
OFFICIAL REPORT

(HANSARD)

CONTENTS

Written Answers to Questions
Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister [p135]
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development [p141]
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure [p144]
Department of Education [p145]
Department for Employment and Learning [p157]
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment [p171]
Department of the Environment [p173]
Department of Finance and Personnel [p185]
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety [p191]
Department for Regional Development [p198]
Department for Social Development [p208]
Written Answers [p213]

£5.00

This document is available in a range of alternative formats.

For more information please contact the
Northern Ireland Assembly, Printed Paper Office,
Parliament Buildings, Stormont, Belfast, BT4 3XX
Tel: 028 9052 1078

ASSEMBLY MEMBERS

Adams, Gerry (West Belfast)
Anderson, Ms Martina (Foyle)
Armstrong, Billy (Mid Ulster)
Attwood, Alex (West Belfast)
Beggs, Roy (East Antrim)
Boylan, Cathal (Newry and Armagh)
Bradley, Dominic (Newry and Armagh)
Bradley, Mrs Mary (Foyle)
Bradley, P J (South Down)
Brady, Mickey (Newry and Armagh)
Bresland, Allan (West Tyrone)
Brolly, Francie (East Londonderry)
Browne, The Lord (East Belfast)
Buchanan, Thomas (West Tyrone)
Burns, Thomas (South Antrim)
Butler, Paul (Lagan Valley)
Campbell, Gregory (East Londonderry)
Clarke, Trevor (South Antrim)
Clarke, Willie (South Down)
Cobain, Fred (North Belfast)
Coulter, Rev Dr Robert (North Antrim)
Craig, Jonathan (Lagan Valley)
Cree, Leslie (North Down)
Dallat, John (East Londonderry)
Deeny, Dr Kieran (West Tyrone)
Dodds, Nigel (North Belfast)
Doherty, Pat (West Tyrone)
Donaldson, Jeffrey (Lagan Valley)
Durkan, Mark (Foyle)
Easton, Alex (North Down)
Elliott, Tom (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
Empey, Sir Reg (East Belfast)
Farry, Dr Stephen (North Down)
Ford, David (South Antrim)
Foster, Mrs Arlene (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
Gallagher, Tommy (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
Gardiner, Samuel (Upper Bann)
Gildernew, Ms Michelle (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
Hamilton, Simon (Strangford)
Hanna, Mrs Carmel (South Belfast)
Hay, William (Speaker)
Hilditch, David (East Antrim)
Irwin, William (Newry and Armagh)
Kelly, Mrs Dolores (Upper Bann)
Kelly, Gerry (North Belfast)
Kennedy, Danny (Newry and Armagh)
Kinahan, Danny (South Antrim)
Lo, Ms Anna (South Belfast)
Long, Mrs Naomi (East Belfast)
Lunn, Trevor (Lagan Valley)
McCallister, John (South Down)
McCann, Fra (West Belfast)
McCann, Ms Jennifer (West Belfast)
McCarthy, Kieran (Strangford)
McCartney, Raymond (Foyle)
McCausland, Nelson (North Belfast)
McClarty, David (East Londonderry)
McCrea, Basil (Lagan Valley)
McCrea, Ian (Mid Ulster)
McCrea, Dr William (South Antrim)
McDonnell, Dr Alasdair (South Belfast)
McElduff, Barry (West Tyrone)
McFarland, Alan (North Down)
McGill, Mrs Claire (West Tyrone)
McGimpsey, Michael (South Belfast)
McGlone, Patsy (Mid Ulster)
McGuinness, Martin (Mid Ulster)
McHugh, Gerry (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
McIlveen, Miss Michelle (Strangford)
McKay, Daithí (North Antrim)
McLaughlin, Mitchel (South Antrim)
McNarry, David (Strangford)
McQuillan, Adrian (East Londonderry)
Maginness, Alban (North Belfast)
Maskey, Alex (South Belfast)
Maskey, Paul (West Belfast)
Molloy, Francie (Mid Ulster)
Morrow, The Lord (Fermanagh and South Tyrone)
Moutray, Stephen (Upper Bann)
Murphy, Conor (Newry and Armagh)
Neeson, Sean (East Antrim)
Newton, Robin (East Belfast)
Ní Chuilín, Ms Carál (North Belfast)
O'Dowd, John (Upper Bann)
O'Loan, Declan (North Antrim)
O'Neill, Mrs Michelle (Mid Ulster)
Paisley, Rev Dr Ian (North Antrim)
Paisley Jnr, Ian (North Antrim)
Poots, Edwin (Lagan Valley)
Purvis, Ms Dawn (East Belfast)
Ramsey, Pat (Foyle)
Ramsey, Ms Sue (West Belfast)
Ritchie, Ms Margaret (South Down)
Robinson, George (East Londonderry)
Robinson, Mrs Iris (Strangford)
Robinson, Ken (East Antrim)
Robinson, Peter (East Belfast)
Ross, Alastair (East Antrim)
Ruane, Ms Caitriona (South Down)
Savage, George (Upper Bann)
Shannon, Jim (Strangford)
Simpson, David (Upper Bann)
Spratt, Jimmy (South Belfast)
Storey, Mervyn (North Antrim)
Weir, Peter (North Down)
Wells, Jim (South Down)
Wilson, Brian (North Down)
Wilson, Sammy (East Antrim)

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Friday 3 July 2009

Written Answers to Questions

OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER

Executive Information Service

Mr J Dallat asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister what the total cost of the Executive Information Service was, in each of the last four financial years. (AQW 6917/09)

First Minister and deputy First Minister (Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness): The Executive Information Service (EIS) is a corporate organisation which provides a range of communication services across the 11 Government departments.

It is not possible to provide a disaggregated figure for the operational costs for the Executive Information Service because of its cross departmental structure and finance systems. Each department retains their own salary budget and the figures provided below relate to inclusive salary costs for each of the last 4 years for all 11 departments.

2008/09	2007/08	2006/07	2005/06
£3,172,147.94	£3,021,957.41	£2,402,319.29	£2,132,992.53

Executive Information Service

Mr J Dallat asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many staff have been employed in the Executive Information Service, in each of the last five years. (AQW 6918/09)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Executive Information Service (EIS) is a corporate organisation which provides a range of communication services across the 11 Government departments.

The figures provided below relate to the total number of staff employed in each of the 11 departments.

1 April	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
Number of Staff in Post	92	97	68	67	55

Conflict Transformation Centre

Mrs D Kelly asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister when the cross-party working group for the Conflict Transformation Centre at the Maze site will be established. (AQW 7773/09)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: In the Assembly on 21 April 2009 the deputy First Minister said that the Junior Ministers would chair an inter-departmental working group to take forward the full recommendations in the Barosso Report. No specific cross-party working group has been set up in relation to conflict transformation. We would refer the Member to the statement we made on 8 April 2009.

Bonuses

Mr P McGlone asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister how much was paid in bonuses to the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service in each of the last five years. (AQW 8124/09)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: Combined salary and bonus information for the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service is currently provided through Resource Accounts in £5k bands, available from www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk. It is our policy not to disclose the remuneration details of individual civil servants, other than in broad terms.

