000
Musical Instruments	2009-2010	07/07/2009	Glenavy Accordion Band	Purchase Musical Instruments	4,680
Musical Instruments	2009-2010	07/07/2009	Castlegore Amateur Flute Band	Purchase Musical Instruments	5,000
Total to Date					123,572

2008-2009

Type	Finance Year	Decision date	Name	Project Title	Grant
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Ballinacross Accordion Band	4,995	Accordion band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Ballymartin Pipe Band	4,999	Pipe band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Ballymena and Harryville Young Conqueror	5,000		
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Ballyreagh Silver Band	4,923	Silver band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Benburb Memorial Pipe Band	3,472	Pipe band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Cappagh Pipe Band	5,000	Pipe band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Castlerock Pipe Band	5,000	Pipe band	

Type	Finance Year	Decision date	Name	Project Title	Grant
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Clogher Youth & Music Club	3,750		
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Coleraine Fife & Drum Band	4,492	Fife and Drum band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Drumaheagles Young Defenders Flute Band	5,000	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	First Old Boys Association Silver Band	4,900	Silver band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Killymuck Accordion Band	5,000	Accordion band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Kilnaslee Pipe Band	3,789	Pipe band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Lisnaskea Accordion Band	5,000	Accordion band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Montober Flute Band	4,958	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Moybrone Pipe Band	4,657	Pipe band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Moygashel Sons of Ulster	4,183		
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Mullinagoagh Pipe Band	4,999	Pipe band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Mulnagore Coronation Accordion Band	4,862	Accordion band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Murley Concert Band (Junior band of Murley Silver Band)	5,000	Concert band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Pomeroy Flute Band	4,736	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Pride of the Derg Flute Band	4,713	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Raffrey Pipe Band	4,999	Pipe band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Roses Lane Ends Temperance Flute Band	3,750	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Sgt White Memorial Flute Band	4,255	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Skeogh Flute Band	5,000	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Tamlaght Pipe Band	5,000	Pipe band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Tamlaghtmore Flute Band	4,005	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Tempo Accordion Band	4,191	Accordion band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	Tubrid Pipe Band	4,688	Pipe band	

Type	Finance Year	Decision date	Name	Project Title	Grant
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	W.J. Armstrong Memorial Pipe Band	4,995	Pipe band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2008-2009	William Strain William Lightbody Memorial Flute Band	5,000	Flute band	
Awards for All	2008-2009	The Hamilton Flute Band	800	Flute band	
Awards for All	2008-2009	Letterbreen Silver Band	4,000	Silver band	
Awards for All	2008-2009	Ballindarragh Accordion Band	1,850	Accordion band	
Awards for All	2008-2009	Trillick Pipe Band	3,650	Pipe band	
Awards for All	2008-2009	Magheraboy Flute Band	3,520	Flute band	
Awards for All	2008-2009	Holy Cross Accordion Band Atticall	2,200	Accordion band	
Total 2008/09			165,331		

2007-2008

Type	Finance Year	Decision date	Name	Project Title	Grant
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Ballykeel Loyal Sons of Ulster flute band	5,000	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Ballymacall True Blues Flute Band	4,300	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Ballymacconnelly Sons of Conquerors	4,525		
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Ballymoughan Flute Band	2,280	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Blaris Accordion Band	4,688	Accordion band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Burntollet Sons of Ulster	5,000		
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Carnagh Accordion Band	2,295	Accordion band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Coalisland Jubilee Accordion Band	4,688	Accordion band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Crumlin Young Loyalist Flute Band	3,963	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Cullybackey Pipe Band	5,000	Pipe band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Curran Flute Band	5,000	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Dromara Highland Pipe Band	5,000	Pipe band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Drumconvis Young Defenders Flute Band	3,795	Flute band	

Type	Finance Year	Decision date	Name	Project Title	Grant
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Drumnaglough Flute Band	3,775	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Dyan Pipe Band	4,594	Pipe band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	George A Dummigan Accordion Band	4,000	Accordion band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Gilnahirk Pipe Band	3,438	Pipe band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Gortagilly Musical Society	5,000		
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Grallagh Unionist Flute Band	5,000	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Hounds of Ulster	5,000		
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Killycoogan Accordion Band	5,000	Accordion band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Kilrea Pipe Band	4,999	Pipe band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Knockloughrim Accordion Band	5,000	Accordion band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Lisnaskea Silver Band	5,000	Silver band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Maghera Sons of William	2,730		
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Magheraboy Flute Band	3,723	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Muckamore Cultural Music Society	5,000		
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Newmills Silver Band	5,000	Silver band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Pride of Ardoyne	4,605		
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Pride of the Maine	3,690		
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Pride of The Park Flute Band Armoy	4,013	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Saint Patrick's Pipe Band, Drumquin	4,901	Pipe band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	St Eugene's Band Omagh	5,000		
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Tullywhisker Pipe Band	5,000	Pipe band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2007-2008	Tyrone Ditches Pipe Band	5,000	Pipe band	
Awards for All	2007-2008	St John's Independant Accordion Band	8,320	Accordion band	Tuition costs
Awards for All	2007-2008	Money more Accordion Band	2,880	Accordion band	Tuition costs
Awards for All	2007-2008	Letterbreen Silver Band	5,795	Silver band	Tuition costs

Type	Finance Year	Decision date	Name	Project Title	Grant
Awards for All	2007-2008	Magheraboy Flute Band	3,600	Flute band	Tuition costs
Awards for All	2007-2008	Upper Crossgare Pipe Band	5,000	Pipe band	Tuition costs
Awards for All	2007-2008	Bawn Silver Band	5,500	Silver band	Tuition costs
Awards for All	2007-2008	Ardboe Central Youth Band	5,000		Tuition costs
Awards for All	2007-2008	Aghavilly Accordion Band	500	Accordion band	Tuition costs
Awards for All	2007-2008	Ballycoan Pipe Band	5,970	Pipe band	Tuition costs
Total 2007/08			197,567		

2006-2007

Type	Finance Year	Decision date	Name	Project Title	Grant
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Ardinariff Flute Band	3,000	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Augharonan Pipe Band	5,000	Pipe band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Barr Jubilee Pipe Band	4,673	Pipe band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Brookeborough Flute Band	5,000	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Cairncastle Flute Band	5,000	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Churchill Flute Band	3,517	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Cranny Pipe Band	3,000	Pipe band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Crimson Arrow Pipe Band	2,605	Pipe band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Desertmartin Accordion Band	5,000	Accordion band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Donaghmore Accordion Band	5,000	Pipe band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Dungiven Flute Band	3,750	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Hillview Flute Band	4,000	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Lisbeg Pipe Band	5,000	Pipe band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Lisburn Young Defenders Flute Band	2,957	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Lisnamulligan Pipe Band	3,773	Pipe band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Lower Woodstock Ulster Scots Flute Band	3,585	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Magheragall Pipe Band	3,500	Pipe band	

Type	Finance Year	Decision date	Name	Project Title	Grant
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Magheraveely Flute Band	5,000	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Maguiresbridge Silver band	4,485	Silver band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	McNeillstown Pipe Band	5,000	Pipe band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Mullabrack Accordion Band	4,594	Accordion band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Newtownards Silver Band	3,630	Silver band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Newtownbutler Flute Band	5,000	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Omagh True Blues	3,000		
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Portrush Sons of Ulster Flute Band	3,000	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Pride of the Shore Flute Band	3,000	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Rasharkin Pipe Band	5,000	Pipe band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Sergeant Walker Memorial Pipe Band	3,263	Pipe band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Sir George White Memorial Flute band	5,000	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Star of Down Flute Band	3,693	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Strabane Concert Brass	5,000	Concert band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Stranocum Flute Band	4,890	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Tullyhogue Flute Band	5,000	Flute band	
Musical Instruments for Bands	2006-2007	Vow Accordion Band	5,000	Accordion band	
Awards for All	2006-2007	South Fermanagh Flute Band	3,284	Flute band	Tuition costs
Awards for All	2006-2007	Churchill Flute Band	2,203	Flute band	Tuition costs
Awards for All	2006-2007	Benburb Pipe Band	984	Pipe band	Tuition costs
Awards for All	2006-2007	Blacksessiagh Coronation Accordion Band	1,520	Accordion band	Tuition costs
Awards for All	2006-2007	Newbuildings Girls Flute Band	2,600	Flute band	Tuition costs
Awards for All	2006-2007	Cooneen Pipe Band	3,600	Pipe band	Tuition costs
Awards for All	2006-2007	Killadeas Pipe Band	9,264	Pipe band	Tuition costs
Awards for All	2006-2007	Pomeroy Accoridian Band	2,465	Accordion band	Tuition costs

Type	Finance Year	Decision date	Name	Project Title	Grant
Awards for All	2006-2007	Cavanaleck Pipe Band	4,000	Pipe band	Tuition costs
Total 2006/07			171,835		

2005-2006

Equipment	2005-2006	St Malachy's Pipe Band Edendork			11,811
Equipment	2005-2006	Garvagh Pipe Band			15,633
Equipment	2005-2006	Letterbreen Silver Band			25,458
Equipment	2005-2006 North Belfast Pipe Band		12,942		
Equipment	2005-2006	Ravara Pipe Band			16,479
Equipment	2005-2006	St Patrick's Pipe Band Coa			13,117
Equipment	2005-2006 Waringsford Pipe Band		13,526		
Equipment	2005-2006 Mavemacullen Accordion Band		12,078		
Equipment	2005-2006	Cookstown Sons of William Flute Band			11,173
Equipment	2005-2006	Aughnaskeagh Silver Band			20,887
Awards for All	2005-2006	Holy Cross Accordion Band Atticall			3,000
Awards for All	2005-2006	St Treas Flute Band			3,000
Awards for All	2005-2006	Drumlough Pipe Band			2,840
Awards for All	2005-2006	Pomeroy Accordion Band			2,700
Awards for All	2005-2006	Breaghey Silver Band			4,225
Awards for All	2005-2006	The Hamilton Flute Band			1,102
Awards for All	2005-2006	Bawn Silver band			2,306
Awards for All	2005-2006	St Brigid's Community Band/Youth Arts Group			4,170
Awards for All	2005-2006	South Ulster Concert Band			1,150
Awards for All	2005-2006	Maguiresbridge Silver Band			3,530
Awards for All	2005-2006	Ballycoan Pipe Band			3,817
Awards for All	2005-2006	Heatherbrook Silver Band			2,998
Awards for All	2005-2006	Upper Crossgare Pipe Band			5,000
Awards for All	2005-2006	The Sergeant Walker Memorial Pipe Band			2,800
Awards for All	2005-2006	Ardboe Central Youth Band			3,840
Awards for All	2005-2006	Fermanagh Concert Band			4,860
Awards for All	2005-2006	Ballydonaghy Pipe Band			5,000
Awards for All	2005-2006	St Canice's Accordion Band			5,000
Awards for All	2005-2006	Killylea Silver Band			2,897
Awards for All	2005-2006	Cullenfadd Pipe Band			3,305
Total 2005/2006	220,644				

Funding for GAA and GAA Clubs

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the total amount of funding provided to the GAA and GAA clubs in each of the last five years. (AQW 2387/10)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) is responsible for the development of sport in Northern Ireland including the distribution of funding. SNI has provided exchequer and lottery funding in each of the last five years to the GAA and to GAA clubs, or for the benefit of GAA clubs, as follows:-

Year	Ulster Council GAA	Gaelic Clubs
2004/05	-	£514,170
2005/06	£3,635,970	£333,183
2006/07	£180,342	£1,838,838
2007/08	£1,197,268	£4,287,035
2008/09	£1,699,552	£6,225,117
Totals	£6,713,132	£13,198,343

Funding for the Irish Football Association and Soccer Clubs

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the total amount of funding provided to the Irish Football Association and soccer clubs in each of the last five years. (AQW 2388/10)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) is responsible for the development of sport in Northern Ireland including the distribution of funding. SNI has provided exchequer and lottery funding in each of the last five years to the Irish Football Association and to soccer clubs, or for the benefit of soccer clubs, as follows:-

Year	IFA	Soccer
2004/05	£1,157,215	£717,735
2005/06	£28,000	£800,000
2006/07	£1,838,450	£214,366
2007/08	£1,604,875	£4,340,724
2008/09	£1,059,228	£5,389,451
Totals	£5,687,768	£11,462,276

Museums Policy

Mrs N Long asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether the current museums policy takes sufficient account of maritime heritage. (AQW 2464/10)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The Report of the Assembly's Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee Inquiry into the need for a Museums Policy for Northern Ireland included a recommendation that the policy address the issue of how the maritime museum sector can be developed.

Departmental Officials are working with key stakeholders to develop a policy which will address the Committee's recommendations including development of the maritime sector.

Irish Premier League Matches

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure if he has had any discussions with the Irish Football Association regarding Irish Premiership league matches being played during the summer months; and if so, what was the outcome. (AQW 2563/10)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: I have had no discussions, nor do I intend at the moment to have discussions, with the Irish Football Association (IFA) regarding Irish Premiership league matches being played during the summer months. The IFA is wholly responsible for the Irish Premiership league including determining

the time at which Premiership league matches should be played. However, under the Soccer Strategy, it was recommended that the football season should continue as at present from August to May, but be kept under regular review. Any review of the football season would be entirely a matter for the IFA to take forward.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Interactive Computerised Assessment

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Education how many children have been affected by the error of the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment concerning the online maths 'Interactive Computerised Assessment'. (AQW 1781/10)

Minister of Education (Ms C Ruane): I am extremely concerned that 31,142 pupils from 328 schools were affected by the error in the computer-based InCAS General Maths assessment tool. Of the pupils affected, the error in the age related results of 20, 472 pupils was 5 months or less. It is estimated that incorrect results were shared with the parents of a maximum of 10,000 pupils.

Rinne an tseirbhís oideachais sa tuaisceart conradh leis an Ionad um Mheasúnú agus Monatóireacht (CEM) de chuid Ollscoil Durham an córas measúnaithe InCAS a fhorbairt agus a riar. Mar gheall ar an aischothú a fuarthas ó roinnt bheag príomhoidí, rinneadh seiceálacha ar na torthaí measúnaithe arna iarraidh sin ag CCEA. Le linn na seiceálacha seo d'aimsigh an tIonad um Mheasúnú agus Monatóireacht an earráid in oibriú an chórais InCAS. Ní raibh feidhm aici seo ar chórais ná ar nósanna imeachta CCEA agus is de bharr dianseasmhacht CCEA gur tháinig an earráid seo chun solais. Bhí an t-eolas ceartaithe ar fáil do scoileanna ó 14 Deireadh Fómhair ar aghaidh.

The InCAS assessment tool was developed and is administered by the University of Durham's Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM) under contract from the education service here. Acting in response to feedback from a small number of principals, CCEA requested checks be carried out on these assessment outcomes. It was during these checks that the CEM discovered the error in their operation of the InCAS system. CCEA systems and procedures have not been compromised and indeed it was largely due to CCEA's persistence that the fault came to light. The corrected information has been available to schools from 14 October.

Following this error, I asked CCEA for a full report on the circumstances that led to this problem and for assurances that such errors would not happen again. I was therefore disappointed that, despite assurances obtained from the Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring at Durham University, my Department was made aware, late on Friday, 23 October, that a further error had been discovered as a result of monitoring by CCEA and feedback from certain of our principals and teachers.

This was a technical error, reported by CEM to CCEA and relating to additional standardised statistical data on InCAS which may be used by some primary schools. This data is over and above the information which needs to be reported parents, and does not affect that information.

This error affects those schools which accessed the relevant statistical data prior to the error being discovered. Up to 274 schools could be affected as there were 274 hits on the relevant part of the website containing this data. However, this is the maximum number as some schools may have accessed the website more than once.

Immediate action was taken to ensure that this error was rectified, and the correct information has been available to schools from Wednesday, 28 October.

It is essential that information used by schools to assess the progress of pupils is accurate and reliable.

I have therefore asked CCEA to commission an immediate audit by an independent third party to determine exactly what went wrong and how any recurrence might be prevented. In addition, to ensure that there is continued confidence in diagnostic assessment I intend to set up a working group to consider how best to address this and to support schools in using diagnostic assessment to inform teaching and learning.

More generally, although InCAS has been developed over a number of years and was piloted in a number of schools prior to rolling out, problems have still emerged. These incidents should highlight to all schools the danger of trying to implement a system of testing young children using breakaway tests that have not been validated or trialled.

Interactive Computerised Assessment

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Education for her assessment of the error made by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment concerning the online maths 'Interactive Computerised Assessment'; and what steps she intends to take to ensure that there is no repeat of this error. (AQW 1782/10)

Minister of Education: I was extremely concerned to hear of this error in the computer-based InCAS General Maths assessment tool.

Rinne an tseirbhís oideachais sa tuaisceart conradh leis an Ionad um Mheasúnú agus Monatóireacht (CEM) de chuid Ollscoil Durham an córas measúnaithe InCAS a fhorbairt agus a riar. Tharla an earráid i gcóras theicneolaíocht faisnéise agus cumarsáide an Ionaid um Mheasúnú agus Monatóireacht i nDurham. Ní raibh éifeacht aici seo ar chórais ná ar nósanna imeachta CCEA agus is de bharr dianseasmhacht CCEA gur tháinig an earráid seo chun solais. Ceartaíodh an earráid láithreach ionas go bhfuair na scoileanna ar fad a raibh éifeacht aici orthu, an t-eolas ceart ar dhul chun cinn gach dalta sa Mhatamaitic Ghinearálta.

The InCAS assessment tool was developed and is administered by the University of Durham's 'Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM)', under contract from the education service here. The error occurred within the CEM ICT system in Durham. CCEA systems and procedures have not been compromised and indeed it was largely due to CCEA's persistence that the fault came to light. The fault was corrected immediately so that, from Wednesday, 14 October, all affected schools were in receipt of the correct information about the progress of all pupils in general maths.

The first priority for me was to ensure that the schools affected were contacted by CCEA and given full explanations. That process was completed promptly. In addition, my officials led a briefing with the main teacher unions, and guidance was issued to the affected schools.