Creggan Pre-School Training Trust

Mr M Durkan asked the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on discussions in respect of Creggan Pre-School Training Trust at the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People. (AQW 8294/09)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: In the Junior Ministers' letter to you dated 4 February 2009, you were advised that the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People does not deal with individual funding cases. Consequently there have been no discussions at its meetings regarding Creggan Pre-School Training Trust. However, the Sub-Committee is currently working on proposals around long-term child care provision and the paper is due to be considered shortly.

Peace III Funding

Mr S Gardiner asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what projects they are currently considering under Peace III funding in respect of (i) Priority 1.1 – Building Positive Relationships at the local level; (ii) Priority 1.2 – Acknowledging and dealing with the past; (iii) and Priority 2.2 - Key institutional capacities are developed for a shared society. (AQW 8349/09)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Department is not currently considering any projects under PEACE III in respect of Priorities 1.1, 1.2 and 2.2. Giving consideration to applications is the role of SEUPB, exercised through the Selection Committees process for each Priority. As an Accountable Department, OFMDFM is represented on the Selection Committees.

Peace III Funding

Mr J Shannon asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the funding available to each constituency through the latest tranche of Peace III funding. (AQW 8400/09)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister does not hold any information on funding made available to each constituency for PEACE III funding.

We suggest that you direct your inquiry to the Special EU Programmes Body who hold this information.

Maze/Long Kesh Site

Mr T Elliott asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, following the decision not to proceed with the original plan, to outline what options are being considered for the Maze/Long Kesh site. (AQW 8457/09)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: As we outlined in our announcement of 8 April 2009, a Development Corporation will take forward the regeneration of Maze/Long Kesh, building on the work previously undertaken by OFMDFM and the All-Party Maze/Long Kesh Consultation Panel, and having regard to all the elements of the site including any listed buildings; the aim being to maximise the economic, historical and reconciliation potential of the site.

We are currently examining the policy and legislative framework necessary to set up and empower a

Development Corporation to drive forward the regeneration work. Proposals for the development of this site of regional significance will be brought forward as soon as possible.

Marine Issues

Mr M Durkan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister if they will provide details of (i) the number of staff, and their relevant grade, in their Department who have responsibility for marine issues, and (ii) the annual total cost of marine-specific work to the Department. (AQW 8459/09)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister has no responsibility for marine issues therefore (i) no staff have responsibility for marine issues and (ii) annual total cost of marine-specific work to the Department is nil.

Childcare Provision

Mrs M Bradley asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to provide an update on (i) the report on childcare provision which is being completed by the child poverty sub group of the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People (ii) the time-scale for the publication of a draft childcare strategy for public consultation and how it will link with the Department of Education's 0-6 Early Years Strategy and (iii) arrangements for consultation with the children's sector and other sectors. (AQW 8536/09)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: A report on childcare provision was presented to the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People on 18th June. Ministers discussed the report and asked for further work to be taken forward through an economic appraisal of a range of strategic options. This will form the basis of a draft childcare strategy which will be subject to public consultation. It is expected that the economic appraisal work will be completed by the end of 2009. The publication of a draft childcare strategy is dependent on the outcome of the economic appraisal and Ministerial agreement but the strategy will of course take into consideration the Department of Education's 0-6 Early Years Strategy. In terms of consultation arrangements with the children's sector and other sectors it is intended to seek the views of as wide a range of people as possible. This will include parents, children, professionals and representative groups from both the public and private sectors.

Holocaust Education Trust

Mr M Durkan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister if they are encouraging the relevant Ministers to provide appropriate funding, including money received under the Barnett formula for the Holocaust Education Trust project, to ensure schools will participate in the Holocaust Education Trust "Lessons from Auschwitz" Project. (AQW 8581/09)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: Additional Barnett consequential funding is not assigned to specific purposes. Funding to assist schools to participate in the "Lessons from Auschwitz" Project is a matter for the Department of Education. It is for the Department of Education to determine how its budget allocation is spent and to bid for additional resources if required.

Planning Appeals Commission

Mr J Shannon asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what steps they are taking to meet, and improve on, their targets for appeals to the Planning Appeals Commission. (AQW 8593/09)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Planning Appeals Commission is an independent tribunal Non-Departmental Public Body. Given its independent tribunal status, its Chief Commissioner has been asked to provide a response directly to you, and we understand that she has written to you in the following terms:

"I have been asked to provide you with information requested in the above Assembly Question.

I explained the position about the workload and performance of the Planning Appeals Commission at the launch of my Annual Report on Friday the 19th June 2009. That report and the Commission's Business and Corporate Plans 2009-2012 are now published on the website www.pacni.gov.uk.

The commitment of Commissioner resources to work referred by the Department of the Environment (draft Development Plans and Major proposals) combined with a sharp and prolonged increase in the number of appeals submitted over a three-year period from 2005-2008 has made it impossible for the Commission to achieve its targets for deciding appeals. At 31st May 2009 the Commission had reduced its historic backlog of appeals from 2,834 to 1,431. In 2008/09 the Commission increased the number of decisions made to 1,411, an increase of 32% from 2007/08. If the current trends continue, the Commission aims to reduce the backlog substantially in the current year. An improvement in clearance targets will only be realised whenever the historic backlog has been cleared.

Fourteen Panel Commissioners were appointed in late 2008 to help address the workload pressures. Their actions will eventually have a positive impact by clearing the backlog and as a consequence reducing the time taken by the Commission to decide all appeals.

I would be happy to provide any further information you require arising out of this response or to meet with you to discuss the matter if that would be more suitable."

Cross Departmental Working Group on Childcare

Mrs N Long asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister if recent meetings of the cross departmental working group on childcare have resolved the dispute between Departments regarding school age child care.

(AQW 8635/09)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The report produced by the cross-departmental group on childcare reviewed the economic and social benefits of childcare along with changing policy positions of departments as these have evolved over time. The report found that an integrated platform of care and education delivery was an effective context in which childcare is provided. The strategic options for the future delivery of childcare will depend on the outcome of an economic appraisal and consultation process following which Ministers will take decisions regarding the most appropriate way forward. This report was presented to the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People on 18th June.

Ministers discussed the report and asked for further work to be taken forward through an economic appraisal of a range of strategic options. This will form the basis of a draft childcare strategy which will be subject to public consultation. It is expected that the economic appraisal work will be completed by the end of 2009 and that decisions will be made on the way forward including departmental responsibility.

Primary Legislation Programme 2009-2010

Mr F Cobain asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the Executive's primary legislation programme for 2009-10.

(AQO 3058/09)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: From restoration in May 2007 to the end of the 2007-08 session, the Executive brought forward 22 Bills to the Assembly, and during this current session, Ministers have introduced 10 Bills. This is in addition to 14 Legislative Consent motions for which Ministers have sought Assembly approval over both periods. Departments have published over 500 pieces of subordinate legislation annually.

In relation to future legislation we are actively considering with other Departments their Legislative intentions to the end of this Assembly's current mandate. We intend to agree with the Executive a schedule of legislative proposals and while this work has not yet been completed it already appears that there is a potentially significant volume of legislation in development for which we will be seeking the Assembly's full co-operation to deliver.

Policing and Justice Powers

Mr P Ramsey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what, if any, impediments exist to devolving policing and justice powers.

(AQO 3059/09)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: On 18 November last year we set out a process which would enable policing and justice responsibilities to be devolved without undue delay. Many of the essential steps identified at that time have now been achieved.

On 20 January 2009, the Assembly approved a report from its Assembly and Executive Review Committee on the arrangements for the devolution of policing and justice matters. It endorsed our view that there should be a single justice department with a single Minister elected by the Assembly. The Committee is currently working on a second report dealing with a range of other issues, including financial provisions, which need to be resolved pre-devolution.

Legislation has been enacted at Westminster to make the necessary legislative changes arising from our decisions announced on 18 November 2008 and the January report of the Assembly and Executive Review Committee. The Secretary of State subsequently made an order to increase the maximum permitted number of ministerial offices to accommodate a new Minister for Justice.

For several months our officials and those of the Department of Finance and Personnel have been engaged in discussions to establish the financial implications of devolution with Whitehall departments, the NIO, the Court Service and frontline justice and policing agencies.

We remain determined to work faithfully through the remaining steps identified in November.

Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy

Ms A Lo asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they will make the publication of the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy a priority, following the racist attacks in Belfast. (AQO 3060/09)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: We are appalled by the deplorable racist attacks on Romanian families in the South and East Belfast areas within the past two weeks, and indeed other recent racist and sectarian attacks.

These are unacceptable acts on men, women and young children who came here to build a new future for themselves. This incident has done major damage to our reputation and our efforts to build a shared and better future for everyone.

We have consistently stated that migrant workers are bringing very real benefits both to our society and our economy. We welcome and support those who have come to live and work here and we utterly condemn hate crime and discrimination of any kind.

It must be remembered that these are the actions of a few; most people were appalled, and many acted to support these families.

A range of groups we fund in Belfast, and local community representatives, are working to prevent more attacks of this kind and to support the unfortunate victims.

We are fully committed to building a cohesive, shared and integrated society for all. We want to ensure that newcomers to our shores are welcomed into communities which are not divided, separate or unequal, whilst at the same time addressing the challenges that face new and host communities.

We are on record as stating that we are finalising proposals for a draft Programme of Cohesion, Sharing and Integration. That Programme must, and will, tackle the challenges which local communities are facing. It will set a framework to tackle the kind of racism, sectarianism and other prejudices which we have seen recently.

We hear the calls for us to conclude the preparation of our policy proposals.

However, a framework alone is not enough. It requires the efforts of us all, that includes everyone in this house, to stand up to reject the behaviours and prejudices which underpin these actions.

We can reassure communities, particularly the most vulnerable, that whilst we liaise with the Assembly Committee, the work of challenging sectarianism, racism and all forms of intolerance is continuing with our active support.

Capital Realisation Task Force

Mr S Hamilton asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when they expect to receive the next report from the Capital Realisation Taskforce. (AQO 3061/09)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: We expect to receive a report on the Review of the Capital Realisations Taskforce during July. The Review is being carried out by Ed Vernon, who led the original Taskforce, to review and update his recommendations in the light of the substantial changes that have taken place in the land and property markets since he presented his original report to the Executive in December 2007.

Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy

Mr J Dallat asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in light of recent high profile racist and sectarian incidents, to provide a definitive date for the publication of the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy for combating sectarianism and racism. (AQO 3062/09)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: We are appalled by the deplorable racist attacks on Romanian families in the South and East Belfast areas within the past two weeks, and indeed other recent racist and sectarian attacks.

These are unacceptable acts on men, women and young children who came here to build a new future for themselves. This incident has done major damage to our reputation and our efforts to build a shared and better future for everyone.

We have consistently stated that migrant workers are bringing very real benefits both to our society and our economy. We welcome and support those who have come to live and work here and we utterly condemn hate crime and discrimination of any kind.

It must be remembered that these are the actions of a few; most people were appalled, and many acted to support these families.

A range of groups we fund in Belfast, and local community representatives, are working to prevent more attacks of this kind and to support the unfortunate victims.

We are fully committed to building a cohesive, shared and integrated society for all. We want to ensure that newcomers to our shores are welcomed into communities which are not divided, separate or unequal, whilst at the same time addressing the challenges that face new and host communities.

We are on record as stating that we are finalising proposals for a draft Programme of Cohesion, Sharing and Integration. That Programme must, and will, tackle the challenges which local communities are facing. It will set a framework to tackle the kind of racism, sectarianism and other prejudices which we have seen recently.

We hear the calls for us to conclude the preparation of our policy proposals.

However, a framework alone is not enough. It requires the efforts of us all, that includes everyone in this house, to stand up to reject the behaviours and prejudices which underpin these actions.

We can reassure communities, particularly the most vulnerable, that whilst we liaise with the Assembly Committee, the work of challenging sectarianism, racism and all forms of intolerance is continuing with our active support.

Presbyterian Mutual Society

Mr D Kennedy asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the range of options being discussed with HM Treasury and the Prime Minister to deal with the situation facing Presbyterian Mutual Society savers. (AQO 3063/09)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: We share your concerns regarding the safeguarding of depositor and member funds at the Presbyterian Mutual Society and met with Prime Minister Gordon Brown in London on 17 June to seek an early resolution of this situation and to bring some comfort to members of the PMS.

At the meeting, Prime Minister Gordon Brown agreed to set up a working group with representatives from HM Treasury, Department of Finance and Personnel and Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to reach a

solution. It will be the work of this group to consider options available and to bring forward proposals to deal with the situation facing PMS savers. We are waiting on the outcome of this group which is expected by September.

Racism

Mr D Hilditch asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an assessment of the work that local district councils undertake to combat racism. (AQO 3064/09)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: Through the District Councils Good Relations Programme, Councils offer a range of programmes covering both racist and sectarian initiatives. All good relations programmes are predicated on local good relations audits which are updated biennially. Funding decisions under the good relations programme are based on the relevance of the plans to the issues identified in the audits and ongoing assessment of the work is achieved by the provision of quarterly progress reports and annual reports by Councils.

SIB: Non-Executive Directors

Mr M McLaughlin asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when additional non-Executive Directors will be appointed to the Strategic Investment Board. (AQO 3065/09)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: We are currently considering the outcome of a competition to appoint a number of non-executive directors to the Strategic Investment Board.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Fishing Quota

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline her plans for negotiating an increase in the fishing quota. (AQW 8378/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (Ms M Gildernew): Work is already in hand for this years December Fisheries Council at which fishing opportunities, including quotas for 2010/11 will be agreed. On 12 May the Commission published its policy document setting out how it would decide the Total Allowable Catches for each fish stock based on scientific advice. I met with my English, Scottish and Welsh Colleagues on 17 June, and our initial views on this document were discussed. We will meet regularly between now and December to develop our negotiating position and we will also meet with the Commission. I and my officials will continue to meet with local industry representatives on a regular basis to develop our own priorities on fishing opportunities, through the Fisheries Forum and other meetings.