Naturally, I was extremely concerned and I asked CCEA for a full report on the circumstances that led to this problem and for assurances that such errors would not happen again. I was therefore disappointed that, despite assurances obtained from the Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring at Durham University, my Department was made aware, late on Friday, 23 October, that a further error had been discovered as a result of monitoring by CCEA and feedback from certain of our principals and teachers.

This was a technical error relating to additional standardised statistical data on InCAS which may be used by some primary schools. This data is over and above the information which needs to be reported parents, and does not affect that information.

Immediate action was taken to ensure that this error was rectified, and the correct information has been available to schools from Wednesday, 28 October. My officials have briefed the main teacher unions: schools have been advised of the position: and, where necessary, support will be available to schools affected by the errors. The Assembly Education Committee has been advised of the position.

It is essential that information used by schools to assess the progress of pupils is accurate and reliable.

I have therefore asked CCEA to commission an immediate audit by an independent third party to determine exactly what went wrong and how any recurrence might be prevented. In addition, to ensure that there is continued confidence in diagnostic assessment I intend to set up a working group to consider how best to address this and to support schools in using diagnostic assessment to inform teaching and learning.

More generally, although InCAS has been developed over a number of years and was piloted in a number of schools prior to rolling out, problems have still emerged. These incidents should highlight to all schools the danger of trying to implement a system of testing young children using breakaway tests that have not been validated or trialled.

Viability Criteria

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Education what is the viability criteria for the establishment of (i) a primary Irish medium school; and (ii) a primary grant aided school. (AQW 2195/10)

Minister of Education: Leagtar amach sa Pholasáí do Scoileanna Inbhuanaithe, a foilsíodh i mí Eanáir 2009, na sé chritéar a úsáidtear le hinmharthanacht scoileanna a athbhreithniú mar a leanas:-

- Eispéireas Oideachasúil d'Ardchaighdeán
- Treochtaí Seasta Rollaithe

- Staid Airgeadais Fhóna
- Ceannaireacht agus Bainistíocht Láidir
- Inrochtaineacht
- Naisc Láidre leis an Phobal.

The Sustainable Schools Policy, published in January 2009, sets out six criteria for use in assessing the educational viability of schools, as follows:-

- Quality Educational Experience
- Stable Enrolment Trends
- Sound Financial Position
- Strong Leadership and Management
- Accessibility
- Strong Links with the Community

A decision on the provision of any Irish primary school will also be made taking into account the Review of Irish Medium Education and the responsibility and onus to facilitate and enhance the Irish language under the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.

People with Dyspraxia

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister of Education to outline (i) the services available to people with dyspraxia in the Western Health and Social Care Trust area; and (ii) what planning and co-ordination exists between education service providers and other agencies to deliver services to this group. (AQW 2232/10)

Minister of Education: I understand that the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety will respond to part (i) of your question relating to the services available to people with dyspraxia in the Western Health and Social Care Trust (your AQW 2227/10 refers). With regard to part (ii) of your question I will reply regarding children and young people.

An inter-board working group consisting of educational psychologists from each of the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) was established in 2003 to plan and co-ordinate the diagnosis and assessment of dyspraxia.

The findings and recommendations of this group were agreed on an inter-disciplinary and inter-agency basis. Multi-agency group meetings were held to facilitate a co-ordinated approach to the assessment and diagnosis of dyspraxia which it was agreed would be called Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD).

As a result of this inter-agency liaison and consultation the booklet “Guidelines towards Inter Agency Agreement (DCD)” was produced. This booklet was distributed to health and education professionals and forms the basis of a co-ordinated approach across the health and education sectors.

Comhoibríonn na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne go rialta le mórán gníomhaireachtaí eile chun comhpháirtíochtaí idirghníomhaireachta idirdhisciplíneacha a chur chun cinn le freastal ar riachtanais páistí agus daoine óga a bhfuil Neamhord Forbartha Comhordaithe acu, lena n-áirítear clinicí forbartha páistí, foirne tacaíochta ilghníomhaireachta, teiripe urlabhra agus teanga, teiripe iompraíochta agus síceolaíthe cliniciúla.

ELBs regularly liaise with many other agencies including occupational therapy, child development clinics, multi-agency support teams, speech and language therapy, behaviour therapy and clinical psychologists to promote inter-agency and inter-disciplinary partnerships to address the needs of children and young people with DCD.

Pensions

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Education how many teachers and college lecturers have been contacted by his Department regarding the overpayment of their pensions; and how many have had their pensions reduced. (AQW 2258/10)

Minister of Education: Seo a leanas líon na múinteoirí agus léachtóirí coláiste a ndearna an Roinn teagmháil leo maidir le ró-íocaíocht a bpinsean agus líon na múinteoirí agus léachtóirí coláiste ar laghdaíodh a bpinsein.

The number of teachers and college lecturers that have been contacted by the Department regarding the overpayment of their pension and the number who have had their pensions reduced, is as follows:

Financial Year	Number of teachers contacted regarding overpayment of pension.	Number of teachers who have had their pensions reduced.
2008/09	557	538
2009/10	43	21

Blind and Partially-Sighted Pupils

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Education what steps are being taken to ensure that all text books are accessible to blind and partially-sighted pupils. (AQW 2259/10)

Minister of Education: Tá tugtha le fios ag Príomhfheidhmeannaigh na mBord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne dom go bhfaigheann na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne ábhair agus téacsleabhair le haghaidh daltaí atá dall agus daltaí a bhfuil fadhbanna radhairc acu ó réimse forleathan sainfhoinse, lena n-áirítear an Cumann Náisiúnta Páistí Dalla, an Institiúid Náisiúnta do Dhaoine Dalla agus Seirbhís Leabharlainne Náisiúnta na hInstitiúide Náisiúnta do Dhaoine Dalla.

I have been advised by the Chief Executives of the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) that ELBs currently access materials and textbooks for blind and partially sighted pupils from a wide range of specialist sources, including, the National Blind Children's Society, the Royal National Institute for Blind People (RNIB) and the RNIB National Library Service.

Each ELB provides textbooks and materials from selected publishers and locally accessed materials such as providing photographic services or adaptive technology services in response to the needs of specific children and young people who are blind or visually impaired.

I recognise, however, that the expediency with which material can be accessed by children and young people is an area where further enhancements to service delivery could be made. In this connection the Regional Strategy Group for Special Educational Needs (RSG) has established a Visual Impairment Working Group the aim of which is to promote a consistent approach across the five ELBs in relation to service delivery in schools. The Working Group has consulted with the voluntary and statutory sectors as well as parents and children. The RNIB has had an active role in this consultation process and has met with the Working Group to discuss outcomes. The Group has reported its findings to RSG and the key recommendation is that a regional resource base is needed, in the context of an overall strategy of achieving full educational inclusion and of improving levels of educational attainment amongst children and young people with a visual impairment.

I can confirm that DE, as part of a strategic stock-take, has prioritised the future development of a centralised resource and has recently secured £190k capital funding. Statutory responsibility for securing provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) rests with the five ELBs, which are responsible under special education legislation for identifying, assessing and in appropriate cases making provision for children with SEN in these areas. Within this context DE has allocated this funding to the Belfast Education and Library Board, on behalf of the five ELBs, to consider how the establishment of a regional resource base may be progressed. It is anticipated that this centralised resource will produce textbooks and study materials in appropriate format for pupils with visual impairment. DE will also be bidding at the next appropriate opportunity for the recurrent funding necessary to staff and maintain this resource although I am sure you will appreciate that no guarantee can be given at this stage as to the outcome of this bid.

Curriculum Advisory and Support Services

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Education to outline how the Curriculum Advisory and Support Services will be delivered when the Education and Skills Authority is established. (AQW 2263/10)

Minister of Education: Beidh an obair a dhéanann an tSeirbhís Chomhairleach agus Tacaíochta don Churaclam mar chuid d'obair na Stiúrthóireachta um Cháilíocht agus Chaighdeáin Oideachais san Údarás um Oideachas agus Scileanna.

The work currently undertaken by the Curriculum Advisory and Support Services will form part of the new Education Quality and Standards Directorate within the Education and Skills Authority. This Directorate will be central to the implementation of 'Every School a Good School' and work is ongoing to determine how best to structure the directorate to ensure the successful implementation of this policy. The Directorate will focus on high quality support at a local level set within a strong regional framework, taking account of international best practice. Any changes to the way in which services are delivered to schools will be phased in over a period of time.

Holy Cross School, Strabane

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Education, in relation to Holy Cross School, Strabane (i) how many pupils have enrolled; and (ii) to detail the total funding for the school, in each of the last three years. (AQW 2270/10)

Minister of Education: Léirítear sa tábla thíos líon na ndaltaí ar an rolla agus an cistiú a tugadh do Choláiste na Croise Naofa, an Srath Bán i ngach bliain airgeadais le trí bliana anuas a bhfuil sonraí iomlána ar fáil dóibh:

In each of the last 3 financial years for which full details are currently held, the pupil enrolment and funding for Holy Cross College, Strabane is shown in the table below:

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Pupil Enrolment*	1,477	1,400	1,369
Total Funding**	£6,343,626	£6,527,889	£9,852,359

Note:

* Pupil enrolment figures reflect the October Schools Census data immediately preceding each financial year.

** The above funding includes both delegated and non-delegated recurrent allocations for each of the 3 years requested and capital funding (2006/07 year only) but excludes other resources such as milk, meals and transport which are not allocated at individual school level.

Curriculum Advisory and Support Services

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Education for her assessment of the Curriculum Advisory and Support Services in each Education and Library Board area. (AQW 2272/10)

Minister of Education: During the 2008/09 financial year, over 90% of the participants who undertook training provided by the Curriculum Advisory Support Services (CASS) rated it as satisfactory or better. The Chief Inspector, in his 2006-2008 report also advised that in-service teacher education focused largely on preparing teachers and leaders to implement the revised curriculum and that the quality of many of the in-service training (INSET) courses was of satisfactory or good quality. However, the Chief Inspector also advised that there was proportionately insufficient investment in the development of the teachers and the educational workforce compared with that invested in changing structures and systems.

Díreofar an t-úrmhúnla forbartha gairmiúla, a bheidh faoi chúram an Údaráis um Oideachas agus Scileanna, ar fheabhsú, ar ardú caighdeán, ar scaipeadh cleachtais mhaith agus ar fhorbairt saineolais go héifeachtach. Oibreoidh mo Roinn go dlúth leis an Údarás um Oideachas agus Scileanna le cinntiú go gcuirfear san áireamh na barúlacha a cuireadh in iúl i dtuarascáil an phríomhchigire.

The new professional development model to be taken forward by the Education and Skills Authority (ESA) will be based on improvement, raising standards, disseminating good practice and effectively building expertise. My Department will work closely with ESA to ensure that account is taken of the concerns expressed within the Chief Inspector's report.

Effective Pre-School Provision in Northern Ireland

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Education for her assessment of the 'Effective Pre-School Provision in Northern Ireland' and 'Effective Provision of Pre-School Education' research publications. (AQW 2273/10)

Minister of Education: Léirigh taighde an EPPNI, a foilsíodh sa bhliain 2006, na héifeachtaí dearfacha a bhíonn ag ardchaighdeán soláthair réamhscolaíochta ar fhorbairt intleachta agus iompraíochta páistí go dtí

deireadh Eochairchéime 1 ar bhunscoil. Thaispeáin taighde an EPPNI gur féidir ról tábhachtach a bheith ag an réamhscolaíocht maidir le dul i ngleic le heisiamh sóisialta agus maidir le cur chun cinn cuimsithe chun tús níos fearr ar bhunscoil a thabhairt do pháistí faoi mhíbhuntáiste, go háirithe.

The EPPNI research, published in 2006, demonstrated the positive effects of high quality pre-school provision on children's intellectual and social behavioural development up to the end of Key Stage 1 in primary school. The EPPNI research indicated that pre-school can play an important part in combating social exclusion and promoting inclusion by offering disadvantaged children, in particular, a better start to primary school. The findings indicated pre-school has a positive impact on children's progress over and above important family influences. It is being taken into account in the development of policy.

The project relating to England (EPPE) has covered similar ground in early years education and care.

Also of interest and benefit to policy making here has been the work of the Centre for Early Childhood Development and Education in the south of Ireland. While the centre has now closed, Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education in Ireland, has been welcomed in the south of Ireland and abroad as a tool which has the potential to transform the provision of early childhood education.

Children with Autism

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Education, in relation to the proposed removal of statements for children with special needs (i) how her Department will safeguard the rights of children with autism; (ii) how children with autism will be assured of the continued education and specialist support they receive from appropriately trained and qualified staff; and (iii) how parents will be consulted and involved in the process. (AQW 2275/10)

Minister of Education: Tá athbhreithniú polasaithe ar Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachais agus Cuimsiú déanta ag an Roinn Oideachais agus d'eisigh sí doiciméad, le haghaidh comhairlithe, i mí Lúnasa 2009 a leag amach ardleibhéal moltaí le haghaidh breathnaithe poiblí. Mairfidh an tréimhse comhairlithe fhoirmiúil go dtí 30 Samhain 2009 agus, i ndiaidh an dáta seo, déanfaidh an Roinn breithniú iomlán ar na freagairtí atá faighte.

The Department of Education has undertaken a policy review of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and inclusion and issued for consultation, in August 2009, a document setting out high level proposals for public consideration. The formal consultation period will run to 30 November 2009, after which the Department will fully consider the responses received. One of a range of proposals is to introduce a Coordinated Support Plan for children and young people with complex or multiple needs and a Personal Learning Plan for all other SEN children. It is proposed that both of these documents would focus on setting and monitoring outcomes for children and young people; a process, which it is considered is not adequately captured in the current system. Until all responses to the policy proposals have been fully considered and decisions made on the proposals that are to be taken forward, it will not be possible to develop the necessary lower level detail of the policy. Overarching principles of the policy will, however, ensure that the rights of children and young people, including those with autism, and their parents, are preserved and that they will receive the specialist support they need as soon as possible following the assessment of that need.

Children with SEN will continued to be managed within the existing SEN framework until any new policy is implemented.

GCSEs

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Education how many children left school without gaining five GCSEs at any grade in each of the last five years. (AQW 2284/10)

Minister of Education: Tá an freagra le fáil sa tábla thíos.

The answer is contained in the table below.

Number of school leavers not gaining five GCSEs at any grade 2003/04 to 2007/08

	Number not gaining five GCSEs at any grade	Percentage not gaining five GCSEs at any grade	Total School Leavers
2003/04	3,632	14.2	25,650

	Number not gaining five GCSEs at any grade	Percentage not gaining five GCSEs at any grade	Total School Leavers
2004/05	3,434	13.6	25,298
2005/06	3,186	12.5	25,528
2006/07	2,797	11.3	24,803
2007/08	2,478	10.3	24,091

Source: School Leavers Survey

GCSEs

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Education how many children left school without gaining a grade D or above in (i) GCSE English; or (ii) GCSE Maths in each of the last five years. (AQW 2285/10)

Minister of Education: Níl na sonraí ar fáil ach do na trí bliana is déanaí siocair gur bailíodh agus gur bailmheasadh eolas ar ábhair aonair don chéad uair sa bhliain acadúil 2005/06. Tá na sonraí ar fáil sa tábla thíos.

The data are only available for the last three years as information on individual subjects was first collected and validated for the 2005/06 academic year. The data are contained in the table below.

Number of pupils not achieving a grade D or above in: (i) GCSE English or (ii) GCSE mathematics 2005/06 to 2007/08

	(i) Pupils not achieving a grade D or above in GCSE English		(ii) Pupils not achieving a grade D or above in GCSE mathematics		Total Leavers
	Number	%	Number	%	Number
2005/06	5,755	22.5	7,789	30.5	25,528
2006/07	5,317	21.4	7,129	28.7	24,803
2007/08	5,033	20.9	6,381	26.5	24,091

Source: School Leavers Survey

Allegations of Harassment or Bullying

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Education how many allegations of harassment or bullying have been reported by staff in her Department in each of the last five years. (AQW 2290/10)

Minister of Education: Ó Eanáir 2004 go Nollaig 2008, rinneadh 5 gearán foirmíuil faoi bhulaíocht agus faoi chiapadh i mo Roinn.

From January 2004 to December 2008, my Department has received 5 formal complaints of harassment and bullying:

2004	None
2005	2
2006	None
2007	None
2008	3

Magherafelt High School Project

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Education, following the public tendering of the Magherafelt High School Project to detail (i) the current status of the project; (ii) how long her Department has been in receipt of

the revised economic appraisal; (iii) when she expects to finally award this project; and (iv) the reasons for the delay in this project. (AQW 2297/10)

Minister of Education: Tá an Roinn ag fanacht ar Bhreithmheas Eacnamaíochta athbhreithnithe ó Bhord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Oirthuaiscirt. Cuireadh athbhreithniú níos luaithe an Bhreithmheasa Eacnamaíochta faoi bhráid na Roinne ar 23 Meán Fómhair agus nuair a breathnaíodh air, cuireadh barúlacha in iúl do Bhord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Oirthuaiscirt ar 27 Deireadh Fómhair. Ní hé mo Roinn an t-údarás conraitheoireachta agus, mar sin, níl sí freagrach as an chonradh a bhronnadh. Beidh sé seo faoi chúram Bhord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Oirthuaiscirt nuair a bheidh faomhaidh riachtanacha an Bhreithmheasa Eacnamaíochta réidh.

The Department is currently awaiting a revised Economic Appraisal (EA) from the North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB). An earlier revision of the EA was submitted to the Department on 23 September 2009 and following its consideration comments were provided to the NEELB on 27 October. My Department is not the contracting authority and is not therefore responsible for awarding the contract. This will be a matter for the NEELB and, from 2010, ESA when the necessary approvals for the EA are in place.

Every School A Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Inclusion

Mrs C Hanna asked the Minister of Education if the proposals outlined in her Department's consultation document 'Every School A Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Inclusion' will result in fewer classroom assistants being employed in schools. (AQW 2346/10)

Minister of Education: Ardleibhéal tograí le haghaidh forbartha polasaí sa réimse is ea na tograí reatha atá leagtha amach sa doiciméad 'Gach Scoil ina Scoil Mhaith: An Bealach Chun Tosaigh do Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachais agus Chuimsiú'. Is iad na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne agus scoileanna i gcomhar le tuismitheoirí a dhéanann cinntí faoi láthair ar leibhéal an tsoláthair atá ar fáil do pháistí a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta oideachais acu, lena n-áirítear soláthar chúnamh ranga.

The current proposals set out in the document 'Every School a Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion' represent high level proposals for policy development in this area. Decisions regarding the level of educational provision to be made for children with special educational needs, including the provision of classroom assistance, is currently determined by the Education and Library Boards and schools in conjunction with parents. While the current proposals intend to enable mainstream schools to have greater flexibility in adapting provision and the increased capacity to meet the educational needs of children within the resources available to them, they will not in themselves determine the provision to be made. The type and level of the educational provision to be made will continue to be a matter for the professionals working with the children.

Every School A Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Inclusion

Mrs C Hanna asked the Minister of Education what assurance she can provide that a higher level of multi-disciplinary support will be provided to take forward the proposals outlined in her Department's consultation document 'Every School A Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Inclusion'. (AQW 2348/10)

Minister of Education: Tacaíonn na moltaí atá leagtha amach i ndoiciméad comhairliúcháin na Roinne Oideachais: 'Gach Scoil ina Scoil Mhaith: An Bealach chun Tosaigh do Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachais agus Chuimsiú', tacaíonn siad le hobair fheabhsaithe ilghníomhaireachta agus ildisciplíneach chun riachtanais mheasúnaithe na bpáistí agus na ndaoine óga a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta oideachais acu a bhaint amach.

The proposals outlined in the Departments of Education's consultation document: 'Every School A Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion', support improved multi-disciplinary and multi-agency working in order to meet the assessed needs of children and young people with special educational needs. It is envisaged that this will be facilitated by memoranda of understanding or service level agreements with relevant partners. Following the completion of the formal consultation period at the end of November 2009, the Department will fully consider the responses received and will then begin to develop the necessary lower level detail. This will be taken forward through the Education and Skills Authority structures and detailed

engagement with other statutory bodies with responsibility for putting in place the non-educational provision required to fully need assessed needs. This will include the support provided by health professionals for children and young people with special educational needs is a matter for the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS). I can provide an assurance that I will make every effort to ensure that the necessary levels of multidisciplinary supports can be made available, before policy proposals are moved forward.

Special Educational Needs

Mrs C Hanna asked the Minister of Education if extra staff will be employed in schools to meet the additional responsibility of providing for special educational needs. (AQW 2349/10)

Minister of Education: Tabharfaidh mé freagra ar an cheist seo i gcomhthéacs an chomhairliúcháin reatha ar an pholasáí: Gach Scoil ina Scoil Mhaith; An Bealach Chun Tosaigh do Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachais agus Chuimsiú. I ndiaidh athbhreithnithe ar Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachais (SEN) agus Chuimsiú, táimid ag moladh gur chóir go raibh scoileanna níos ábalta freastal ar riachtanais measúnaithe na bpáistí agus na ndaoine óga i scoileanna príomhshrutha, gan iallach orthu tacaíocht sheachtrach a lorg.

I am addressing this question from the context of the current policy consultation: Every School a Good School; The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion. Following a review of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Inclusion, it is a proposal that schools would have a greater capacity to meet the assessed needs of children and young people in mainstream schools, without the need to seek external supports. Under the current SEN framework, schools already have responsibility for providing for assessed needs for those enrolled there. It is proposed that, instead of mainstream schools having to wait in many cases for external assessment to identify the provision that they should make, school staff would be trained to better identify and meet those needs. To facilitate this, a comprehensive capacity building programme for schools would be developed and delivered in advance of the implementation of any new policy.

Every School A Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Inclusion

Mrs C Hanna asked the Minister of Education, following her Department's consultation document 'Every School A Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Inclusion', what assurance can be given that a higher level of multi-disciplinary support will be provided by health professionals. (AQW 2350/10)

Minister of Education: Tacaíonn na moltaí atá leagtha amach i ndoiciméad comhairliúcháin na Roinne Oideachais: 'Gach Scoil ina Scoil Mhaith: An Bealach chun Tosaigh do Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachais agus Chuimsiú', tacaíonn siad le hobair fheabhsaithe ilghníomhaireachta agus ildisciplíneach chun riachtanais mheasúnaithe na bpáistí agus na ndaoine óga a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta oideachais acu a bhaint amach.

The proposals outlined in the Departments of Education's consultation document: 'Every School A Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion', support improved multi-disciplinary and multi-agency working in order to meet the assessed needs of children and young people with special educational needs. It is envisaged that this will be facilitated by memoranda of understanding or service level agreements with relevant partners. Following the completion of the formal consultation period at the end of November 2009, the Department will fully consider the responses received and will then begin to develop the necessary lower level detail. This will be taken forward through the Education and Skills Authority structures and detailed engagement with other statutory bodies with responsibility for putting in place the non-educational provision required to fully need assessed needs. This will include the support provided by health professionals for children and young people with special educational needs is a matter for the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS). I can provide an assurance that I will make every effort to ensure that the necessary levels of multidisciplinary supports can be made available, before policy proposals are moved forward.

Mobile Classrooms

Mr F Molloy asked the Minister of Education to list primary schools where more than 80% of classrooms are mobile classrooms; and what action she is taking to replace these with permanent buildings. (AQW 2353/10)

Minister of Education: Liostaítear sa tábla seo a leanas na bunscoileanna sin ina bhfuil 80% de na seomraí ranga ina seomraí ranga soghluaiste. Tá roinnt scéimeanna ag céimeanna éagsúla pleanála chun seomraí ranga soghluaiste a athsholáthar. Cé gur mhian leis an Roinn go mbeidh íslíú ar líon na seomraí ranga soghluaiste seo, ní féidir é seo a dhéanamh ach leis na hacmhainní airgeadais atá ar fáil.

The following table lists those primary schools where more than 80% of classrooms are mobile classrooms. There are a number of schemes at various stages of planning for replacement of mobile classrooms. Whilst my Department would wish to see a decrease in the number of these mobiles, this can only be achieved within the confines of available financial resources.

School Name	Address	Plans for Replacement Permanent Build
Scoil an Droichid	Cooke Street, Belfast	Officials are currently in discussion with InaG regarding future plans.
Gaelscoil na Mona	Mona Link, Belfast	This school has not reached capital viability level.
Bunscoil Cholmcille	Steelstown Road, Derry	Scheme at Feasibility Study stage
Gaelscoil Uí Dhochartaigh	Ballycolman Estate, Strabane	Project manager being appointed to take forward major capital work scheme.
Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir	Lecky Road, Brandywell, Derry	Project manager being appointed to take forward major capital work scheme.
Gaelscoil na gCrann	Dun Uladh Cultural Centre, Ballynamullan Road, Omagh	This school has not reached capital viability level.
Omagh Integrated Primary School	Dergmoney Road, Omagh	Announced for future capital funding project.
Roe Valley Integrated Primary School	Roe Mill Road, Limavady	No plans at the present time
Crossroads Primary School	Drumgarner Road, Kilrea	Major capital work being considered.
Gaelscoil an Chaistil	Kiln's Road, Ballycastle	This school has recently been provided with new modular units which have a 25 year plus lifespan.
Braidside Integrated Primary School	Frys Road, Ballymena	Economic appraisal stage for major capital work
Maine Integrated Primary School	Church View, Randalstown	This school has not yet reached capital viability level.
Corran Integrated Primary School	Black Cave Road, Larne	Major capital work at Feasibility Study stage
Scoil na Fuiseoige	Summerhill Road, Belfast	Announced for future capital funding
Millennium Integrated Primary School	Belfast Road, Saintfield	No plans at the present time.
Kingsmills Primary School	Drumnahunshin Road, Whitecross, Armagh	No plans at the present time.
St Mary's Primary School	123 Granemore Road Tassagh, Armagh	Feasibility Study stage for major capital work
Killowen Primary School	Killowen Old Road, Rostrevor	No plans at the present time.
St Peter's Primary School	Collegelands Road, Charlemont, Moy	Potential for federation with other schools in the area being considered.
Gaelscoil Uí Néill	Washing Bay Road, Coalisland	Project manager being appointed to take forward major capital work scheme.
Phoenix Integrated Primary School	Chapel Street, Cookstown	No plans at the present time.

Maghera High School Site

Mr B Armstrong asked the Minister of Education what plans exist for the future use of the former Maghera High School site. (AQW 2354/10)

Minister of Education: Tá Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Oirthuaiscirt ag breathnú úsáidí amach anseo d'iar-shuíomh Ardscoil Mhachaíre Rátha faoi láthair. Sa chás nach sainaithneoidh Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Oirthuaiscirt (ná an tÚdarás um Oideachas agus Scileanna ó 1 Eanáir 2010) úsáid mhalartach

inmharthana, dearbhófar é mar shuíomh barrachais agus diúscrófar é de réir threoir an Lárionaid Comhairle i dtaca le diúscairt réadmhaoine barrachais na hearnála poiblí i dtuaisceart na hÉireann.

The North Eastern Education & Library Board (NEELB) is currently exploring future uses of the former Maghera High School site. In the event that neither the NEELB (nor the Education and Skills Authority from 1 January 2010) identify a viable alternative use, the site will be declared surplus and disposed of in accordance with Central Advisory Unit guidance on the disposal of surplus public sector property in the north of Ireland.

Young Men's Health

Ms D Purvis asked the Minister of Education how schools teach young men about their health, including raising awareness of (i) testicular cancer; and (ii) prostate cancer. (AQW 2358/10)

Minister of Education: Cuimsíonn an curaclam athbhreithnithe atá i bhfeidhm thar gach bliainghrúpa i ngach scoil dheontaschúnta snáithe nua “Foghlaim don Saol agus don Obair” ag leibhéal iarbhunscoile. Níl an curaclam athbhreithnithe chomh saintreorach agus a bhí agus cuidíonn sé le múinteoirí an curaclam a oiriúnú chun freastal ar riachtanais a ndaltaí. Tá sé faoi na scoileanna a shocrú cad iad na hacmhainní a úsáideann siad chun an curaclam a sheachadadh.

The revised curriculum, which is now in place in all year groups in all grant aided schools, includes a new strand “Learning for Life and Work” at post primary level.

The revised curriculum is less prescriptive than before and allows schools/teachers to tailor the curriculum to meet the needs of their pupils. It is up to schools as to which resources they use to deliver the curriculum.

Through the Personal Development/Personal Health strand of Learning for Life and Work (LLW), pupils have the opportunity to explore the concept of health as the development of a whole person and to investigate the influences on physical and emotional/mental personal health. Home Economics is also a discrete strand of LLW and, through the exploration of healthy eating, pupils develop the knowledge, understanding and practical skills required for healthy living.

Through LLW, schools can also become involved in projects offered by statutory and non-statutory health groups on specific health issues. For example Action Cancer runs a “Health Action” programme for both boys and girls from 11-18 years olds which covers strong, core messages on early detection and cancer prevention and information on prevention and detection can be included as appropriate to the age and gender of the group.

Backlog of School Maintenance

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Education what action her Department is taking to reduce the backlog of school maintenance. (AQW 2375/10)

Minister of Education: Tá na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne freagrach as cothabháil na Scoileanna Rialaithe agus na Scoileanna faoi Chothabháil. Cé go socraíonn mo Roinn leithdháiltí buiséid iomlána do na Boird, déanann na Boird féin cinneadh ar an méid maoinithe a chaitheann siad ar a mbuiséid chothabhála agus ar sheirbhísí eile.

Education and Library Boards have responsibility for the maintenance of Controlled and Maintained schools. Whilst my Department determines the overall centre budget allocations for the Boards, it is for the Boards to determine, along with other services to be provided, how much funding it attributes to its maintenance budget.

As you may be aware from my press release of 6th March on the 2009/10 Education Budget, my Department set aside an additional £5 million for maintenance, and this was allocated to Education and Library Boards on 1st September this year to help ease pressures in this area. Education and Library Boards are keen to address the maintenance backlog, and have allocated £21.535 million to maintenance works in the current financial year, including the £5 million recently allocated by my Department.

I have also continued to support bids to the Executive, through the formal in year monitoring process, for additional funding on maintenance. Unfortunately these bids have not been successful.

Cat Litter Being Dumped

Mr A McQuillan asked the Minister of Education if she is aware of cat litter, used for cleaning laundered diesel, being dumped on North Eastern Education and Library Board grounds in the Lodge Road area of Coleraine, and if so, at what cost is the disposal of cat litter and the cleaning of the grounds to the Board.

(AQW 2381/10)

Minister of Education: On 16 March 2009 illegal dumping was discovered at the North Eastern Education and Library Board's Coleraine Grounds Maintenance Depot.

Cuireadh in iúl do na húdaráis ábhartha agus rinneadh gníomh gan mhoill chun uiscebhealaigh ar na gaobhair a chosaint ó dhramhaíl fhabhtaithe. Coimisiúnaíodh sainchomhlacht chun nádúr agus staid an éillithe a mheas. Léirigh torthaí scrúdaithe gur éillíodh cuid mhór talaimh mar gheall ar leachtanna ó mhálaí a raibh easair chait iontu.

The relevant authorities were notified and steps were taken immediately to prevent leeching of contaminated waste into nearby waterways. A specialist company was commissioned to determine the nature and state of contamination. Test results revealed that a large area of land at the depot had been contaminated by liquids from bags containing cat litter.

In total, around 200 tonnes of contaminated waste had to be removed. The site is subject to on-going monitoring.

The total cost of action taken was £47,784.

Education and Skills Authority

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of Education if she still plans to have the Education and Skills Authority in place by 1 January 2010.

(AQW 2386/10)

Minister of Education: Dhíreoinn aird an chomhalta ar na freagraí a thug mé ar AQO 280/10 agus 285/10 do Chomhaltaí Aontroim Thuaidh agus Iarthar Thír Eoghain, an tUrramach R Coulter agus Pat Doherty faoi seach, a foilsíodh sa tuairisc oifigiúil dé hAoine, 6 Samhain.

I refer the Member to the answers to AQOs 280/10 and 285/10 that I provided to the Members for North Antrim and West Tyrone, Rev Dr R Coulter and Pat Doherty respectively, published in the official report on Friday 06 November.

St Columba's Primary School, Sixtowns, Draperstown

Mr F Molloy asked the Minister of Education to provide an update on the proposal for a new building at St Columba's primary school, Sixtowns, Draperstown.

(AQW 2400/10)

Minister of Education: It is critically important that investment in the education estate is consistent with and supportive of the policy framework I am putting in place. At the heart of this is Every School a Good School, Sustainable Schools, the Revised Curriculum and the Entitlement Framework. As area based planning develops, these policies will drive the reshaping of our estate and the consequential investment plans.

Mar Aire Oideachais, caithfidh mé a chinntiú go soláthraíonn na hacmhainní substaintiúla atá á n-infheistiú againn faoi láthair, go soláthraíonn siad na torthaí is fearr do na páistí agus an luach is fearr don cháiníocóir. Ar 15 Deireadh Fómhair 2009, d'fhógair mé go raibh athbhreithniú ar na tionscadail reatha údaraithe agam, an tionscadal do St Columba's Primary School san áireamh, lena dheimhniú go bhfuil siad ar fad i gcomhréir leis an chreat beartais agus dá bhrí sin go mbeidh siad inmharthana agus inbhuanaithe san fhadtréimhse.

As Minister for Education, I need to ensure that the substantial resources we are now investing produce the best outcomes for children and value for the taxpayer. On 15 October 2009, I announced that I have commissioned a review of current projects, including that for St Columba's Primary School, to validate that all are consistent with the policy framework and hence will be viable and sustainable in the long term.

Building Programme for St Peter's Primary School, Charlemont

Mr F Molloy asked the Minister of Education to provide an update on the status of the building programme for St Peter's primary school, Charlemont, given that enrolment has increased by over 250% since the school was formed after the amalgamation of Loughgall primary school and Collegelands primary school in 1996.

(AQW 2406/10)

Minister of Education: Chuir Comhairle na Scoileanna Caitliceacha faoi Chothabháil in iúl go bhfuil sí ag iniúchadh na rogha le múnla cónaidhme a cheapadh do na trí scoil i bparóiste Loch gCál, eadhon Scoil Pheadar, Scoil Mhuire agus Scoil Eoin. Tá mo Roinn, mar sin, ag fanacht le moltaí daingne ar an cheist seo ó Chomhairle na Scoileanna Caitliceacha faoi Chothabháil.

The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) has advised that it is currently examining the option of a federated model for the three schools in the parish of Loughgall, namely St Peter's, St Mary's and St John's. My Department is, therefore, awaiting firm proposals for this area from CCMS. The proposals will be considered in the context of the Sustainable Schools Policy and Area-Based Planning to ensure that any potential investment will produce the best outcomes for children and value for the taxpayer

Primary Schools with an Increased Enrolment

Mr C Boylan asked the Minister of Education to list primary schools with an increased enrolment greater than 100% since the academic year 1999/00, including the percentage increase over that period, but excluding new schools, amalgamations or federations formed during that time.

(AQW 2425/10)

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

The information requested is listed in the table below.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS THAT HAVE HAD OVER 100% INCREASE IN ENROLMENT FROM 1999/00 - 2008/09

School Name	2008/09 Enrolment	% increase from 1999/00
Brownlee Primary School	191	103
Christ The Redeemer, Dunmurry	591	1,638
Cortamlet Primary School	85	113
Culmore Primary School	82	141
Kilmoyle Primary School	126	129
Kirkinriola Primary School	99	183
Kirkistown Primary School	113	109
Spires Integrated	202	248
St Brigid's Primary School Tirkane	145	174
St Patrick's Primary School, Garvagh	150	159
St Peters Primary School, Moy	125	127

Source: School census.

Note:

1. Figures based on pupils in nursery, reception and Year 1 – 7 classes in schools.

Autistic Spectrum Disorder Advisory Service

Mrs C Hanna asked the Minister of Education if there are plans for an Autistic Spectrum Disorder Advisory Service which schools and parents can access.