The scientific advice for most of the TACs important to our fleet will be available at the end of June /early July and we will be able to assess the likely recommendations on TACs at that stage. I will argue for the maintenance or increase of fish stocks that are of interest to our fleet where this is sustainable and supported by scientific evidence. My key priority will be to ensure that the Nephrops (prawn) TAC is maintained at a level that sustains the stock and the activity of our catching and processing sectors. Prawns account for the majority of the fish landed by our fleet.

The rules for setting the cod TAC are contained in the new Cod Recovery Plan introduced last year. We can expect the Commission to propose further significant cuts in this TAC as the state of the stock in the Irish Sea shows no sign of improvement. I shall argue for this TAC to be set at a level that that does not affect the activity of the prawn fleet that needs some quota to cover its small by-catch of cod.

Comber Potatoes

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the application for Comber Potatoes to be registered as a description; and to confirm if it has now been permitted. (AQW 8402/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The NI Potato Stakeholder Forum's application to register "Comber Potatoes" under the EU Protected Food names Scheme is still currently being developed in conjunction with Ards Borough Council and the growers. The application process can be quite a lengthy and complicated process to ensure that there is agreement across the industry.

On receipt of an agreed application the Department would be in a position to issue the required 12 week national consultation. Following this, the application would be forwarded to DEFRA, as the competent authority, before being submitted to the EC.

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

Tuberculosis

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if she has any plans to inoculate badgers against tuberculosis. (AQW 8411/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Currently, I have no plans to inoculate badgers against tuberculosis.

While I recognise that badger vaccination may be the most feasible wildlife factor element in the long-term in the eradication of bovine tuberculosis, it could be some time before an effective vaccine for badgers becomes available.

My Department will continue to keep in contact with the work that is on-going in Britain and in the south of Ireland to develop a badger vaccine.

We will continue to explore how best we can contribute to this work.

Single Farm Payments

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what percentage of claims for single farm payments made in 2008 have not yet been settled. (AQW 8412/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: At 17 June 2009, 1.85% of the claims submitted to the 2008 Single Farm Payment Scheme were not finalised.

UK Status on Food Exports

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the reasons why she has called for the removal of UK status on food exports. (AQW 8413/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: I have already explained the rationale for this during Oral Question Time in the Assembly sitting on Monday 15th June. I believe that we need to maximise the potential of selling our produce on the world stage with a clear Clean Green label, associating our produce with a positive disease free status.

You will also wish to note that under Council Regulations 1760/2000 and 21/2004, the identification code on cattle and sheep ear tags must begin with the letters identifying the Member State of origin in accordance with the country codes laid down by the International Standards Organisation.

However, as the concept of regionalisation is well established by the EU Commission, I intend to press the case for regionalisation on this issue.

UK Status on Food Exports

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if she was acting in her Ministerial capacity when she called for the removal of UK status on exported food. (AQW 8428/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: My initial statement on this matter was issued through a party Press Release. Subsequently I expressed my view and rationale for this position as Minister during

Question Time in the Assembly sitting on Monday, 15 June 2009 and I do believe this issue merits further consideration.

Marine Issues

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if she will provide details of (i) the number of staff, and their relevant grade, in her Department who have responsibility for marine issues, and (ii) the annual total cost of marine-specific work to the Department. (AQW 8463/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development:

- (i) The following staff have responsibility/part responsibility for marine issues in Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Grade	Number with responsibility for Marine issues
Director (G5)	0.75
Principal Officer (G7)	1.2
Deputy Principal	3
Staff Officer	3.8
Executive Officer 1	3.8
Executive Officer 2	2.75
Administrative Officer	2.4
Administrative Assistant	1
Typist	0.5
Chief Fisheries Officer	0.9
Deputy Chief Fisheries Officer	0.9
Senior Fishery Officer	2
Fishery Officer 1	5
Fishery Officer 2	7

- (ii) The annual total cost of marine specific work to the Department for 2008/09 is £4,216,904. This is broken down by costs directly incurred by Fisheries Division of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and work undertaken by the Agri- Food Biosciences Institute in support of DARD fisheries policy objectives.

FISHERIES DIVISION

Area	Cost
Average Staff Costs	£1,169,054
Travel Costs	£66,350
Enforcement costs	£127,867
Consultations	£656
Research	£401,340
Total	£1,765,267

AGRI- FOOD BIOSCIENCES INSTITUTE

Area	Cost
Average Staff Costs	£1,169,752

Area	Cost
Non staff Costs	£481,885
Research vessel grant in aid	£800,000
Total	£2,451,637

Apple Industry

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what help her Department is giving to the apple industry in (i) advice; (ii) financial assistance; and (iii) advertising and promotion. (AQW 8588/09)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development:

- (i) CAFRE staff work closely with the apple industry to deliver industry training, knowledge and technology transfer and benchmarking programmes. This work includes the evaluation of different planting systems including high density orchards, meeting quality assurance and legislative initiatives. In conjunction with AFBI, CAFRE staff also appraise plant health, pest and disease control measures and chemical evaluations and have provided technical support and advice in the processing and packaging of apples and apple products.
- (ii) My Department is a major sponsor of apple research with considerable research being carried out by AFBI, Loughgall. The Department provided £10k from the 2009 NI Regional Food Programme to support the Bramley Apple Blossom Fair. The apple processing sector has received approximately £1.35m in grant aid under the Processing and Marketing and Marketing Development Grant Schemes as part of the Programme for Building Sustainable Prosperity 2000-2006. Financial assistance may be available to the apple industry involved in the processing and marketing of apples through schemes under the Rural Development Programme namely the Processing & Marketing Grant Scheme and the Marketing Development Grant Scheme which are delivered directly by DARD and are currently open for applications.
- (iii) My Department helped the apple industry advertise and promote the Armagh Bramley through its support for the Bramley Apple Blossom Fair held at Loughall on 8/9 May this year. This initiative arose from the Fruit Industry Federation participation in DARD's Supply Chain Development programme. Another initiative from this programme is an application to register 'Armagh Bramley Apples' as a Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) under the EU Protected Food Names Scheme.

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, ARTS AND LEISURE

Safety at Sports Grounds

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to whether injuries or incidents reported at sports grounds in recent years are behind the safety at sports grounds initiative. (AQW 8489/09)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (Mr G Campbell): The safety at sports grounds initiative has been one of my Department's major policy priorities over the past number of years. It arose as a result of an Inter-Departmental Working Group review in the late 1990's which recommended that steps be taken to bring major sports grounds in Northern Ireland (primarily Football, Gaelic games and Rugby) up to acceptable spectator safety standards.

National Shooting Week

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure has he had any discussions with shooting bodies concerning involvement in National Shooting Week. (AQW 8544/09)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Neither I nor Sport Northern Ireland, which is responsible for the development of sport in Northern Ireland, has received any requests from shooting bodies to discuss involvement in National Shooting Week.