(AQW 2426/10)

Minister of Education: Following publication of the 'Report of the Task Group on Autism (2002)', the Department of Education funded the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) to establish an inter-board autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) group to provide a support programme to children on the autistic spectrum within

each ELB. As a consequence, an ASD advisory service was established in each ELB to enhance existing ASD services.

Tá rochtain ag scoileanna agus tuismitheoirí i ngach Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlaine ar réimse forleathan seirbhísí agus acmhainní, lena n-áirítear comhairle agus eolas, traenáil múinteora agus tuismitheora, cuairteanna comhairlithe ar scoileanna agus tuismitheoirí, agus tacaíocht dalta aonair.

In all ELBs schools and parents can access an extensive range of services and resources including advice and information, teacher and parent training, consultation visits to schools and parents and individual pupil support.

Autistic Spectrum Disorder

Mrs C Hanna asked the Minister of Education how her Department will guarantee the rights of children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and their specific neurological condition, under the proposals outlined in her Department's consultation document 'Every School A Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion'. (AQW 2428/10)

Minister of Education: The key principles of the Department of Education's proposals for children with special educational needs, including those with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), are contained in the current consultation document. These underpinning principles include: the continued promotion of an inclusive ethos in schools; the provision of a continuum of provision to meet a diversity of need; quality intervention and provision tailored to the needs of individuals and focused on improved outcomes for those facing barriers to learning; and all professionals, including teachers, have the skills and knowledge to allow early identification and intervention to facilitate improved outcomes.

Trí chreat feabhsaithe, ar nós an chinn a bhfuil á bheartú sna tograí nua, a chaomhnófaí cearta na bpáistí a bhfuil neamhord ar speictream an uathachais acu. Déileálfar an creat reatha um Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachais le páistí a bhfuil neamhord speictream an uathachais acu go dtí go gcuirfear aon togra nua i bhfeidhm.

It would be through an improved framework, such as that envisaged by the new proposals, that the rights of children with ASD would be preserved.

Children with ASD will continue to be managed within the existing SEN framework until any new policy is implemented.

Autistic Spectrum Disorder

Mrs C Hanna asked the Minister of Education how her Department will continue to offer children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder specialist support from trained and qualified staff under the proposals outlined in her Department's consultation document 'Every School A Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion'. (AQW 2429/10)

Minister of Education: I measc réimse na moltaí atá cuimsithe i ndoiciméad comhairliúcháin na Roinne Oideachais: 'Gach Scoil ina Scoil Mhaith – An Bealach Chun Tosaigh do Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachais agus Chuimsiú', tá moladh ann le Plean Comhordaithe Tacaíochta a thabhairt isteach do pháistí agus do dhaoine óga a bhfuil riachtanais chasta nó ilriachtanais acu agus le Plean Foghlama Pearsanta a thabhairt isteach do gach páiste eile a bhfuil Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachais acu.

One of a range of proposals contained in the Department of Education's consultation document: 'Every School a Good School - The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion', is to introduce a Coordinated Support Plan for children and young people with complex or multiple needs and a Personal Learning Plan for all other SEN children. It is proposed that both of these documents, in addition to setting out the special educational support to be provided, would provide a focus on setting and monitoring outcomes for children and young people; a process, which it is considered is not adequately captured in the current system. After all responses to the policy proposals have been fully considered and decisions made on the proposals that are to be taken forward, the Department will develop the necessary lower level detail of the policy. Overarching principles of the policy will, however, ensure that the rights of children and young people, including those with autism, and their parents, are preserved and that they will receive the specialist support they need as soon as possible following the assessment of that need.

Provision for children with autism will continued to be managed within the existing SEN framework until any new policy is implemented.

Every School A Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion

Mrs C Hanna asked the Minister of Education what guarantee her Department can give to uphold parents rights to be consulted, to challenge decisions and hold professionals to account under the proposals outlined in her Department's consultation document 'Every School A Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion'. (AQW 2472/10)

Minister of Education: It is a key underpinning principle of the current policy proposals for a revised special educational needs (SEN) framework that the knowledge, views, experience and involvement of parents and carers will play a vital role in the development and maintenance of any programme put in place to support a child.

Trí chreat feabhsaithe, ar nós an chinn a bhfuil á bheartú sna tograí nua, a chaomhnófaí cearta na bpáistí a bhfuil riachtanais speisialta oideachais acu agus a dtuismitheoirí. Ní chuimsíonn an doiciméad comhairliúcháin 'Gach Scoil ina Scoil Mhaith: An Bealach chun Tosaigh do Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachais agus Chuimsiú' aon togra a chaolódh an ceart atá ag tuismitheoirí a agóid in aghaidh cinnidh ar sholáthar riachtanais speisialta oideachais.

It would be through an improved framework, such as that envisaged by the new proposals, that the rights of children with SEN and their parents would be preserved.

The consultation document 'Every School a Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion' includes no proposals that dilute the rights of parents to challenge decisions about SEN provision. It is envisaged that a right of appeal through the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal will remain.

Every School A Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion

Ms A Lo asked the Minister of Education if there will be sufficient funding and training in place to meet the proposals outlined in her Department's consultation document 'Every School A Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion'. (AQW 2490/10)

Minister of Education: Tá £25 milliún sa bhreis leithdháilte agam chun na tograí polasaithe san Athbhreithniú ar Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachais agus Chuimsiú a chur i bhfeidhm. Tá sé beartaithe go n-úsáidfear an cistiú a leithdháilteadh sa bhliain 2009/10 le haghaidh imeachtaí réamhfheidhmithe do chlár um fhorbairt acmhainne do scoileanna agus suíomhanna réamhscoile, agus leithdháilfear an comhardú le haghaidh rollú amach an traenála agus na forbartha sin ón scoilbhliain 2010/2011.

I have allocated an additional £25 million to commence implementation of the Review of SEN and Inclusion policy proposals.

It is envisaged that the funding allocated during 2009/10 will be used for pre-implementation activities on a capacity building programme for schools and pre-school settings and the balance will be allocated for the roll out of that training and development from the 2010/2011 school year.

First Aid Training

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Education if her Department has considered revising teachers' conditions of employment to include mandatory First Aid training. (AQW 2508/10)

Minister of Education: Cé go n-éilíonn na Rialacháin um Shábháilteacht agus Sláinte (Garchabhair) 1982 go soláthraítear trealamh, áiseanna agus pearsanra imleor oiriúnach i dtaca le garchabhair, ní shonraíonn siad an méid cruinn pearsanra garchabhrach atá riachtanach. Dhíreoinn d'aird ar an fhreagra a thug mé do Chomhalta Aontroim Thoir, Alastair Ross ar AQW 913/10, a foilsíodh sa Tuairisc Oifigiúil ar 16 Deireadh Fómhair 2009.

No. While the Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations (NI) 1982 require the provision of adequate and appropriate equipment, facilities and personnel in relation to first-aid, they do not specify the exact number of first-aid personnel required. I refer you to the reply I gave the Member for East Antrim, Alastair Ross to AQW 913/10, published in the Official Report on 16 October 2009.

Conduct of Children at School

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Education what criteria are in place to control the conduct of children at school; and to outline the disciplinary steps schools can take. (AQW 2510/10)

Minister of Education: Every school must have a written discipline policy which includes anti-bullying measures and is set in the context of the school's overall pastoral care responsibilities. This policy will determine the measures (which can include rules and the means of enforcing them) which the school will take to promote self-discipline and respect for authority among the pupils, encourage good behaviour and secure an acceptable standard of behaviour.

The Department's publication "Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour" (available on the Department's website at www.deni.gov.uk/ppbehaviour-4.pdf) provides guidance to schools in developing and renewing such policies.

Disciplinary steps or sanctions which schools have found useful include withdrawal of privileges; additional work; restriction of access to extra-curricular facilities or activities; detention; placement on report; temporary removal to another class or learning support unit; or, in extreme cases, suspension, or expulsion following suspension.

Cé go bhfuil an araíonacht agus smachtbhannaí riachtanach in amanna chun iompar páistí a rialú, is tábhachtach a chuimhneamh go gcaithfear cothrom folláin a fháil idir smachtbhannaí agus luaíochtaí chun dea-iompar a spreagadh agus chun ord a choinneáil. Is féidir le córas luaíochtaí agus dreasachtaí bheith ina mhodh tábhachtach do mheonta dearfacha a spreagadh.

It is important to note that whilst discipline and sanctions are sometimes necessary to control the conduct of children, a healthy balance needs to be struck between sanctions and rewards to encourage good behaviour and maintain the rules. A system of rewards and incentives can provide a powerful tool to encourage positive attitudes.

Provision of Early Years Teachers

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 1155/10, what action she intends to take to encourage the Boards of Governors of schools to increase the provision of early years teachers to reduce class sizes in Key Stage one, rather than increasing the number of classroom assistants. (AQW 2532/10)

Minister of Education: I have given priority to increasing funding to front-line school services and to increasing the proportion of available funding going to primary schools. The Local Management of Schools arrangements allow a school's Boards of Governors flexibility to take decisions on class sizes as part of their responsibilities for determining their school's staffing complement and for managing its budget.

Tugann sé seo deis do Ghobharnóirí socrú a dhéanamh ar an dóigh a n-úsáideann siad a maoiniú tarmiligthe chun uaséifeacht a bhaint amach de réir sainriachtanais agus príomhthosaíochtaí a scoileanna, lena n-áirítear socrú ar líon na múinteoirí agus na foirne neamhmhúinteora.

This gives Governors the opportunity to determine how they use their delegated funding to maximum effect in accordance with their school's specific needs and priorities. This includes determining the number of teachers and non-teaching staff. Decisions by schools on class sizes must also be taken in certain cases in accordance with specific statutory limitations and educational and health and safety policy considerations.

Autistic Spectrum Disorder Advisory Service

Ms A Lo asked the Minister of Education if there will be an Autism Spectrum Disorder advisory service which schools and parents can access under the proposals outlined in her Department's consultation document 'Every School A Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion'. (AQW 2542/10)

Minister of Education: The Review of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Inclusion makes high level policy proposals for a revised SEN framework. It does not, however, make recommendations about the strategic approach currently being followed across Education and Library Boards (ELBs) for the delivery of individual special educational services, such as those for children with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD).

As part of the ELBs strategic approach to ASD services, the Department of Education has funded the establishment and maintenance of an inter-board ASD group, which provides a support programme for children on the autistic spectrum within each ELB; this includes the provision of an ASD advisory service.

Tá rochtain ag scoileanna agus tuismitheoirí i ngach Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne ar réimse forleathan seirbhísí agus acmhainní, lena n-áirítear comhairle agus eolas, traenáil múinteora agus tuismitheora, cuairteanna comhairlithe ar scoileanna agus tuismitheoirí, agus tacaíocht dalta aonair. Ní dhéanann an tAthbheithniú ar Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachais aon mholadh leis an chur chuige straitéiseach a athrú.

In all ELBs, schools and parents can access an extensive range of services and resources including advice and information, teacher and parent training, consultation visits to schools and parents and individual pupil support.

The Review of SEN and Inclusion is currently out for consultation and has been extended until 30 November 2009.

Exceptional Closures

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Education how many days each (i) primary school; and (ii) secondary school has been closed for exceptional reasons in the North Down constituency, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 2561/10)

Minister of Education: In imthosca eisceachtúla, nuair atá druidim scoile riachtanach ar chúiseanna nach bhfuil neart ag gobharnóirí scoile orthu, is féidir leis an Roinn íslíú a fhaomhadh ar an méid laethanta ba chóir don scoil bheith ar oscailt.

In exceptional circumstances, where the closing of a school becomes necessary for reasons outside the control of the school governors, the Department can grant approval for a reduction in the required number of days during which a school should be in operation.

In the 2004 year, the Department did not approve an exceptional closure for any primary or post-primary school in the North Down constituency. Lists of the primary and post-primary schools in the North Down constituency for which the Department approved exceptional closures in the 2005-2008 years are provided below.

EXCEPTIONAL CLOSURES – PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NORTH DOWN CONSTITUENCY

Year	School	No. of exceptional closure days
2005	Kilmaine Primary School	2
2006	Bangor Central Integrated Primary School	1
2006	Groomsport Primary School	1
2007	Groomsport Primary School	1
2008	Towerview Primary School	2

EXCEPTIONAL CLOSURES – POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NORTH DOWN CONSTITUENCY

Year	School	No. of exceptional closure days
2007	Bangor Academy and Sixth Form College	1
2008	Bangor Academy and Sixth Form College	5

School Non-Attendance

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to provide a breakdown of figures relating to school non-attendance during the 2008/09 academic year. (AQW 2562/10)

Minister of Education: The requested information is not yet available.

Detailed information on pupil attendance for the 2008/09 school year was collected from schools as part of the school census exercise in October. These detailed statistics which include the reasons for absence are undergoing

analysis and will be published in the new year. Statistics for the 2007/08 school year can be viewed at the Department's website at www.deni.gov.uk/school_attendance_-_statistical_press_release_200708.pdf.

Bailíonn an Roinn staitisticí i dtaca le líon na n-atreoruithe mar gheall ar neamhfhreastal ó gach Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne ar bhonn bliantúil. Tá an Roinn ag déanamh anailise ar shonraí a fuarthas ó na Boird don scoilbhliain 2008/09 faoi láthair, agus foilseoidh sí na staitisticí seo sna seachtainí atá romhainn. Tá sonraí don scoilbhliain 2007/08 le fáil ar shuíomh idirlín na Roinne ag www.deni.gov.uk/non-attendance_statistics_2007_08_-_website-2.pdf.

The Department collects statistics annually from each Education and Library Board on the number of referrals for non-attendance. The Department is currently analysing data from the Boards for the 2008/09 school year and will publish these statistics in the coming weeks. The data for the 2007/08 school year can be viewed at the Department's website at www.deni.gov.uk/non-attendance_statistics_2007_08_-_website-2.pdf.

Education and Welfare Service

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to detail the criteria applied, including the threshold, before referring a child to the Education and Welfare Service. (AQW 2564/10)

Minister of Education: Déanfaidh scoil tarchur don tSeirbhís Leasa Oideachais de chuid a bord oideachais agus leabharlainne áitiúil nuair is cúis imní é freastal scoile an dalta nó nuair a thiteann freastal scoile an dalta faoi 80%.

A school will make a referral to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) in its local Education and Library Board when a pupils' school attendance is a cause for concern or when attendance drops below 85%.

The 'threshold' of 85% is used as a guiding tool only and a school can use its own discretion to determine if the non-attendance is an issue that requires external support. This may include consideration of other issues such as a pupil's personal circumstances, a pupil's general condition of health and examining any emerging absence patterns.

Education and Welfare Service

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Education how many children were referred to the Education and Welfare Service, broken down by each key stage, in the 2008/09 academic year. (AQW 2565/10)

Minister of Education: The requested information is not yet available.

Detailed information on pupil attendance for the 2008/09 school year was collected from schools as part of the school census exercise in October. These detailed statistics which include the reasons for absence are undergoing analysis and will be published in the new year. Statistics for the 2007/08 school year can be viewed at the Department's website at www.deni.gov.uk/school_attendance_-_statistical_press_release_200708.pdf.

Bailíonn an Roinn staitisticí i dtaca le líon na n-atreoruithe mar gheall ar neamhfhreastal ó gach Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne ar bhonn bliantúil. Tá an Roinn ag déanamh anailise ar shonraí a fuarthas ó na Boird don scoilbhliain 2008/09 faoi láthair, agus foilseoidh sí na staitisticí seo sna seachtainí atá romhainn. Tá sonraí don scoilbhliain 2007/08 le fáil ar shuíomh idirlín na Roinne ag www.deni.gov.uk/non-attendance_statistics_2007_08_-_website-2.pdf.

The Department collects statistics annually from each Education and Library Board on the number of referrals for non-attendance. The Department is currently analysing data from the Boards for the 2008/09 school year and will publish these statistics in the coming weeks. The data for the 2007/08 school year can be viewed at the Department's website at www.deni.gov.uk/non-attendance_statistics_2007_08_-_website-2.pdf.

Projections for Primary School Numbers

Mr P Butler asked the Minister of Education for her assessment of the Department's projections for primary school numbers over the next five years; and whether there will be an increase in the primary school population. (AQW 2571/10)

Minister of Education: Seo a leanas na réamh-mheastacháin daonra is déanaí a bhí foilsithe ag NISRA, a léiríonn líon na bpáistí a bheidh ag aois bhunscoile sna blianta 2008 go dtí 2014:

The latest population projections published by NISRA show that the projected number of children of primary school age in the years 2008 to 2014 is as follows:

Year	Children aged 4 – 10
2008	160,302
2009	159,590
2010	159,469
2011	161,219
2012	164,724
2013	167,993
2014	171,168

Note:

Projections are 2008-based.

The figures show a projected rise of 10,866 (7%) in the number of children of primary school age between 2008 and 2014.

Sure Start Scheme for North Down

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Education for an update on the Sure Start scheme for North Down.

(AQW 2593/10)

Minister of Education: Is é is aidhm do Thús Cinnte ná obair le tuismitheoirí agus le páistí faoi 4 bliana d'aois chun forbairt fhisiceach, intleachtach agus shóisialta a chothú. Tá seirbhísí á ndírú ar an 20% de na bardaí is mó atá faoi mhíbhuntáiste i dtuaisceart na hÉireann. Níl aon sheirbhís de chuid Tús Cinnte i limistéar Dhún Thuaidh faoi láthair.

Sure Start aims to work with parents and children under the age of 4 to promote the child's physical, intellectual and social development. Services are targeted at the 20% most disadvantaged wards in the north of Ireland. There are currently no Sure Start services in the North Down area.

Home-schooling

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Education how many children are being home-schooled, broken down by Education and Library Board.