GAA Events

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many GAA events he has (i) attended; and (ii) hosted, since taking office. (AQW 8710/09)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Since becoming Minister I have not attended or hosted any GAA events. My predecessor attended one GAA event and hosted one event.

Meetings with the GAA

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many meetings he has had with the GAA since becoming Minister. (AQW 8711/09)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Since becoming Minister I have not had the chance, as yet, to meet with the GAA. My predecessor had three meetings with the GAA.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Council for Catholic Maintained Schools

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of Education how many teachers are employed in the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools sector broken down by (i) Protestant; and (ii) Roman Catholic. (AQW 7920/09)

Minister of Education (Ms C Ruane): Ní fhostaíonn an Roinn múinteoirí agus ní choinníonn sí eolas staitistiúil ar chreideamh múinteoirí.

The Department does not employ teachers and does not hold statistical information on the religious breakdown of teachers.

Class size limits

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Education if she intends to reduce class size limits at Key Stage one; and if her Department recognises the benefits of reduced pupil:teacher ratio. (AQW 8105/09)

Minister of Education: Article 16(2) of the Education Order 1998 states that “the Board of Governors of a primary school shall not cause or permit the number of pupils in a class at any time to exceed the statutory limit”. The statutory limit of 30 at Key Stage one is given effect by regulation 4 of the Class Sizes in Primary Schools Regulations 2000, with regulation 5 setting out the circumstances under which an exception to the limit may apply.

The Education and Library Boards are responsible for providing to eligible schools any additional funding to meet the policy from within their overall allocations.

I have commissioned a review of schools’ funding to examine a range of issues, with particular focus on bringing greater fairness and equality to the arrangements for distributing funding across all schools and targeting social need.

I believe it is very important to reduce class sizes because the quality of learning is vital to later educational progress. The pupil:teacher ratio has a key role to play, in particular for teachers in schools with significant proportions of disadvantaged pupils, in enabling them to have smaller classes so that they can deal with barriers to learning; give individual help to pupils; or work in small groups.

Dá mbeadh laghdú ar bith ar mhéideanna na ranganna, bheadh infheistíocht substaintiúil riachtanach, ar scála a éileodh ar thacaíocht ó gach cuid den Choiste Feidhmiúcháin.

Any reduction in class sizes would require substantial investment, of a scale that would require support from across the Executive and I look forward to all party support.

Class Size Limits

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Education if there is a legal requirement to ensure that class sizes at Key Stage one do not exceed thirty pupils, placed upon (i) her Department; (ii) the Education and Library Boards; and (iii) primary schools. (AQW 8107/09)

Minister of Education: Article 16(2) of the Education Order 1998 states that “the Board of Governors of a primary school shall not cause or permit the number of pupils in a class at any time to exceed the statutory limit”. The statutory limit of 30 at Key Stage one is given effect by regulation 4 of the Class Sizes in Primary Schools Regulations 2000, with regulation 5 setting out the circumstances under which an exception to the limit may apply.

The Education and Library Boards are responsible for providing to eligible schools any additional funding to meet the policy from within their overall allocations.

I have commissioned a review of schools’ funding to examine a range of issues, with particular focus on bringing greater fairness and equality to the arrangements for distributing funding across all schools and targeting social need.

I believe it is very important to reduce class sizes because the quality of learning is vital to later educational progress. The pupil:teacher ratio has a key role to play, in particular for teachers in schools with significant proportions of disadvantaged pupils, in enabling them to have smaller classes so that they can deal with barriers to learning; give individual help to pupils; or work in small groups.

Dá mbeadh laghdú ar bith ar mhéideanna na ranganna, bheadh infheistíocht substaintiúil riachtanach, ar scála a éileodh ar thacaíocht ó gach cuid den Choiste Feidhmiúcháin.

Any reduction in class sizes would require substantial investment, of a scale that would require support from across the Executive and I look forward to all party support.

Southern Education and Library Board

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of Education to outline what action she is proposing to take about the 40% of Southern Education and Library Board primary schools which overspend beyond her 5% limit. (AQW 8167/09)

Minister of Education: Ag deireadh na bliana airgeadais 2007/08 bhí 23 scoil san iomlán i limistéar Bhord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Deiscirt (SELB) le heasnamh charnacha sa bhuiséad de 5% nó níos mó. Is ionann seo agus beagnach 10% de na bunscoileanna ar fad i limistéar Bhord an Deiscirt.

At the end of the 2007/08 financial year there were a total of 23 schools in the Southern Education & Library Board (SELB) area with cumulative budget deficits of 5% or more, representing approximately 10% of all primary schools in the Southern Board area.

Schools must receive the consent of the Board’s Chief Finance Officer, Chief Executive, or the Finance and General Purposes Committee before planning for a deficit. The level at which approval is required will depend on the size of the proposed deficit and the percentage this represents of the resources available to the school.

All Boards are required to agree with schools viable recovery plans designed to reduce deficits (and surpluses) to within 5% (or £75,000 whichever is the lesser) of their annual available resources. In addition, the Board of Governors must submit a three year financial plan to the Board for approval.

SELB LMS officers are in contact with schools regularly to discuss their financial position. My Department also regularly monitors and reviews the progress being made by all Funding Authorities, and actions being taken to bring schools’ budgets back to within this target.

Bonuses

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Education how much was paid in bonuses to senior Civil Servants in her Department in 2008/09. (AQW 8201/09)

Minister of Education: Mionsonraítear thíos na bónais fheidhmíochta a íocadh le státseirbhísigh shinsearacha:

Performance bonuses paid to senior civil servants are detailed below:

	Nos.	Total
2008/09	14	£114,000

There is widespread public anger at the large bonuses being paid to public servants who are already in receipt of substantial incomes. As Minister I share this concern and want a review to be undertaken on the matter.

Teachers' Pensions

Ms A Lo asked the Minister of Education what impact the rule changes on early retirement will have on teachers' pensions. (AQW 8306/09)

Minister of Education: Agus measúnú déanta agam ar na freagraí a fuarthas ón comhairliúchán deireanach ar dhréacht Rialacha do Mhúinteoirí (TÉ) 2009 (Cúiteamh le haghaidh iomarcaíocht agus luathscor) agus ar athruithe moltacha do Rialacha Aoisliúntais na Múinteoirí (TÉ) 2009, shocraigh mé go ndéanfar Measúnacht Tionchair Chomhionannais (EQIA).

Having considered the responses to the recent consultation on the draft Teachers' (Compensation for Redundancy and Premature Retirement) Regulations (NI) 2009 and complementary amendments to the Teachers' Superannuation Regulations (NI) 1998, I have decided that a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) will be undertaken.

The Department will publish an EQIA for consultation early in the autumn. Further progress on the timing and content of the draft regulations will depend on the outcome of consultation on the EQIA. For teachers prematurely retired and/or made redundant at the end of the 2008-2009 school year, the arrangements for compensation will therefore be in accordance with the existing regulations, i.e. on the same basis as in 2008.

The effect of the draft regulations would be make teachers' employers liable for the compensation costs associated with decisions to grant premature retirement, whether on grounds of redundancy or in the interests of the efficient discharge of the employer's function. Existing provisions regarding discretionary compensation for redundancy would be retained.