(AQW 2619/10)

Minister of Education: Is féidir le tuismitheoirí oideachas baile a roghnú dá bpáistí agus ní bhíonn aon cheanglas dlíthiúil orthu a gcinneadh a chur in iúl don Bhord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne ná don Roinn. Thug na Boird an t-eolas atá sa tábla seo a leanas agus tá sé bunaithe ar eolas a fuarthas go raibh an páiste ag fáil oideachais do pháiste sa bhaile. D'fhéadfaí go bhfuarthas an t-eolas seo ó thuismitheoirí, ó scoil dheireanach an pháiste, ó rannóg aistrithe an Bhoird nó ón tSeirbhís Leasa Oideachais.

Parents can choose to home educate and there is no legal requirement for them to advise their Education and Library Board or the Department of their decision. The information in the following table has been provided by the Boards and is based on notifications received that a child is being home educated. These notifications may have been made by parents, a child's previous school, the Board's transfer department or its Education Welfare Service.

Board Area	Number of home educated children in the 2008/09 school year
BELB	13
NEELB	55
SEELB	41

Board Area	Number of home educated children in the 2008/09 school year
SELB	32
WELB	63

Figures for the current school year will be collected in June 2010.

DEPARTMENT FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING

‘Step Ahead’ Initiative

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what criteria will be applied to determine wage rates in the ‘Step Ahead’ initiative. (AQW 2231/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning (Sir Reg Empey): The ‘Step Ahead’ initiative is funded by the Department, through the Steps to Work programme, but it does not determine wage rates within the initiative. Funding to Lead Contractors fully covers the cost of 30 hours employment for Step Ahead employees at the National Minimum Wage rate and weekly Employers’ National Insurance Contribution. However employers may, if they wish, pay Step Ahead employees wages above the National Minimum Wage rate.

Student Debt

Mr T Burns asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the total amount of debt belonging to students from Northern Ireland which has been written off by the Student Loans Company in each of the last ten years. (AQW 2316/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The total amount of debt belonging to students from Northern Ireland which has been written off in each of the last ten years is detailed in the table below.

Financial Year	Total amount written off ¹
1999/2000	£42,000
2000/2001	£10,000
2001/2002	£50,000
2002/2003	£40,000
2003/2004	£84,000
2004/2005	£83,000
2005/2006	£205,000
2006/2007	£186,000
2007/2008	£225,000
2008/2009	£815,000

This debt encompasses both mortgage style loans and income contingent repayment loans. These loans are cancelled upon death, permanent disability or on the borrower reaching a prescribed age (in the case of loans pre-2006) or passage of time (in the case of loans since 2006).

Steps to Work Programme

Mr D Kennedy asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what is the percentage of ‘drop outs’ in Step 2 of the Steps to Work programme in the County Antrim area in each of the last two years. (AQW 2372/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Steps to Work, the Department's main adult return to work programme, provides a flexible, individually tailored programme of support to assist the unemployed and economically inactive find and sustain employment at the earliest opportunity. The Department does not collate information on those that 'drop out' of Step 2 element of the programme. The programme is aimed at achieving employment outcomes and participants may leave before their expected completion date for a variety of reasons, including taking up employment.

Steps to Work Programme

Mr D Kennedy asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether TWL Training Limited has successfully achieved its programme plans as outlined in its tender for the contract of the Steps to Work programme. (AQW 2374/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Similar to all Steps to Work Lead Contractors, TWL has undergone a two phase inspection by the Education and Training Inspectorate. The second phase was completed in October 2009 and feedback confirms that in most of the areas inspected the quality of training and services provided by TWL is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. A published report is due shortly. The Department will continue to monitor the delivery of TWL's provision.

DEPARTMENT OF ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Energy Prices

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if she can confirm whether energy prices for business customers have increased in the last month, and if so, what consultation took place between her Department and the business community in advance of this increase. (AQW 1964/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Mrs A Foster): The electricity tariff year is from 1st October until 30th September. For the average business customer, prices for the tariff year beginning 1st October 2009 are lower than those for the tariff year beginning October 2008. This is due to lower wholesale energy costs and a one-off rebate of £100million which was distributed across all electricity customers in January 2009. This led to the majority of larger business customers experiencing a decrease in their electricity bills. Increases in customer bills for larger energy users in the last month reflect, in part, the end of the rebate. A detailed explanation of the reasons for the increase has been produced by the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation (NIAUR) and may be seen at:

http://www.niaur.gov.uk/uploads/publications/Background_Briefing_on_NIE_Energy_price_decrease_Sept_2009.pdf.

NIAUR's explanation shows that as a result of lower electricity pool prices in the Single Electricity Market, income for generators is reduced, and through NIE's Power Procurement Business, the long term power generation contracts in Northern Ireland mean that the shortfall in income for generators is met by consumers through the Public Service Obligation (PSO) charges. This of course impacts on the price for domestic and business customers alike. It is unfortunate that Large Energy Users are feeling the burden more as the PSO costs are applied directly in relation to electricity usage, however charging on the basis of usage is deemed most equitable.

NIAUR as the independent energy regulator has the lead role in consulting with industry and others on energy tariff changes, hence while the Department has no direct role in such matters, it has a keen interest in ensuring that energy costs for all consumers are as low as possible.

NIAUR has a statutory duty in relation to electricity tariff setting and has advised that it conducted the following consultations on energy tariffs:

An ETI Committee briefing in May 2009;

Organised a Stakeholder Forum in August 2009 that was attended by energy suppliers, representatives of industry and business, other public organisations and voluntary bodies;

Held individual meetings with business representatives and other individual businesses.

In addition, a further Utility Regulator briefing to businesses on the PSO element of the tariffs and Use of System changes took place on 6th November 2009.

In relation to communication between energy suppliers and their customers, the Utility Regulator has advised that suppliers inform customers when tariff changes take place and therefore should provide information on how the new tariff will affect them.

Energy Price Increase

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what contact her Department has had with the Regulator in advance of the energy price increase in the last month for business customers.

(AQW 1965/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: In relation to the recent round of energy tariff changes my officials had a number of meetings with staff in the Utility Regulator's office during July and August 2009 in advance of the tariff changes in October.

My officials also attended the Utility Regulator's Stakeholder Forum on energy tariff reviews which was held in August 2009 and was attended by energy suppliers, industry and business representatives, other public organizations, and voluntary bodies. This event included discussions around increases in Public Service Obligation Charges and their impact on business electricity customers.

In addition, I met with Iain Osborne, the Utility Regulator, on 14 September 2009 in advance of the public announcement of changes to energy tariffs.

Energy Price Increase

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if the energy price increase affecting businesses arises from the public service obligation, and if so, can it be phased in over a three year period.

(AQW 1966/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The Utility Regulator has explained in detail the reasons for the recent increases in electricity tariffs for large electricity users. Details are given from page 14 onwards in the following document:

http://www.niaur.gov.uk/uploads/publications/Background_Briefing_on_NIE_Energy_price_decrease_Sept_2009.pdf.

This explanation shows that increases in electricity charges for larger energy users are due in large part to the impact of higher Public Service Obligation (PSO) charges and use of electrical system charges. The bulk of PSO charges are associated with the long term power generation contracts in Northern Ireland established when the electricity industry was privatised in the early 1990's. The contracts were necessary to provide appropriate terms to attract bidders for the power stations, thus providing an assured income. A number of the individual contracts are scheduled for review in 2010 by the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation (NIAUR).

There have also been increases in electrical "use of system" costs as electricity demand has fallen, and these costs have to be spread over a smaller number of customers, and lower electricity volumes.

In relation to the phasing of additional PSO costs over a 3 year period, there are no current arrangements in place to allow these costs to be recovered over a longer period. To do so might also increase the risk of such costs impacting on consumers at a time when future wholesale energy costs might be higher than at present.

Small Businesses

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the number of small businesses in each constituency, including the number of employees hired.

(AQW 2276/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Table 1 provides the latest published figures for numbers of small businesses and the number of employees in small businesses by parliamentary constituency in Northern Ireland.

TABLE 1. SMALL BUSINESS NUMBERS AND EMPLOYEES BY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY

Parliamentary Constituency	Number of small businesses ²	Number of Employees ³ in small businesses
Belfast East	2,075	9,868
Belfast North	1,960	12,297
Belfast South	4,030	21,025
Belfast West	1,315	8,050
East Antrim	2,185	7,055
East Londonderry	3,610	10,323
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	6,660	13,602
Foyle	2,730	11,613
Lagan Valley	4,205	13,270
Mid Ulster	5,720	12,762
Newry & Armagh	5,540	15,085
North Antrim	5,075	12,330
North Down	2,450	8,803
South Antrim	3,515	12,058
South Down	5,725	13,126
Strangford	3,570	10,861
Upper Bann	3,670	12,451
West Tyrone	5,300	10,648
Northern Ireland	69,335	215,227

1. Small businesses have been defined as having fewer than 50 employees.
2. Source: Inter-Departmental Business Register, March 2009
3. Source: Northern Ireland Census of Employment, September 2007
4. Please note that the business register contains information on all businesses in the United Kingdom which are VAT registered or which operate a PAYE scheme. As a result the estimates of the numbers of businesses used in this answer will exclude those smaller businesses which do not exceed the VAT threshold or are VAT exempt.

Investment

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what recent investment there has been in the Strangford constituency. (AQW 2320/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Between April 2006 and March 2009, the last three years for which annual figures are available, Invest NI made 259 offers of support to its clients in the Strangford constituency. These offers, to both indigenous and externally-owned companies, consisted of over £5 million of assistance promoting total investment of nearly £35 million.

Invest NI's work with the constituency's indigenous businesses helped promote the growth and development of a number of the area's key employers. They have included Willowbrook Foods, Belfast Aircraft Stress Engineers, TG Eakin and the Fin Engineering Group, all of whom have undertaken significant investments in recent years which should lead to increased employment opportunities in the area.

In terms of the constituency's overseas investors, Invest NI's activities helped secure significant reinvestments by companies such as LE Pritchitt, Travel 118 and Quizdom UK.

State Pension Age

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what proportion of men and women over the state pension age continue to work (i) part-time; and (ii) full-time. (AQW 2435/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Latest Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates for the period April to June 2009, which were first published on 12 August 2009, showed that 11% of men and 8% of women remained in employment after they had reached the state pension age. The proportion of those in full-time employment was 6% for men and 2% for women. The proportion in part-time employment was 5% for men and 7% for women.

Estimates for the full-time / part-time status of those past state pension age are based on small sample sizes and are subject to a relatively high degree of sampling variability. They should, therefore, be treated with caution.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Derelict Buildings

Mr D O'Loan asked the Minister of the Environment if District Councils will be given legal powers to deal with visual aspects of derelict buildings. (AQW 2225/10)

Minister of the Environment (Mr E Poots): There is no legal mechanism in Northern Ireland planning law to regulate the condition of derelict buildings and the Department has no powers in this respect.

However, I appreciate that neglected or derelict buildings can attract large amounts of litter and this can be detrimental to the amenity of the local neighbourhood. This is one of the issues that will be addressed in the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill which will enable District Councils to deal more effectively with a wide range of local environmental problems, including litter.

District Councils also have powers to deal with premises in such a state as to be a nuisance or prejudicial to health. The relevant nuisance legislation is, however, very old and has not kept pace with developments in nuisance legislation applying outside of Northern Ireland. The proposals in the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill will update the current Northern Ireland legislation on statutory nuisances and improve the procedures for dealing with them.

Building Preservation Notices

Mrs C Hanna asked the Minister of the Environment how many Building Preservation Notices have been issued, since they became available, to protect built heritage. (AQW 2226/10)

Minister of the Environment: To date, the Department has issued 28 Building Preservation Notices.

Heaney House

Mrs C Hanna asked the Minister of the Environment if he has reviewed the case of the 'Heaney House' formerly at 16 Ashley Avenue, Belfast and the surrounding land which remains underdeveloped, and if so, for his assessment of its demolition in 2002 and the continued 'gap site' status. (AQW 2242/10)

Minister of the Environment: The property at 16 Ashley Avenue was demolished in 2002. It was not a listed building and nor was it located within a conservation area. The Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015, published in November 2004, designated this part of Lisburn Road, including Ashley Avenue, as a proposed Area of Townscape Character. In 2002, however, there was no requirement for consent to demolish the building. The site remains vacant today.

Planning Service has received a number of planning applications in recent years for development of a larger site which includes 155-177 Lisburn Road and 3-7 Tate's Avenue as well as 16 Ashley Avenue. Some of these applications have been found to be unacceptable and have been subsequently withdrawn. The most recent and

current application is for a mixed use development of 45 private apartments with on-site car parking and 3 retail units on the ground floor. The specific proposal for the site of 16 Ashley Avenue is for a 3-storey building incorporating vehicular access at ground floor level and 4 apartments on the upper 2 floors. This application is still under consideration.

Building Preservation Notices

Mrs C Hanna asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to the Building Preservation Notices announced by him on 15 October 2009 (i) who initiated the notices; (ii) how the notices were assessed; (iii) how long this assessment took; and (iv) how long the notices will last. (AQW 2245/10)

Minister of the Environment:

1-6 Harker's Hill Portadown

- (i) The request to consider issuing these Building Preservation Notices (BPNs) came through Planning Service.
- (ii) They were assessed by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) in relation to the requirements of Article 42A of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991, as amended in 2003, and followed established procedures.
- (iii) The assessments took relatively short periods of time, however in the case of Harker's Hill there was a gap of 14 months between the initial request to consider BPNs, and the action of issuing them.
- (iv) The notices will last for a period of 6 months from the date when they were served.

The Valley, 15 Valley Road Ballymena

- (i) The Building Preservation Notice was initiated by a third party. It is Departmental policy not to divulge such information without the third party's consent, which the Department has not sought.
- (ii) As (ii) above.
- (iii) The assessments took relatively short periods of time, however there was a gap of 4 months between the initial request to consider listing and the issue of a Building Preservation Notice.
- (iv) As (iv) above.

Building Preservation Notices

Mrs C Hanna asked the Minister of the Environment if he plans to place a Building Preservation Notice on 21-33 Ashley Avenue, Belfast, a Victorian terrace directly opposite the 'Heaney House' gap site; and if not, on what grounds he would place a notice. (AQW 2247/10)

Minister of the Environment: There were no plans to place a Building Preservation Notice on 21-33 Ashley Avenue, however the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) is now treating your question as a 'listing query' and will assess the buildings against legislation, policy and established practice to determine if Building Preservation Notices may be merited. As part of the standard procedure, Agency staff will contact you to see if you have any relevant information that would support a case.

The grounds on which a Building Preservation Notice may be served are set out in Article 42(A) of The Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 as amended in 2003. There are two criteria, both of which must be satisfied. They are

- '(1) where it appears to the Department that an unlisted building:
 - (a) is of special architectural or historic interest; and
 - (b) is in danger of demolition or of alteration in such a way as to affect its character as a building of such interest,...

Detail of the listing process, which is carried out by NIEA, is available on their website www.ni-environment.gov.uk. I have attached a copy, as Appendix A for ease of reference.

Areas of Special Scientific Interest

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) targets set for the establishment of Areas of Special Scientific Interest; and (ii) how many such areas have been established in each of the last five years. (AQW 2251/10)

Minister of the Environment: (i) The Programme for Government 2008-11 contains a target to declare 25 ASSIs a year in each of the three years of the Programme.

The number of ASSIs declared in each of the last five financial years were as follows:-

Year	No Declared
2004/05	13
2005/06	2
2006/07	15
2007/08	14
2008/09	25

John Lewis Partnership

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of the Environment what investigations have been undertaken into the latest difficulty on the John Lewis Partnership planning application for Sprucefield; and if he has established any culpability undertaken any within his Department or the Planning Service for the latest procedural mistake. (AQW 2256/10)

Minister of the Environment: It may be helpful at the outset if I clarify the circumstances surrounding recent developments regarding the planning application submitted on 28 August 2008 by Sprucefield Centre Ltd.

Under Regulation 15(2) of the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (NI) 1999 (as amended) the Planning Service requested further information on 2 December 2008. Regulation 15(2A) requires the applicant to submit this information within 3 months or such extended period as may be agreed in writing. Where the information is not submitted within 3 months and no extended period has been agreed the legislation states that the application shall be deemed to be refused.

On 24 February 2009 the Planning Service wrote to the Planning Appeals Commission requesting that a public local inquiry into the proposal be arranged.

On 4 September 2009, some nine months following the request under regulation 15(2) the applicant submitted the further information.

The PAC wrote to the Planning Service on 14 October 2009 seeking its view as to whether, in the circumstances, the application must be deemed to be refused. Following legal advice, the Planning Service advised that its preliminary view was that the application was deemed to be refused. But, given that the applicant strongly disagreed with this view and intended to seek a declaration from the courts on the status of the application the PAC was requested to proceed with the inquiry process pending a resolution.

The PAC noted the preliminary view but declined the request to allow the inquiry to proceed.

The responsibility for ensuring that information is submitted within the requirements as set down in the legislation lies with the applicant/agent and requires no action on the part of the Department other than to respond to any request for an extension of time. No such request was made.

Planning Regulations Regarding the Control of Advertising

Mr B McElduff asked the Minister of the Environment if his Department will relax the planning regulations regarding the control of advertising, including withdrawing enforcement action where possible, in order to assist local businesses at this time of economic downturn. (AQW 2300/10)

Minister of the Environment: The statutory requirements for advertisements are set out in Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992. There is no latitude within these Regulations for relaxation of the required control.

My Department's planning policy for advertisements is contained in Planning Policy Statement 17, 'The Control of Outdoor Advertisements'. This PPS complements the Government's commitment to securing a competitive economy whilst affording appropriate protection to amenity and public safety.

There is also a wider responsibility on my Department to ensure that we respect our natural and built environment. Indeed the quality of our environment is important in assisting economic development.

CO2 Emissions

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of the Environment what discussions he has had with the Minister of Regional Development regarding the reduction of CO2 emissions. (AQW 2301/10)

Minister of the Environment: I have had no discussions with the Minister for Regional Development regarding the reduction of CO2 emissions.

Orange Arch Structures

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of the Environment to list all orange arch structures which received planning permission in each of the last three years. (AQW 2305/10)

Minister of the Environment: Further to my recent answer to Paul Butler MLA on the same subject (AQW 696/10) I can again confirm 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.