Under the new regulations all of the options currently available to employers would remain in place. In cases of premature retirement these include the immediate payment of unreduced pension benefits and, where the teacher is eligible to receive it, the award of an additional service credit ("added years"). The regulations would also provide employers with discretion to make an enhanced severance or "termination" payment as an alternative to premature retirement. The circumstances under which premature retirement is granted and the amount of compensation would be a matter of policy on the part of the compensating authority, i.e. the relevant Education and Library Board in the case of controlled and maintained schools, and the Department in the case of all other schools. With effect from 1 January 2010 the new Education and Skills Authority will be the compensating authority in respect of all grant-aided schools.

There are discrete arrangements for infirmity retirement and no change to these is currently proposed: the additional costs associated with early retirement on grounds of ill health will continue to be met by the Teachers' Pension Scheme. Nor are there proposals to alter the provision within the Teachers' Pension Scheme, known as actuarially reduced benefits, which allows a teacher aged 55 or over to retire and to elect to receive his or her pension benefits before normal retirement age.

The Teachers' Pension Scheme is a defined benefit "final salary" scheme and remains one of the most important and valuable benefits available to teachers. The draft regulations do not include any change to the available benefits. These include:

- Substantial employer contribution towards the cost of pension – currently at the rate of 13.6% of gross salary;
- Guaranteed pension at normal pension age;
- The option to take part of pension as a tax-free lump sum (compulsory for teachers joining the Scheme before 1 April 2007);
- Pension value protected through full index linking;

- Access to ill-health benefits, should a teacher become permanently unable to teach;
- Children's and dependants' pension;
- In-service death grant;
- The option to have pension paid early at an actuarially reduced rate or through a phased retirement option.

Transfer 2010

Mrs C Hanna asked the Minister of Education (i) what plans are in place to monitor the implementation of Transfer 2010; and (ii) what measures are available to the Department to assess whether schools are following departmental guidance. (AQW 8330/09)

Minister of Education: Is féidir leis an Roinn monatóireacht a dhéanamh ar chur i bhfeidhm Aistriú 2010, agus ar a mhéad a chloítear leis an treoir mholta ar Aistriú 2010, trí iniúchadh a dhéanamh ar an mhéid a léiríonn na critéir iontrála a shocraíonn Bhoird Ghobharnóirí scoileanna na critéir mholta. Déanann an Roinn monatóireacht go rialta freisin ar leibhéal na n-achomharc a dhéantar le binsí neamhspleácha iontrála, agus déanfar measúnú ar chineálacha gníomhaíochtaí monatóireachta eile más gá.

The Department plans to monitor the implementation of Transfer 2010, and adherence to the proposed Transfer 2010 guidance, by examining the extent to which admissions criteria set by school Boards of Governors reflect the recommended criteria. The Department also routinely monitors the level of appeals made to independent admissions tribunals, and other forms of monitoring activity will be considered as necessary.

Accommodation for Primary Schools

Mr T Lunn asked the Minister of Education what steps she is taking to ensure that adequate accommodation will be made available for (i) Drumlins Integrated Primary School, Ballynahinch; (ii) Rowandale Integrated Primary School, Moira; (iii) Phoenix Integrated Primary School, Cookstown; (iv) Maine Integrated Primary School, Randalstown; and can she confirm what that accommodation will comprise and when it will be available for the school to use. (AQW 8476/09)

Minister of Education:

- (i) Drumlins Integrated Primary School, Ballynahinch; Phoenix Integrated Primary School, Cookstown; and Maine Integrated Primary School, Randalstown each require an additional classroom with toilets to accommodate an increase in their enrolment for September 2009. My Department has taken steps to ensure that this accommodation will be in place for the commencement of the new school term.

Measann mo Roinn go bhfuil cóiríocht leormhaith ag Rowandale Integrated Primary School, Moira le freastal a dhéanamh ar an rollú i mí Mheán Fómhair.

My Department considers that Rowandale Integrated Primary School, Moira already has adequate accommodation on site to cater for the enrolment for September.

Teaching Staff With Disabilities

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Education to detail (a) the legal obligations on Non Departmental Public Bodies when employing teaching staff with disabilities; (b) the relevant legislation under which this obligation is framed; and (c) to confirm that any measures, which must be taken at schools in order to facilitate teaching staff with disabilities, are funded by her Department. (AQW 8480/09)

Minister of Education:

- (a) and (b) The legal obligations for Non-Governmental Public Bodies when employing teaching staff with disabilities is as contained within the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended. Under the Act 'a disabled person' is defined as a person with 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. The Act makes it unlawful for employers to discriminate directly against people with disabilities in relation to recruitment, selection, terms and conditions, training or other benefits by subjecting the person with a disability to any other detriment.

If an existing employee becomes disabled the employing authorities must make every effort to provide the fullest support and make reasonable adjustments wherever practical to facilitate a return to the workplace. The Act makes it unlawful for employers to discriminate against current or prospective disabled employees because of a reason relating to their disability.

In adhering to their responsibilities under the disability discrimination legislation employing authorities are required to make reasonable adjustments to structural/physical features and to employment arrangements to ensure that a person with a disability is not substantially disadvantaged compared to a person with a disability.

- (c) Employing authorities are responsible for providing a suitable environment and resources for their employees to carry out their work duties and fully participate in the work place.

Grant-aid funding in relation to reasonable adjustment for disabilities remains consistent with existing Departmental grant funding guidelines and arrangements. Capital costs for improving physical accessibility in controlled schools are financed by the Education and Library Boards. Schools in other sectors are grant-aided directly by the Department as long as the Department's prior approval has been obtained.

Caithfidh gach scoil nach bhfuil i dteideal cúnaimh deontais chaipitil na Roinne féinmhaoinitheach a dhéanamh dá n-oibreacha caipitiúla lena chinntiú go bhfuil siad ag cloí lena ndualgais reachtúla. Caithfidh scoileanna neamhspleácha maoiniú a fháil óna n-acmhainní féin le haghaidh gach gné rochtána lena chinntiú go bhfuil a socruithe féin ar aon dul le gach riachtanas reachtúil.

Any school not eligible for Departmental capital grant-aid must self-finance their capital works to ensure that they are compliant with statutory duties. Independent schools must finance all aspects of accessibility from their own resources to ensure that their own arrangements are in line with all statutory requirements.

School Meals

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Education to detail, by sector and in each primary school, (i) the number of pupils; (ii) the number of pupils entitled to free school meals; (iii) the number of pupils that take free school meals; (iv) the number of pupils entitled to a free school uniform; and (v) the number of pupils that take a free school uniform, using the most recent October statistics. (AQW 8504/09)

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

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

School Meals

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of Education to detail, by sector and in each post-primary school, (i) the number of pupils; (ii) the number of pupils entitled to free school meals; (iii) the number of pupils that take free school meals; (iv) the number of pupils entitled to a free school uniform; and (v) the number of pupils that take a free school uniform, using the most recent October statistics. (AQW 8505/09)

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

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

Education and Skills Authority

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of Education to outline the process by which the new Education and Skills Authority will manage the targets inherited from, and set by, the Education and Library Boards and where does she envisage that economies of scale will be achieved and enable targets to be met and economies effected. (AQW 8512/09)

Minister of Education: Beidh mo Roinn ag ullmhú Ráitis Bainistíochta don Údarás nua um Oideachas agus Scileanna (ESA) agus leagfar an creat forleathan ina mbeidh an ESA ag oibriú amach ann.

My department will be preparing a Management Statement for the new Education and Skills Authority (ESA) which will set out the broad framework within which ESA will operate. Targets for ESA will be developed

and put in place based on the priorities and objectives for Education. A similar process operates in the existing arrangements for the Education and Library Boards where targets are agreed as part of annual Resource Action Plans.

An outline business case for the implementation of the Review of Public Administration programme in education was published in December 2008. It sets out the savings which will be achieved through a reduction in tiers of management; the merging of nine organisations into one and the harmonisation of procedures; processes and systems all of which will allow the re-direction of resources to the delivery of front-line services.

In addition, as part of the transition process, the ESA Chief Executive (Designate) has been appointed as an additional Departmental Accounting Officer from April 2009 so that he has a role in overseeing systems of control, corporate governance and the quality of decision making within the existing organisations prior to the establishment of ESA in January 2010.

Teaching Staff with Disabilities

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Education to detail (a) the amount of money spent on projects at schools which have facilitated pupils with disabilities; and (b) the amount of money spent on projects at schools which have facilitated teaching staff with disabilities, in each of the last five years. (AQW 8516/09)

Minister of Education: Sonraítear thíos an méid airgid a caitheadh, i ngach bliain le cúig bliana anuas, ar thionscadail i scoileanna a d'éascaigh idir daltaí agus múinteoirí faoi mhíchumas.

Details of the amount of money spent on projects at schools which have facilitated both pupils and teachers with disabilities in each of the last five years are detailed below:

	£000's				
	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
a. The amount of money spent on projects at schools which have facilitated pupils with disabilities	4,329	5,123	4,375	4,205	5,689
b. The amount of money spent on projects at schools which have facilitated teaching staff with disabilities	276	0	17	3	0

These costs relate mainly to building maintenance/equipment project costs specifically relating to pupils and teachers with disabilities to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act, which includes pupils with special educational needs (SEN), but does not include general SEN costs such as classroom assistant costs etc.

South Eastern Education and Library Board

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 7593/09, to confirm that Commissioners at the South Eastern Education and Library Board are aware of the severe impact upon the health and family of Mr Joe Gillan, resulting from the withdrawal of his secondment agreement in January 2009. (AQW 8517/09)

Minister of Education: The Chief Executive of the South Eastern Education and Library Board has advised that the issues you raise are operational matters regarding an employee at the Board. Such matters would not normally involve the Commissioners but fall within the responsibility of Board Officers. The Commissioners are not aware of the details of this case. The Chief Executive of the Board has also advised that:

The Board did not withdraw Mr Gillan's secondment agreement. The Commissioners did not interview a short-listed candidate to replace Mr Gillan; this was done by Board Officers. A replacement for Mr Gillan's post was routinely ratified by the Commissioners in December. When Mr Gillan requested a return to his original post with the Board this was facilitated.

It is standard procedure to issue a P45 to an employee moving to a new employer to ensure the paying authority has the correct tax code, gross and net pay for the employee. There was no termination of Mr Gillan's pension.

Tá tugtha le fios dom ag an Bord go bhfuil foireann SEELB eolach ar threoirphrionsabail an Choimisiúin um Sheirbhísí Phoiblí

The Board has also advised me that SEELB staff are aware of the Public Services Commission guiding principles.

South Eastern Education and Library Board

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 7593/09, to confirm that Commissioners at the South Eastern Education and Library Board are aware of the delay to the NI Endoscopy Reporting System and Bowel Cancer Screening Programme, resulting from the withdrawal of Mr Joe Gillan's secondment agreement in January 2009. (AQW 8518/09)

Minister of Education: The Chief Executive of the South Eastern Education and Library Board has advised that the issues you raise are operational matters regarding an employee at the Board. Such matters would not normally involve the Commissioners but fall within the responsibility of Board Officers. The Commissioners are not aware of the details of this case. The Chief Executive of the Board has also advised that:

The Board did not withdraw Mr Gillan's secondment agreement. The Commissioners did not interview a short-listed candidate to replace Mr Gillan; this was done by Board Officers. A replacement for Mr Gillan's post was routinely ratified by the Commissioners in December. When Mr Gillan requested a return to his original post with the Board this was facilitated.

It is standard procedure to issue a P45 to an employee moving to a new employer to ensure the paying authority has the correct tax code, gross and net pay for the employee. There was no termination of Mr Gillan's pension.

Tá tugtha le fios dom ag an Bord go bhfuil foireann SEELB eolach ar threoirphrionsabail an Choimisiúin um Sheirbhísí Phoiblí

The Board has also advised me that SEELB staff are aware of the Public Services Commission guiding principles.

South Eastern Education and Library Board

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 7593/09, if (a) Commissioners at the South Eastern Education and Library Board interviewed a short-listed candidate to replace Mr Joe Gillan; (b) that a replacement was offered as a cover during Mr Joe Gillan's secondment; and (c) that the decision to offer a replacement as cover during Mr Joe Gillan's secondment was ratified by the Commissioners. (AQW 8520/09)

Minister of Education: The Chief Executive of the South Eastern Education and Library Board has advised that the issues you raise are operational matters regarding an employee at the Board. Such matters would not normally involve the Commissioners but fall within the responsibility of Board Officers. The Commissioners are not aware of the details of this case. The Chief Executive of the Board has also advised that:

The Board did not withdraw Mr Gillan's secondment agreement. The Commissioners did not interview a short-listed candidate to replace Mr Gillan; this was done by Board Officers. A replacement for Mr Gillan's post was routinely ratified by the Commissioners in December. When Mr Gillan requested a return to his original post with the Board this was facilitated.

It is standard procedure to issue a P45 to an employee moving to a new employer to ensure the paying authority has the correct tax code, gross and net pay for the employee. There was no termination of Mr Gillan's pension.

Tá tugtha le fios dom ag an Bord go bhfuil foireann SEELB eolach ar threoirphrionsabail an Choimisiúin um Sheirbhísí Phoiblí

The Board has also advised me that SEELB staff are aware of the Public Services Commission guiding principles.