Ban on Snares

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of the Environment (i) which groups have lobbied him on the issue of a ban on snares; and (ii) what steps his Department has taken to ban snares. (AQW 2306/10)

Minister of the Environment: I have been asked by the League Against Cruel Sports to ban the manufacture and use of snares. The Wildlife (NI) Order 1985 bans the use of certain snares which are considered cruel to wildlife, such as self-locking snares. I understand that there is a need for land managers to have proper pest control measures in place and I intend to keep the issue of snares under review.

Review of Public Administration

Ms C Ní Chuilín asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the cost to his Department of the transfer of functions to Local Government as part of the Review of Public Administration. (AQW 2356/10)

Minister of the Environment: To end September 2009 my Department has spent £6.71 million on taking forward the Review of Public Administration.

Recycling Rates

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of the Environment to list the current recycling rates for each council. (AQW 2366/10)

Minister of the Environment: The 2008/9 municipal waste and household waste recycling rates will be released in December 2009 and will be available on the NI Environment Agency website www.ni-environment.

gov.uk. Municipal waste is defined in the Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003 as waste from households, and other waste that, because of its nature or composition, is similar to waste from households.

The most up to date figures currently available, the 2007/8 rates are as follows:

	Household Waste %	Municipal Waste %
Antrim Borough Council	48.73	47.14
Ards Borough Council	27.61	26.27
Armagh City & District Council	37.28	38.55
Ballymena Borough Council	26.54	24.85
Ballymoney Borough Council	26.21	23.96
Banbridge District Council	45.70	45.44
Belfast City Council	23.24	20.67
Carrickfergus Borough Council	33.16	29.33
Castlereagh Borough Council	37.69	35.74
Coleraine Borough Council	29.86	25.62
Cookstown District Council	36.31	33.38
Craigavon Borough Council	34.67	29.01
Derry City Council	31.93	28.29
Down District Council	31.56	25.99
Dungannon & South Tyrone Borough Council	30.22	28.21
Fermanagh District Council	28.84	25.10
Larne Borough Council	37.44	32.12
Limavady Borough Council	35.97	36.17
Lisburn City Council	31.95	31.58
Magherafelt District Council	38.09	35.49
Moyle District Council	34.51	28.98
Newry & Mourne District Council	30.09	25.99
Newtownabbey Borough Council	30.27	26.90
North Down Borough Council	38.05	30.63
Omagh District Council	38.09	32.52
Strabane District Council	23.00	21.02
NI Average	31.90	28.84

Cat Litter Being Dumped

Mr A McQuillan asked the Minister of the Environment if the Northern Ireland Environment Agency is aware that cat litter, used for cleaning laundered diesel is being dumped on North Eastern Education and Library Board grounds in the Lodge Road area of Coleraine. (AQW 2382/10)

Minister of the Environment: On the 20 April 2009 the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) were made aware that a significant amount of cat litter had been dumped in the grounds of Coleraine High School.

The North Eastern Education and Library Board contacted the Hazardous Waste section in NIEA requesting advice on the disposal requirements for the waste. NIEA records indicate that 53.6 tonnes of hazardous material

were removed from the site in Coleraine and taken to an authorised facility in England in accordance with the Hazardous Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005.

A specialised company, employed by the Education Board to clean up the site, has confirmed that a further 143.9 tonnes of non hazardous material was removed and taken to a nearby landfill site.

Spreading of Slurry

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of the Environment how many farms were visited by Northern Ireland Environment Agency officials on 15 October 2009 to investigate the spreading of slurry on that day.

(AQW 2385/10)

Minister of the Environment: Three farms were visited by staff from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) on 15 October 2009 to investigate the spreading of slurry on that day. However, in light of the query raised by your constituent, NIEA sought legal guidance on the interpretation of the Nitrates Action Programme (NI) 2006 Regulations (NAP Regulations).

Although it has previously been interpreted by DARD and DOE staff that the closed period runs from 15 October to 31 January (inclusive), legal advice has defined that the closed period runs from 16 October to 31 January (inclusive).

NIEA will write to the three individuals whose farms were visited on 15 October 2009 to advise them of this.

Land Owned by the Housing Executive

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment what discussion his Department has had with the Department for Social Development regarding open space land owned by the Housing Executive being released for social housing.

(AQW 2422/10)

Minister of the Environment: While there has been no discussion between Departments, officials from my Department's Planning Service have discussed this matter with officials from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE). Arising from these discussions a Joint Protocol has been in place, between the Planning Service and NIHE since 25 March 2007, for proposals by NIHE or its partner agencies (normally housing associations) to develop areas of open space, including for the provision of social housing.

Ballyholme Beach and Groomsport Beach

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of the Environment if Ballyholme Beach and Groomsport Beach met the recent water quality tests.

(AQW 2470/10)

Minister of the Environment: On 3 November 2009, I announced the EC Bathing Water Directive Compliance for Northern Ireland. I can confirm that the bathing waters at Ballyholme and nearby Groomsport both complied with the mandatory standards of the Directive.

Climate Change

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of the Environment if he discussed the issue of climate change at the North-South Ministerial Council.

(AQW 2482/10)

Minister of the Environment: No, however I held a bi-lateral meeting with my counterpart, Minister Gormley on 30 October 2009 during which the issue of climate change was discussed.

Dog Fouling Offences

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of the Environment how many people have been prosecuted for dog fouling offences in each council area, in each of the past 24 months.

(AQW 2486/10)

Minister of the Environment: The Department obtains information concerning dog fouling offences from district councils on a yearly basis only. The figures in respect of prosecutions by the courts for the 2007/08 and 2008/09 years are as follows;

Council	2007/08	2008/09
Belfast City	3	3
Coleraine	0	1
Craigavon	1	0
Down	1	0
Larne	1	1
Moyle	0	2
Newtownabbey	1	0
All other Councils	0	0

Code of Conduct for Councillors

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of the Environment if he has any plans to introduce a new code of conduct for councillors under the Review of Public Administration. (AQW 2487/10)

Minister of the Environment: Departmental officials are currently developing a new ethical standards framework for Northern Ireland councillors. It will include a mandatory Code of Conduct and supporting mechanisms for investigations, adjudications and appeals. The proposed framework will be provided for in the forthcoming Local Government (Reorganisation) Bill and will become effective in May 2011 when the 11 new councils come into operation.

Northern Ireland councillors are currently guided by the Northern Ireland Code of Local Government Conduct which issued in April 2003. The Code is a guidance only document and there are no formal mechanisms for addressing circumstances where it may not have been adhered to.

Code of Conduct for Councillors

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of the Environment if there is currently any form of a code of conduct for councillors. (AQW 2488/10)

Minister of the Environment: Departmental officials are currently developing a new ethical standards framework for Northern Ireland councillors. It will include a mandatory Code of Conduct and supporting mechanisms for investigations, adjudications and appeals. The proposed framework will be provided for in the forthcoming Local Government (Reorganisation) Bill and will become effective in May 2011 when the 11 new councils come into operation.

Northern Ireland councillors are currently guided by the Northern Ireland Code of Local Government Conduct which issued in April 2003. The Code is a guidance only document and there are no formal mechanisms for addressing circumstances where it may not have been adhered to.

Contamination Survey

Ms C Ní Chuilín asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the contamination survey carried out on a playground in the Pepperhill Street area in Carrickhill, North Belfast. (AQW 2515/10)

Minister of the Environment: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) was consulted by Planning Service on 29 July 2009 on a Planning Application for a playground development at Carrick Hill, Belfast. As there are a number of current and former industrial activities in the vicinity of the application site, NIEA requested that further information be provided to assess the risk of any potential land contamination to its

proposed new use. In response to this, a Preliminary Risk Assessment Report (PRA) was provided to the Agency by Planning Service on 7 September 2009, and in return a response was issued to Planning on 9 November 2009.

The advice of the Agency to Planning Service stated that, on the basis of the geological information presented in the preliminary risk assessment, the Agency had no objection to the planning application being approved provided it was conditioned for managing any unforeseen contamination encountered during the development work. In addition, ground gases maybe a potential problem due to the made-ground (i.e. infill of manmade materials, such as rubble, etc) on the site and it was recommended that Planning Service consult further with the Environmental Health Department at Belfast City Council to determine the need to monitor and characterise the gas regime at the site.

Global Warming Gases HFCs, in Supermarket Refrigeration

Mr B Wilson asked the Minister of the Environment if he would consider following the lead of Austria and Denmark and introducing measures to phase out the use of the global warming gases HFCs, in supermarket refrigeration. (AQW 2524/10)

Minister of the Environment: I have no plans at present to phase out the use of HFCs in the supermarket refrigeration sector in Northern Ireland. The Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 currently place controls on the use of these gases, which includes HFCs, within supermarket refrigeration equipment, in order to minimise unintentional emissions and comply with European requirements. The Regulations require compulsory leakage checks on equipment, the controlled recovery of F-gases from used equipment and that employees who work with such equipment have officially recognised qualifications. Discussions on further restrictions on the production and consumption of HFCs continue at international level, and subject to agreement, the use of HFCs in applications such as refrigeration is likely to decrease in the future.

Proposed Incinerator at Glenavy.

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of the Environment how many objections have been submitted to his Department in relation to planning applications S/2008/0630/F and S/2009/0579/F, for a chicken litter incinerator at Glenavy. (AQW 2556/10)

Minister of the Environment: To date, 6733 letters of objection, 1 objection petition and 6342 letters of support have been received in respect of planning application S/2008/0630/F. In addition, 12 letters of objection have been received in respect of the planning application by Rose Energy for a water abstraction facility and water pipeline.

Proposed Incinerator at Glenavy

Mr P Butler asked the Minister of the Environment how many objections his Department has received to date regarding Rose Energy's proposals for an incinerator at Glenavy. (AQW 2570/10)

Minister of the Environment: To date, 6733 letters of objection, 1 objection petition and 6342 letters of support have been received in respect of Rose Energy's planning application for a Biomass Fuelled Power Plant at Ballyvannon Road Glenavy. Planning Service is also processing a planning application by Rose Energy for a water abstraction facility and water pipeline, and 12 letters of objection have been received in respect of that application.

Road Deaths

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of the Environment how many road traffic fatalities have occurred so far this year compared to the same period last year; and what factors have contributed to any difference. (AQO 342/10)

Minister of the Environment: The number of road deaths in Northern Ireland so far this year is 100, compared with 87 for the same period last year.

It is impossible to be precise about the reasons for the increase, because of the range of factors that can impact positively or negatively upon road safety. These include vehicle, road and traffic engineering; education and awareness; weather; roadside enforcement and penalties; along with public attitudes and various social and cultural factors.

As there are so many variables, the figures can fluctuate significantly from month to month and from year to year. For that reason, the long-term trend is more significant, and it shows that road deaths have come down from a peak of nearly 400 in the early 1970s. However, within that long-term pattern there were significant upward movements – for example, in 1977, 1984, 1986, 1987, 1994, 1998 and 2000.

Over the last few years, the figures have reduced steadily, from 150 in 2002 and 2003 to last year's figure of 107, which was the lowest since records began in 1931.

The continued long-term improvement is due to the sustained efforts of the Department and all of its key partners including the Roads Service, the PSNI, the Department of Education, the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service and the Ambulance Service, along with many others such as vehicle manufacturers, engineers, scientists and technologists, to deliver a comprehensive programme of road safety education, engineering and enforcement initiatives.

Despite the positive long-term pattern, the current figures indicate that there can be no let-up in our efforts to promote road safety, and that is why action is proceeding on a wide range of improvement initiatives including the new road safety strategy, drink and drug driving, driver training and testing, graduated driver licensing, vehicle and operator licensing, and motorcycling.

Local Government: Funding

Mr R Beggs asked the Minister of the Environment for a brief assessment of each of the options outlined in the recent PricewaterhouseCoopers report on the funding of the Review of Public Administration in Local Government. (AQO 345/10)

Minister of the Environment: The PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) economic appraisal identifies funding for both the implementation programme and on-going delivery of services under the new 11-council model. It suggests that funding will be required from a number of sources and outlines four possible streams, i.e. increased non-District Rate Revenue, increased District Rate Revenue, avoiding costs and better use of assets. All of these options have their individual merits but they also raise a range of significant issues for both Central and Local Government and I will be exploring these fully with the Minister of Finance and Executive colleagues in the coming weeks.

Carbon Emissions

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of the Environment if his Department is committed to the carbon emission reduction targets set out in the Programme for Government; and for his assessment of the progress to date in meeting these targets. (AQO 346/10)

Minister of the Environment: In its Programme for Government (2008-2011) the Executive set a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25% in 2025 on 1990 levels. This is an issue which cuts across all Departments and therefore all Ministers have a responsibility to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, and contribute to the Programme for Government target.

My own Department is committed to making its contribution as evidenced by the progression of various pieces of policy and legislation, for example the Climate Change Act, the Carbon Reduction Commitment, the Energy Efficiency Scheme and Planning Policy Statement 18 on renewables.

My Department is also the lead department in the monitoring of the Programme for Government's greenhouse gas target through Public Service Agreement 22.

The latest figures (2007), published last month, show that greenhouse gas emissions in Northern Ireland have reduced by 13% (carbon dioxide by 9%) on 1990 levels. Based on this latest data it is projected that if this progress continues, a reduction of 22% in greenhouse gas emissions will be achieved by 2025 against the 25% target.

Planning Applications

Mr D Kennedy asked the Minister of the Environment for an assessment of the current volumes of planning applications being submitted and processed by the Planning Service. (AQO 347/10)

Minister of the Environment: During the last business year 20,500 valid planning applications were received and 26,200 applications were processed to decision or withdrawn (by the applicant) before a decision was issued. Just under 13,000 live cases also were at various stages of processing at the end of the business year. Approximately 2,000 of these are deferred dPPS 14 applications received after 16 March 2006, all of which were reconsidered after dPPS 21 was issued in November 2008.

The number of applications received in 08/09 was a decrease of 26.7% on the number received in 07/08. Similarly in the first quarter of 09/10 application numbers decreased by 16% with just under 5,400 applications received. The number of applications processed to decision or withdrawal in the first quarter of 09/10 was 5,768.

Over the last 12 months, the total number of live applications under consideration has continued to reduce, continuing a trend from 2006/07. However, this reduction in live applications should be set in the context of both the number of applications being received by Planning Service and, a number of significant process improvements delivered by Planning Service including Streamlined Council Consultation and the Development Management Good Practice Guide.

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

Media Training

Mr T Lunn asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much his Department has spent on media training for staff in each of the last five financial years. (AQW 2122/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel (Mr S Wilson): The Department of Finance and Personnel spent £16,500 over the last five financial years on media training for staff.

	£
2004/05	2,400
2005/06	2,100
2006/07	12,000
2007/08	0
2008/09	0
Total	16,500

Committee on Climate Change

Mr D Ford asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if his Department has sought advice from the Committee on Climate Change with regard to its obligations under the Programme for Government. (AQW 2185/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: No specific advice has been requested to date.

Civil Service Central Transfer List

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) on what date the Civil Service central transfer list was removed; and (ii) how many people were on the list at the time of its removal, broken down by (a) government department or agency; and (b) District Council area to which transfer was requested. (AQW 2223/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The Central Transfer List (CTL) ceased to be effective from early 2008 but was finally withdrawn following the introduction of the Vacancy Management and Elective Transfer policies on 23 March 2009. At that date there were some 7000 names on the list but information in relation to them was not updated and it is not possible to provide the breakdown requested.

Professional Registration Fees

Mrs N Long asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if there is a unified policy across all Departments regarding the payment of employees' professional registration fees. (AQW 2280/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The Subscriptions to Professional Bodies policy in the HR Handbook covers payment by Departments of subscriptions to professional bodies for individual members of staff. Departments may pay subscriptions to a professional or similar body on the employee's behalf if they believe it can be justified. This would include the payment of registration fees if required. This policy applies across all Departments in the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

Professional Registration Fees

Mrs N Long asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline which categories of public sector employees within his remit currently have professional registration fees paid, and which do not. (AQW 2281/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The attached table illustrates the categories of public sector employees within my remit that have professional fees paid by my department and those that do not.

Legal professional fees are only paid where necessary for the execution of the work in which they are involved. For this reason some solicitors and barristers have their professional fees paid whilst others do not.

Fees Paid by Department	Fees Not Paid by Department
Architects	
Auditors	
Accountants	
Accounting Technicians	
Barristers	Barristers
Construction Professionals	
Chartered Institute of Purchasing & Supply -CIPS	
Mechanical & Electrical Engineers	
Solicitors	Solicitors
Surveyors	
Textile Institute	
Trainers	
Valuers	

Economic Appraisal for Magherafelt High School

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in relation to the economic appraisal for Magherafelt High School, (i) how long his Department has been in receipt of the revised economic appraisal; (ii) when he expects to award this project; and (iii) to explain the reasons for the delay in this project. (AQW 2308/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: First sight of the appraisal was on 12th October 2009. Further information was requested from DE on 23rd October. A partial response was received on 4th November.

It will be for DE to award the project. DFP's role is to review and approve the appraisal in keeping with general appraisal guidance.

There has been no delay by DFP. This is a matter for the Minister for Education.

Interreg IV Funding

Ms J McCann asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, given that cross border groups received indicative letters of offer and submitted their multi-annual plans 15 months ago, to explain the delay in these groups receiving Interreg IV funding through his Department. (AQW 2415/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The INTERREG IVA Programme is progressing well having approved 34 projects with a value of €152.5m representing approximately 59 per cent of the total programme budget, and will comfortably meet its EU Commission expenditure target for this year.

The cross border groups' multi annual plans are accepted as setting out the strategic development plans for each of the cross border groups region and the need now is for the projects within these to be developed by the groups and brought forward so that they can be considered and appraised in line with the normal public expenditure value for money and control requirements that apply to all public expenditure. Each of the cross border groups are at different stages in this process. There is no delay in the approval and funding of the projects that have been brought forward. While SEUPB is currently dealing with a large number of projects all are currently progressing through the agreed selection process. The first letters of offer are expected to issue during November. For other projects the SEUPB is still waiting for the groups to present these to them.

Health Service

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the efficiency of the Health Service in Northern Ireland compared to that in the rest of the UK. (AQO 353/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The Appleby Review of Health and Social Care Services in Northern Ireland highlighted the scope for significant efficiency gains if the health and social care sector in Northern Ireland were to match the level of performance in England in terms of productivity and efficiency.

Whilst the figures are provisional, I understand that the DHSSPS Productivity Working Group, supported by staff from NISRA, has most recently estimated that staff hospital productivity in Northern Ireland falls below that of England by just over 12%. There remains therefore scope for the Health Minister to continue to drive forward improvements in productivity within the Health Service and to reducing that productivity

gap thus releasing extra funding for frontline services. There are no statistics available which relate to Scotland or Wales.

Mobile Workers

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he has issued guidelines to Departments on the use of agency staff under the Mobile Workers Scheme. (AQO 354/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: No guidelines on the use of agency staff under the Mobile Workers Scheme have been issued to Departments. A User's Protocol for the NICS Provision of Temporary/Short term Workers has however been issued. Additional guidance has been sent to Departments advising that the use of agency staff should be kept to a minimum and that such staff should only be used to meet short term business needs for a period not exceeding 51 weeks.

Government Property

Rev Dr R Coulter asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the most recent global valuation of all property owned by Departments. (AQO 355/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The value of land and property owned by each Department is reported and published annually in departmental accounts.

A review of the 2008-09 Annual Reports and Accounts for the 11 Departments indicate that the aggregate value of the land and property owned by Departments is £1.8 billion. The valuation date is 31st March 2009.

The value of assets under the control of Non Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) and Health Boards are reported separately in the published accounts of these bodies.

Civil Service: Office Locations

Mr G Campbell asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if future decisions regarding the establishment of Civil Service offices or new office locations will take account of the Bain proposals. (AQO 356/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The Report was the result of an independent review of policy on the location of public sector jobs. The question about whether or not future decisions will take account of these proposals is a matter for the Executive.

I have specific views on the affordability and value for money of the review recommendations, and a change in policy can only be determined by the Executive. Hence, I have written to Executive colleagues at the end of September to say I am keen for an early discussion.

In the meantime, it is a matter for departments to determine the optimal location of any new jobs or offices, based on operational considerations and normal value for money principles.

Community and Voluntary Organisations: Funding

Ms D Purvis asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the impact of efficiency savings on community and voluntary organisations tasked with delivering front-line services on behalf of Government Departments. (AQO 357/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: As part of the Budget 2008-11 process the Executive agreed that Northern Ireland departments would be set the target of delivering 3% per annum cash releasing efficiency savings over the years 2008-09 to 2010-11.

As a result of the Executive's efficiency savings programme, over £1.6 billion of resources, will be recycled into the budgets for frontline services over the three year Budget period, thus improving the level of services delivered.

Although primary responsibility for the planning and delivery of efficiency savings lies with individual Ministers and departments, it has been pointed out to departments that efficiency savings should not be achieved by simple cuts in the funding to priority frontline services. However, it is also recognised that there is scope to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of delivery in these areas.

I have not made an assessment of the impact of efficiency savings on community and voluntary organisations.

Presbyterian Mutual Society

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on his discussions with the Treasury regarding the Presbyterian Mutual Society. (AQO 358/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Discussions with HM Treasury on resolving the difficulties of the Presbyterian Mutual Society are ongoing. As a member of the Ministerial Working Group on this issue, I attended a meeting with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury in Downing Street on 14th October. This meeting was also attended by the First Minister, deputy First Minister and the Enterprise Minister.

This was a very constructive meeting in which we agreed that a bank takeover would be the preferred solution to the PMS problem. Officials have since been engaged in intense negotiations with a number of banks to pursue this solution. The Ministerial working group will meet again within the next few weeks to receive an update on the progress being made by officials.

Whilst there are a number of complex legal, financial and regulatory issues involved in resolving the PMS issue, I am confident that a satisfactory conclusion can be achieved for PMS savers.

Dormant Bank Accounts

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel when funds from dormant bank accounts will be available for use by community projects. (AQO 359/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: I am currently considering the consultation responses on the priority spending areas for the Dormant Bank and Building Society Accounts scheme. Following endorsement of the selected spending priorities by OFMDFM and the Executive there are a number of key processes to be completed.

Subject to the approval of the secondary legislation and the establishment of the national Reclaim Fund, money not required to meet repayments to account holders will be passed to the Big Lottery Fund for reinvestment in society. The distribution of the surplus assets is expected to commence during 2010.

Census

Mrs N Long asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on preparations for the 2011 Census. (AQO 360/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Preparations are proceeding on the basis that the next Census will take place on 27 March 2011. There has already been formal consultation on the topic content and users are being kept informed of current thinking through, for example, the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency's website and 'Information Day' events. Census Office conducted a Census Test in 2007, and a Census Rehearsal is currently ongoing. A Census Order and subsequent Census Regulations are required to conduct a Census in 2011 and a draft Order has been submitted for consideration by the First Minister, the deputy First Minister and the Executive.

Energy Efficiency

Dr S Farry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on plans for new building regulations to promote energy efficiency. (AQO 361/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: I understand that, following close consideration of responses to their recently closed consultation on this matter, England & Wales intend to introduce regulations in October 2010 to require that the energy efficiency of new buildings is improved by 25%, rising to 44% by 2013. My officials are working with their counterparts in England & Wales to examine the consultation responses, and preparatory work has begun on a similar amendment to our equivalent Part F of the Northern Ireland Building Regulations, with a view to introducing parallel regulations some 6 months or so after England & Wales. This delay is to allow sufficient time for local public consultation and to ensure that the regulations are adapted as appropriate to suit the different fuel circumstances in Northern Ireland.

England & Wales has also confirmed their intention that all new homes should be zero carbon by 2016. I reiterate the undertaking given by my predecessor in February this year during the Final Stage debate on the Building Regulations (Amendment) Bill that amendments to Northern Ireland regulations will not be out of kilter to those in other jurisdictions.

However, I am concerned that the measures that may be required by a developer to achieve a zero carbon home may not be cost effective in relation to the expected benefit, and any Impact Assessment to support the necessary amendment to the building regulations will have to demonstrate that the measures are technically, functionally and economically feasible before such amendment is made.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Bowel Cancer Screening

Mr T Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the schedule for bowel cancer screening which is due to start by the end of 2009. (AQW 2035/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Mr M McGimpsey): Significant progress towards implementing the Bowel Cancer Screening Programme in Northern Ireland has already been achieved in a range of areas, including the establishment of a call/recall centre, setting up of an IT system and a screening laboratory. Health and Social Care Trusts have each nominated a screening colonoscopy centre and are currently working towards accreditation by the Joint Advisory Group on Gastrointestinal Endoscopy. Quality Assurance Standards have been agreed to ensure the programme will operate within a quality assured framework, and a range of public and professional information leaflets and material have been developed.

As there has been a need for the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to identify funding from within the Health and Social Care budget to meet a range of high priority pressures including swine flu, I regret that it has been necessary to defer the start of the bowel screening programme to 1 April 2010.

‘Card Before You Leave’ Appointment System

Mrs M O’Neill asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the ‘Card Before You Leave’ appointment system will be fully operational. (AQW 2036/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I refer to my answer to AQW 1515/10. Further to this I would advise that four of the five Trusts have confirmed that the scheme is to be fully operational by 1st November 2009. The Northern Trust, while it has introduced the scheme for those aged over 18, is working to address issues with having the scheme in place within CAMHS. The Trust has advised that it expects the scheme will be fully operational from January 2010.

‘Card Before You Leave’ Appointment System

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the implementation of the ‘Card Before You Leave’ appointment system in each Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 2093/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I refer the member to the answer I gave to AQW 2036/10

Spending per Child on Personal Social Services

Mrs M Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given spending per child is lower in Northern Ireland than in other parts of the UK, what measures he intends to put in place to increase spending per child on personal Social Services. (AQW 2096/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My main task at the moment is to protect vital services from cuts. This includes all of the very many critical areas of spending we have in health such as, for example, acute services, primary care, domiciliary care, learning disability, mental health and children’s services. Within CSR I have invested approaching £20m in family and children’s services. I have also invested in services covering areas such as mental health, domestic violence, suicide and substance abuse, all of which have a positive impact on family and children’s services. However, there is now considerable further pressure on children’s services arising from current economic circumstances. I will be making the case to protect and enhance our investment in such services at every stage as we move through harder economic times. Should more resources become available to me, services for children will be amongst my highest priorities

Bowel Cancer Screening

Mr T Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if all Health and Social care Trusts are currently in a position to begin screening for bowel cancer in people over 60 years old. (AQW 2105/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Significant progress towards this target has been made in a range of areas, including the establishment of a call/recall centre, the setting up of an IT system and the identification of a screening laboratory. Health and Social Care Trusts have each nominated a screening colonoscopy centre and are currently working towards accreditation by the Joint Advisory Group

on Gastrointestinal Endoscopy. Quality Assurance Standards have been agreed to ensure the programme will operate within a quality assured framework and a range of public and professional information leaflets and materials has been developed.

As a result of the need for the Department to identify funding from within the Health and Social Care budget to meet a range of high priority pressures including swine flu, I regret that it has been necessary to defer the start of the bowel screening programme to 1 April 2010.

Missed Diagnoses of Cancer

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many (i) missed diagnoses of cancer; (ii) radiotherapy errors; and (iii) chemotherapy errors were recorded across all Health and Social Care Trusts, in each of the last five years. (AQW 2153/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: (i), (iii) Given the complexity of the many presentations of cancer, and the reporting procedures available, the numbers of missed diagnoses of cancer and chemotherapy errors could only be collated at disproportionate cost.

(ii) Radiotherapy is provided at the Belfast Trust and, due to the reconfiguration of the Trusts in April 2007, information regarding radiotherapy errors is only able from that date. Trust records indicate that 2 radiotherapy errors were reported during 2008/09. It should be noted that during 2008/09, the Belfast Trust delivered approximately 58,000 fractions of radiotherapy to 709 patients (a fraction is described as a single attendance for radiotherapy treatment).

Committee on Climate Change

Mr D Ford asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if his Department has sought advice from the Committee on Climate Change with regard to its obligations under the Programme for Government. (AQW 2184/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Department of the Environment has lead responsibility for Climate Change and is the primary point of contact with the Committee on Climate Change. The Minister of the Environment liaises with the Committee on Climate Change on behalf of Executive colleagues and keeps Departments informed of the on-going work of the Committee.

Senior officials from my Department have also attended recent briefing from representatives of the Committee and will consult with them further as appropriate.

Efficiency Savings

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to explain why the recommendations within the value for money audit on physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy have not been taken forward, at a time when delivering better value for money within existing resources is crucial in terms of producing efficiency savings across the Health Service. (AQW 2190/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My Department is committed to addressing all the recommendations arising from each of the Value for Money Audit programmes.

A detailed action plan has been developed and I have now commissioned the development of an Allied Health Professions strategy which will address the recommendations emanating from the Value for Money Studies.

Outpatient Appointments

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on progress in relation to achieving the target of no patient waiting longer than nine weeks for a first outpatient appointment for physiotherapy, occupational therapy or speech and language therapy by April 2010. (AQW 2193/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Responsibility for monitoring waiting time targets rests with the HSC Board. All Trusts have assured the Board that the 9-week target will be met by 1 April 2010.

Applications to take Children into Care

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many applications have been made to take children into care in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone area, in the last three years; and how many children this involved. (AQW 2200/10)

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

Care Packages

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many care packages have been withdrawn in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency in the last twelve months. (AQW 2201/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information on the number of care packages withdrawn in the last twelve months is not available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Care Packages

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many care packages have been refused in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency in the last twelve months. (AQW 2202/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information on the number of care packages refused in the last twelve months is not available centrally.

Care Packages

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many care packages are currently in place in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency. (AQW 2203/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information on the number of care packages currently in place is not available in the format requested.

Free Personal Care for People with Dementia

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what decisions he has taken regarding the provision of free personal care for people diagnosed with dementia living in residential care homes. (AQW 2204/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: In May 2007 I commissioned a report on the cost of introducing free personal care for all residential care and nursing home residents, not just those with dementia. This report estimated that free personal care would cost some £30.5m and benefit just over 3,700 of the 14,232 residents in care homes at that time.

The report also examined the cost of disregarding a resident's former home in the financial assessment to determine how much each resident can afford to contribute to the cost of their care. The report estimated that this disregard would cost some £44.3m and benefit approximately 2,900 residents.

I have considered this issue very carefully against the competing priorities I face across the health service and have concluded that free personal care is not affordable within the current CSR period. However, there is currently no requirement to sell a former home to meet an assessed contribution; how a resident meets this contribution is a matter for the resident and their advisors.

People Having to Sell Their Homes to Pay for Care

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he is taking to prevent people having to sell their homes to pay for care. (AQW 2205/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: In May 2007 I commissioned a report on the cost of introducing free personal care for all residential care and nursing home residents, not just those with dementia. This report estimated that free personal care would cost some £30.5m and benefit just over 3,700 of the 14,232 residents in care homes at that time.

The report also examined the cost of disregarding a resident's former home in the financial assessment to determine how much each resident can afford to contribute to the cost of their care. The report estimated that this disregard would cost some £44.3m and benefit approximately 2,900 residents.

I have considered this issue very carefully against the competing priorities I face across the health service and have concluded that free personal care is not affordable within the current CSR period. However, there is currently no requirement to sell a former home to meet an assessed contribution; how a resident meets this contribution is a matter for the resident and their advisors.

People Diagnosed with Dementia

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what assistance is available for people diagnosed with dementia who require residential care. (AQW 2206/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My Department's aim is to maintain people within their homes whenever possible and a range of community services are in place to support this aim.

Each person diagnosed with dementia and requiring care and support receives an individual, multi-disciplinary, assessment of their needs - physical, psychological and social functioning - and the carers' and relatives' needs.

Where it has been decided that a residential home is the best setting in which to deliver care, an income based assessment is carried out to ascertain how much the individual can contribute towards his or her placement.

My Department is currently developing a Northern Ireland Dementia Strategy. It is hoped the strategy will be available for consultation in early 2010.

Deep clean at the Causeway Hospital

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) to explain the reasons for the 'deep clean' at the Causeway Hospital on 17 and 18 October 2009; (ii) why this resulted in visitors being refused entry to the hospital; (iii) if it is acceptable that relatives who had travelled to see patients were unable to do so; and (iv) what action he is taking to ensure this situation is not repeated. (AQW 2212/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: "Deep cleaning" is carried out twice per annum in all Northern Health & Social Care Trust hospitals. This allows the Trust to carry out more intensive cleaning of equipment, fixtures and fittings, for example ventilation grills. Misleading information may have been supplied about visitor access to wards in Causeway Hospital which were being "deep cleaned" on 17 and 18 October. However, no-one was refused entry and, following this incident, ward staff in Causeway Hospital have been instructed to ensure that appropriate information is always supplied and displayed.

Limavady's Emergency Ambulance

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) to explain why Limavady's emergency ambulance was called to a road traffic accident outside Altnagelvin Hospital on 21 October 2009; and (ii) what emergency cover was provided in Limavady while the ambulance was unavailable. (AQW 2213/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) deploys its emergency response ambulance vehicles using a dynamic tactical deployment plan to ensure that the nearest resource responds to an emergency call.

Because an ambulance is based at a particular station it does not follow that it will only respond to emergency calls at that location. In this case particular case the A&E ambulance based in Limavady was free and as the nearest available resource was dispatched.

Private Dental Practices

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many private dental practices there are compared to the number of Health Service dental practices. (AQW 2214/10)

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

Health Service Dentists

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he is taking to increase the number of Health Service dentists. (AQW 2215/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Department is currently in negotiations with the dental profession regarding a new contract which will result in an increase to the number of dentists directly commissioned by the Health and Social Care Board in areas where access to Health Service dentistry in Northern Ireland is problematic.

In addition to this I announced in May 2009 that the Department had awarded a tender to Oasis Dental Care Ltd for additional dental services which will result in 38 additional dentists being available in various areas of Northern Ireland.

Out-Patient Physiotherapy

Mr J O'Dowd asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 1321/10, what his Department's target is for waiting times for out-patient physiotherapy. (AQW 2219/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: As from 1 April 2009 the waiting time target for an appointment with a physiotherapist after referral is a maximum of 13 weeks. This figure will reduce to 9 weeks by 31 March 2010.

Bowel Cancer Screening

Mrs C Hanna asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on his Department's Programme for Government commitment to introduce a bowel cancer screening programme by December 2009. (AQW 2228/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Significant progress towards this target has been made in a range of areas, including the establishment of a call/recall centre, the setting up of an IT system and the identification of a screening laboratory. Health and Social Care Trusts have each nominated a screening colonoscopy centre and are currently working towards accreditation by the Joint Advisory Group on Gastrointestinal Endoscopy. Quality Assurance Standards have been agreed to ensure the programme will operate within a quality assured framework and a range of public and professional information leaflets and materials has been developed.

As a result of the need for the Department to identify funding from within the Health and Social Care budget to meet a range of high priority pressures including swine flu, I regret that it has been necessary to defer the start of the bowel screening programme to 1 April 2010.

Realignment and Location of Legacy Board Functions

Mr W Irwin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in relation to the Business Services Organisation Realignment and Location of Legacy Board Functions consultation document of 22 October 2009, (i) what criteria was used to identify the suitability of the proposed locations; and to identify how each of the proposed locations met the selection criteria; and (ii) to list the locations not selected and how they failed to meet the criteria. (AQW 2261/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Business Services Organisation's Consultation Document proposes that the legacy Board functions continue to be provided from existing sectors. These

proposals are based on the need to ensure that functions would be delivered in the most economic way possible and that they would be close to the major customer bases. The equality screening of the proposals indicates that the impact on staff is not considered significant but where individuals are affected the BSO will work with these staff to address their concerns.

Realignment and Location of Legacy Board Functions

Mr C Boylan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he can give an assurance that no work streams will be relocated until the public consultation is completed on the Realignment and Location of Legacy Board Functions in response to the RPA Savings Targets within the Business Services Organisation. (AQW 2288/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I can give an assurance that no decision will be taken on the relocation of legacy Board functions until the consultation process is completed. Staff have been advised that interim arrangements may be necessary to ensure continuity of services. Any such arrangements will, however, be on a “without prejudice” basis to the consultation process and will be reviewed following the outcome of the consultation.

Realignment and Location of Legacy Board Functions

Mr C Boylan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in relation to the Realignment and Location of Legacy Board Functions in response to the RPA Savings Targets within the Business Services Organisation consultation document of October 2009, to detail (i) the cost to the BSO to provide the legacy Board functions from the current locations; and (ii) the projected savings to the BSO if the proposed realignment and relocations were approved. (AQW 2321/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The cost to the BSO to provide the legacy Board functions from the current locations is circa £3.5m.

The overall savings targets set by the Review of Public Administration for the BSO are £0.854m in 2009/10 and £1.146m in 2010/11 with a further £0.57m under review. The savings that would be secured from the proposed relocation of functions are significant, some £0.098m in 2009/10 and £0.678m in 2010/11.

Neurology Unit at Musgrave Hospital

Mrs C Hanna asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) when a decision will be made on funding for the proposed neurology unit at Musgrave Hospital; (ii) if funding is available, how long after building begins does he expect it to be completed; and (iii) if funding is not available, will the project revert to the 2008 plan of delivering a temporary facility adjacent to the Mitre rehabilitation unit. (AQW 2410/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Funding has been identified for the new Neurology Unit and remains available. My Department is considering urgently a business case. Once this is approved, construction is expected to take approximately 18 months.

Swine Flu Vaccine

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the programme for the rolling out of the swine flu vaccine; and for an update on its progress. (AQW 2503/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The swine flu vaccination programme began in Northern Ireland on 21 October, initially in Trusts, and commenced in GP Practices from 26 October.

The speed of the programme is dependent on receipt of the vaccine, which, once supplies are received here, are split under pharmaceutical conditions, then packed for distribution throughout Northern Ireland. All GPs receive a pro rata amount based on their 2008/09 seasonal flu vaccination orders. They are informed, via the HSC Board intranet site, of the amount of vaccine they will receive for the following week enabling them to invite patients for

vaccination that week. GPs have been advised to use their clinical judgement and vaccinate their most vulnerable patients within the priority groups first.

Based on the current delivery schedule and in line with my earlier announcements, the Department expects that everyone in the priority groups and frontline healthcare and social workers will be vaccinated by mid-December 2009.

Neurology Unit at Forster Green Hospital

Mrs C Hanna asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he can provide an assurance that, given the current financial crisis affecting Health and Social Care Trusts, there will be no diminution in the palliative care, respite care and rehabilitation available to patients accessing the Neurology Unit at Forster Green Hospital. (AQW 2535/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I can confirm that there are no plans to reduce any of the services provided at the Neurology Unit at Forster Green Hospital in advance of the transfer to the new unit at Musgrave Park.

Guidance on the Termination of Pregnancy

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what process is in place to monitor compliance with the Guidance on the Termination of Pregnancy. (AQW 2572/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) has set up a working group to identify the progress which has been made to date in terms of the implementation of the Guidance on the Termination of Pregnancy. Trusts will prepare a position paper for submission to the HSCB in January 2010 and thereafter, the HSCB, PHA and Trusts will work together to ensure that the Guidance is implemented adequately and consistently across Northern Ireland.

In future accountability meetings, my Department will be seeking assurances from the HSC Board that the Guidance has been fully implemented and that all actions listed in the accompanying circular, HSS(MD)-9-2009 are being progressed in a timely manner.

DEPARTMENT FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A5 Western Transport Corridor

Mr T Buchanan asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 1468/10, to detail the costings of the four individual routes identified for the A5 Western Transport Corridor. (AQW 2008/10)

Minister for Regional Development (Mr C Murphy): My Department's Roads Service has advised that because of the scale of the project and the number of possible route options, the scheme was split into three sections to assist the assessment process. Section 1 runs from New Buildings to the south of Strabane, Section 2 runs from the south of Strabane to the south of Omagh and Section 3 runs from the south of Omagh to Aughnacloy. The estimated costs of the four routes within each of the three sections are outlined in the table below.

Section				
1	£356,000,000	£375,000,000	£413,000,000	£417,000,000
2	£384,000,000	£385,000,000	£388,000,000	£404,000,000
3	£307,000,000	£341,000,000	£341,000,000	£361,000,000

I announced The Preferred Route in July 2009 which is a combination of parts of the routes in the table above. In Section 1 the Preferred Route is estimated to cost £383 million, in Section 2 the Preferred Route is estimated to cost £385 million and in Section 3 the Preferred Route is estimated to cost £342 million.

It must be emphasised that these cost estimates were used for comparative purposes, and that economy is only one of the criteria used in determining the Preferred Route. The other criteria are safety, environment, integration and accessibility, in accordance with Department for Transport guidance.

After consideration of risk as well, as the efficiencies and savings which materialise as the scheme design develops, the estimated cost of the Preferred Route was subsequently adjusted to the range £650 million - £850 million.

Further details of the scheme costs and rationale used are available on the project website www.a5wtc.com under Publications/Preferred Options Report. Chapter 3 of this document describes how the various routes evolved, Chapter 10 (and Appendix I) refer to costs and Chapter 12 describes the selection of the Preferred Route.

If you require any further clarification on the scheme costs then please contact the Project Sponsor, Conor Loughrey on 02882254728 or by e-mail at conor.loughrey@drdni.gov.uk

NI Railways

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 1520/10, (i) whether NI Railways country depot staff are at a disadvantage in the allocation of localised overtime if crews from major depots are providing cover; and (ii) if this is a cost effective way to cover overtime in country depots (AQW 2239/10)

Minister for Regional Development: This is an operational issue for Translink. They have told me that inter-depot working allows for major depots to cover smaller country depots without the requirement for localised overtime, but that NIR has also systems in place to monitor equality of overtime opportunities across train driving staff, in line with internal staff agreements in relation to allocation of overtime.

Translink argue current arrangements for transfer of staff and train crews between depots ensures optimum efficiency of staff resource and ensures compliance with Working Time Directive requirements.

Translink

Mr J Spratt asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 1720/10, how Translink determines a low-value contract. (AQW 2402/10)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink are a Centre of Procurement Expertise and are therefore operationally responsible for all procurement issues within its remit.

Translink determine a low value contract as a contract that is below the OJEU (Official Journal of the European Union) threshold value (for utilities/supplies and services £280k and for works £3.5 m).

In respect of the contracts for fuel installation referred to in AQW1720/10 Translink have agreed to meet face to face with yourself or any other interested party to discuss the evaluation. Translink have also highlighted that it is open to anyone to pursue a complaint about the tender process. This is set out on the Translink website.

Rail and Bus Fuel Installation, Inspection and Maintenance

Mr J Spratt asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 1720/10, to detail the cost of the Rail and Bus Fuel Installation, Inspection and Maintenance contracts in each of the last three years. (AQW 2427/10)

Minister for Regional Development: The cost of the Rail and Bus Fuel Installation, Inspection and Maintenance contracts in each of the last three years are set out in the tables below:

COST OF FUEL INSTALLATIONS

	2006/07 £	2007/08 £	2008/09 £
Bus	Nil	381,720	208,652
Rail	Nil	123,789	26,701
Total		505,509	235,353

COST OF INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE

	2006/07 £	2007/08 £	2008/09 £
Bus	34,617	72,706	45,821
Rail	15,096	28,553	22,823
Total	49,713	101,259	68,644

In respect of the contracts for fuel installation referred to in AQW1720/10 Translink have agreed to meet face to face with yourself or any other interested party to discuss the evaluation. Translink have also highlighted that it is open to anyone to pursue a complaint about the tender process. This is set out on the Translink website.

Cost of Legal Advice

Mr T Gallagher asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost incurred by his Department for legal advice in relation to each public inquiry in (i) 2006/07; (ii) 2007/08; and (iii) 2008/09. (AQW 2442/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I should explain that general legal advice is provided in-house by the Department of Finance and Personnel's Departmental Solicitors Office. At present, no hard charge is imposed for this advice.

Counsels are appointed to provide legal advice and represent the Department at public inquiries. The costs incurred for counsel representation at public inquiries in each of the three subject financial years are as follows:-

Financial year of Inquiry	Inquiry Type	Cost (1)
2006/07	A4/A5 Corridor Improvements – Composite Environmental Statement/Direction Order/Vesting Order Inquiry.	£17,742
2006/07	A1 Grade Separated Junctions – Composite Environmental Statement/Direction Order/Vesting Order Inquiry.	£4,876
2006/07	A1 Beechhill to Cloghogue Vesting Order Inquiry.	£8,930
2006/07	Frederick Street Link Vesting Order Inquiry.	£3,525
2006/07	A2 Shore Road – Composite Environmental Statement/Direction Order/Vesting Order Inquiry.	£11,515
2006/07	Ballee Road – Composite Environmental Statement/Direction Order/Vesting Order Inquiry.	£5,875
2006/07	Broadbridge – Composite Environmental Statement/Direction Order/Vesting Order Inquiry.	£7,050
2006/07 Total Spend		£59,513
2007/08	Randalstown to Toome – Composite Environmental Statement/Direction Order/Vesting Order Inquiry.	£8,219
2007/08	Toome to Castledawson – Composite Environmental Statement/Direction Order/Vesting Order Inquiry.	£10,645
2007/08 Total Spend		£18,864
2008/09	NIL	

(1) Payment of costs may be after the financial year of the Inquiry.

Extension of the Railway System

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister for Regional Development if a business case has been provided for the extension of the railway system. (AQW 2452/10)

Minister for Regional Development: A business case has not been provided for the extension of the railway system here recently. The planned investment in public transport by the Department for Regional Development in the North of Ireland, over the next ten years, is set out in the Investment Delivery Plan which is published on the Strategic Investment Board's website. Development of the railway infrastructure is currently based on the recommendations arising out of the business case, produced in August 2007, for the New Trains Two Programme. This followed from the work of an inter-departmental group established in September 2006 which considered options for future investment in the railways network here. Given the available funding, my priority at this time is to maintain, improve and upgrade existing railway lines in the region.

Scoring of Tenders

Mr J Spratt asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 1720/10, (i) if an individual or a panel was responsible for the scoring of tenders; and (ii) to identify those individuals or panel members involved. (AQW 2474/10)

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

- Two separate panels were involved, one for bus and one for rail. A procurement advisor was attached to each panel.
- It would not be normal practice to reveal the names of panel members.

In respect of the contracts for fuel installation referred to in AQW1720/10 Translink have agreed to meet face to face with yourself or any other interested party to discuss the evaluation. Translink have also highlighted that it is open to anyone to pursue a complaint about the tender process. This is set out on the Translink website.

Rail and Bus Fuel Installation, Inspection and Maintenance

Mr J Spratt asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 1720/10, to detail the anticipated spend on rail and bus fuel installation, inspection and maintenance for each of the next three years. (AQW 2537/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I refer to my recent answer to you in respect of AQW 2427/10 which set out the cost of the Rail and Bus Fuel Installation, Inspection and Maintenance contracts in each of the last three years. Translink have provided the following information.

Inspection and Maintenance

On inspection and maintenance, Translink have confirmed to me that they estimate spend in the next 3 years to be in line with the 2008/09 figures i.e. approximately £46,000 for bus and £23,000 for rail.

COST OF FUEL INSTALLATIONS

	2009/10 £'000	2010/11 £'000	2011/12 £'000	2112/13 £'000
Bus	195	60	60	60
Rail	77	50	1,196	-
Total	272	110	1,256	60

With the exception of the 2009/10 expenditure, Translink planned capital expenditure over the Corporate Plan years 2010/11 to 2112/13 should be treated as provisional as their Capital Plan has not yet been finalised or agreed. It is also worth noting that the indicative spend in some cases includes the cost of ancillary works, i.e. necessary construction/enabling works, as well as decommissioning and site rectification, depending on what is required at the individual locations. In short, spend reflects the total anticipated budget. All Fuel Installations relate to capital projects which will be separately tendered including the major capital works planned for 2011/12.

Review of Public Transport Reform

Mr T Gallagher asked the Minister for Regional Development if external consultants were involved at any stage of the preparation work for the Review of Public Transport Reform, and if so, to provide details.

(AQW 2545/10)

Minister for Regional Development: Yes. Consultants FGS McClure Watters in partnership with the University of Leeds and McGrigors were appointed in August 2008 to prepare an Outline Business Case. The purpose of the Outline Business Case was to provide a detailed analysis of the costs, risks and benefits of introducing reforms to the current institutional arrangements that support and deliver public transport here and to make recommendations on the preferred organisational model. It also included an examination of the opportunities for customer service improvements and for achieving efficiency savings under the revised arrangements.

The assignment was completed in June 2009 at a cost of £93,200.

Belfast Sewers Project

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail, from the inception of the Belfast Sewers Project (i) the damage caused to (a) buildings; (b) roads; and (c) above ground and under ground infrastructure; (ii) the estimated or actual cost of replacement or repair of this damage; and (iii) who has borne, or will bear, the costs.

(AQW 2584/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that from the inception of the Belfast Sewers Project:-

- (a) damage was caused to eleven properties, mostly minor damage such as broken windows and plasterwork.
- (b) there have been two instances of damage to roads, one of which was in a public road.
- (c) there has been no damage to above or below ground infrastructure, other than that referred to in (a) and (b) above.
- (ii) The estimated or actual cost of replacement or repair of this damage has not been assessed separately by NIW since it has been administered by the contractor.
- (iii) The costs of the damage are currently being borne by the joint venture company and their insurance company.

My Department's Roads Service has advised that any excavations and reinstatements, carried out on the public road network, associated with the Belfast Sewer's Project being undertaken by NIW, have been in accordance with The Street Works (Northern Ireland) Order 19

DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Rent Arrears

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Social Development how many people are currently in rent arrears to the NI Housing Executive; and how this compares to the last three financial years.

(AQW 2182/10)

Minister for Social Development (Ms M Ritchie): The number of current tenants in rent arrears and comparable figures for each of the last three financial years is as follows:

30 September 2009	23077
31 March 2009	22963
31 March 2008	23305
31 March 2007	25070

Merger of Volunteer Centres

Mr R McCartney asked the Minister for Social Development what decisions have been made by her Department and the Volunteer Development Agency in relation to the merger of volunteer centres.

(AQW 2271/10)

Minister for Social Development: My Department has agreed to fund the Volunteer Development Agency in their work with 10 volunteer centres towards merger and modernisation. These autonomous organisations have decided to come together to pool their resources and reduce duplication of activities. No decision has been taken for the future Volunteer Infrastructure

Volunteer Development Agency's Merger

Mr B McElduff asked the Minister for Social Development if the volunteer centres which have withdrawn from the Volunteer Development Agency's merger process will be adequately resourced and appropriately funded in the 2010/11 financial year.

(AQW 2312/10)

Minister for Social Development: My Department is providing funding to 15 Volunteer Centres until 31 March 2010 under the Volunteer Bureau Initiative. Future funding will be determined by the findings from the Volunteering Strategy consultation which closed on 6 November 2009. Consideration is being given as to how best to support volunteering in the interim until a finalised Strategy is in place. My Department will be writing to all Volunteer Centres in the coming weeks.

Funding Allocation for the Omagh Volunteer Centre

Mr B McElduff asked the Minister for Social Development when she will finalise her Department's funding allocation for the Omagh Volunteer Centre beyond 31 March 2010.

(AQW 2313/10)

Minister for Social Development: My Department is providing funding to 15 Volunteer Centres, including Omagh Volunteer Centre, until 31 March 2010 under the Volunteer Bureau Initiative. Future funding will be determined by the findings from the Volunteering Strategy consultation which closed on 6 November 2009. Consideration is being given as to how best to support volunteering in the interim until a finalised Strategy is in place. My Department will be writing to all Volunteer Centres in the coming weeks.

Review of Public Administration

Ms C Ní Chuilín asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the cost to her Department of the transfer of functions to local government as part of the Review of Public Administration.

(AQW 2343/10)

Minister for Social Development: Up to September 2009 my Department spent £1.1 million on the Review of Public Administration.

Master Plans in West Belfast

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development (i) how many plans or Master Plans has her Department commissioned in west Belfast since she came to office; (ii) to detail the total cost of these plans; (iii) if any of these plans have been implemented; (iv) of the plans not yet implemented, when she expects work to begin; and (v) how many plans will be commissioned in the next three years.

(AQW 2412/10)

Minister for Social Development: Since taking up post in May 2007, I have commissioned one masterplan and four research studies in west Belfast.

I commissioned the Westside Regeneration Masterplan for the Greater Castle Street area in October 2007. This Masterplan was published on 22 September 2009 and will be implemented on a phased basis. The first phase has started with the commissioning of a public realm scheme for the renewal of Bank Square.

Also in late 2007, I commissioned five Strategic Regeneration Frameworks for areas of Belfast, via the Belfast Area Partnerships. Strategic Regeneration Frameworks for West Belfast and the Greater Shankill have

been prepared by consultants, in cooperation with the relevant Partnerships and are now subject to a process of engagement with statutory bodies, so that they can inform planning and budget decisions over the next cycle.

I have commissioned two further research studies in west Belfast: the Andersonstown Gateway Feasibility Study (published March 2009); and a report into the development potential of lands at the Glen Road. The Andersonstown Gateway and Glen Road studies are exploratory in nature, considering the development potential of the relevant areas and giving an initial indication of development options. I have already announced my intention to prepare a full masterplan for the Andersonstown Gateway area; I believe that a masterplan approach may also be appropriate for the lands at the Glen Road and for DSD-owned lands at Springvale.

The costs of these studies were as follows:

Plan/Strategy	Total cost
Westside Regeneration Masterplan	£204,000
West Belfast Strategic Regeneration Framework	£94, 635
Greater Shankill Strategic Regeneration Framework	£80, 972
Andersonstown Gateway Feasibility Study	£38, 035
Lands at the Glen Road Research Study	£52,125 (DSD Contribution: £22, 125)

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