Autism

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Education to detail the outside bodies, including charitable organisations, that have been consulted about autism by her Department over the last 4 years. (AQW 8531/09)

Minister of Education: In August and September 2007 two stakeholder consultations were held at the Middletown Centre for Autism to canvas opinion about the building and refurbishment project. The following organisations, with experience of working with children with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), were invited to attend:

Autism Initiatives, National Autistic Society, Autism NI (PAPA), Parents Education as Autism Therapists, Special Provision for the Education of Autistic Children, Disability Action, Mencap, the Chief Executives of each of the Education and Library Boards, NI Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY), NICCY Youth Panel, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, NI Council for Integrated Education, Comhairle Na Gaelscolaíochta, Association of Teachers and Lecturers, Irish National Teachers Organisation, National Association of Head Teachers, National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers, Ulster Teachers Union, Inspection Services Branch from the Department of Education, Special Standing Conference, Camphill Community Glencairg, Appleby Trust, Allied Health Professionals from the Department of Health and Social Services, Lisnally Special School, Sperrinview Special School, Roddensvale Special School, Clifton Special School, Harberton Special School, Irish Autism Action, Irish Society for Autism, ASPIRE, Irish Progressive Association for Autism, St Patrick's College of Education, Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools, Catholic Primary Schools Management Association, Church of Ireland Board of Education, An Foras Patrúnachta, Educate Together, Irish Vocational Educational Association, Joint Managerial Body, National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education Schools, Secondary Education Committee, National Parents Council (Post Primary), National Parents Council (Primary), Association of Teaching Sisters, Association of Secondary School Teachers in Northern Ireland, Irish Schoolheads Association, Irish National Teachers Organisation, Irish Principals Network, National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals, Teachers Union of Ireland, Holy Family Special School and St Brigid's Special School.

The Department of Education has undertaken a review of special educational needs (SEN) and inclusion aimed at reducing bureaucracy and improving consistency of provision and access to support for all children with SEN, including those with autism. The policy proposals, which emerged from this Review, are presently awaiting Executive agreement to issue for public consultation. In developing these policy proposals there has been much early engagement with a wide range of groups and individuals to obtain the views of stakeholders including teachers and other educational and health professionals, parents, children and young people. Members of the review team have also met with representatives from a number of voluntary groups including Autism NI, National Autistic Society (NAS) and Parents Education as Autism Therapists (PEAT).

The Education and Training Inspectorate has met and discussed autism with the following: the five Education and Library Boards, the 5 Board ASD Training Group, Torbank School, Special Provision for the Education of Autistic Children, the European Agency for Development of Special Needs Education, Autism NI, Special Education Support Service, Institute of Child Education and Psychology Europe, Daldorch House School, Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety and Camphill Community Glencairg.

The Department organised a 2-day Autism Stocktake Conference on 10th and 11th March 2008 with delegates from England, Scotland and Wales joining inspectors and policy advisors from the North and South of Ireland to consider autism provision across the education sector and common strategic approaches across England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. As part of this event, I met with delegates to hear their views on autism provision.

In addition the Department has been working closely with colleagues in the Department of Education and Science, the Inspectorate and Educational Psychologists, North and South and the Middletown Centre in planning for the successful ASD Conference, which was hosted in April 2008 in Croke Park and the forthcoming conference planned for November this year in Armagh.

Departmental officials have met on several occasions over the last four years with members of Autism NI and the National Autistic Society.

Mar chríoch, bhí cruinnithe agam le proifisiúnaigh ASD ó scoileanna agus ó Bhoird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne, le grúpaí ASD, tuismitheoirí agus pearsanra ó Ionad Choilidh Channanáin le haghaidh Uathachas le dhá bhliain anuas agus bhí mé ábalta a dtuairimí faoi sholáthar ASD a chloisteáil mé féin.

Finally, I have had a number of meetings with ASD professionals from schools and Education and Library Boards, ASD groups, parents and personnel from the Middletown Centre for Autism over the last two years and I have been able to hear first hand their views on ASD provision.

Behaviour Analysis

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Education if she and her advisor's she would be prepared to meet directly with professionals trained in applied behavioural analysis. (AQW 8534/09)

Minister of Education: I recently met professionals trained in applied behaviour analysis (ABA) in a visit to the Middletown Centre for Autism on 20 May 2009. I also visited the SPEAC Centre (Special Provision for the Education of Autistic Children) at Torbank Special School on 16 January 2008 and met again with representatives of the SPEAC Committee on 7 May 2008.

Behaviour Analysis

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Education to outline the reasons behind her statement that applied behaviour analysis is a commercial product. (AQW 8535/09)

Minister of Education: Tá alán módhanna difriúla ann a bhaineann leis an t-idirghabháil oideachais le haghaidh Uathachas, módhanna a bhí forbartha ag grúpaí éagsúla agus eagraíochtaí dheonacha.

There are many different methods of educational intervention for autism which have been developed by various groups and voluntary organisations.

As I stated in response to your previous AQW 8172/09, the Chief Executives of the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) have advised that an officer from each ELB has completed high level accredited training in applied behaviour analysis (ABA) at Trinity College, Dublin. ELBs are therefore very aware that ABA, which in itself can take on many forms, is one of the many methods of intervention for autism. In addition many educational practitioners, including educational psychologists, are skilled in ABA approaches.

Interventions for children with autism, in line with the Report of the Task Group on Autism, should be child – centred, not cost centred. If ELB officials consider ABA, a specific approach not ordinarily available in house, to be the best intervention for a particular child, then ABA is “bought in” from the most appropriate supplier – hence its description as a commercial product.

South Eastern Education and Library Board

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 7593/09, whether the commissioners at the South Eastern Education and Library Board are aware that approval was given for Mr Joe Gillan's secondment to Health and Social Care in December 2008. (AQW 8549/09)

Minister of Education: The Chief Executive of the South Eastern Education and Library Board has advised that the issues you raise are operational matters regarding an employee at the Board. Such matters would not normally involve the Commissioners but fall within the responsibility of Board Officers. The Commissioners are not aware of the details of this case. The Chief Executive of the Board has also advised that:

The Board did not withdraw Mr Gillan's secondment agreement. The Commissioners did not interview a short-listed candidate to replace Mr Gillan; this was done by Board Officers. A replacement for Mr Gillan's post was routinely ratified by the Commissioners in December. When Mr Gillan requested a return to his original post with the Board this was facilitated.

It is standard procedure to issue a P45 to an employee moving to a new employer to ensure the paying authority has the correct tax code, gross and net pay for the employee. There was no termination of Mr Gillan's pension.

Tá tugtha le fios dom ag an Bord go bhfuil foireann SEELB eolach ar threoirphrionsabail an Choimisiúin um Sheirbhísí Phoiblí

The Board has also advised me that SEELB staff are aware of the Public Services Commission guiding principles.

South Eastern Education and Library Board

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to 7593/09, to confirm (a) that commissioners at the SEELB are aware that a P45 was issued to Mr Joe Gillan in January 2009 and that his NILGOSC pension was stopped; (b) that the SEELB wrote to the HSCT ICT programme support office stating that they has a policy of

not acting as the paying authority for the Review of Public Administration secondment; (c) who authorised the issue of the P45; (d) who authorised the letter to the HSCT; and (e) who authorised the termination of Mr Gillan's NILGOSC pension. (AQW 8550/09)

Minister of Education: The Chief Executive of the South Eastern Education and Library Board has advised that the issues you raise are operational matters regarding an employee at the Board. Such matters would not normally involve the Commissioners but fall within the responsibility of Board Officers. The Commissioners are not aware of the details of this case. The Chief Executive of the Board has also advised that:

The Board did not withdraw Mr Gillan's secondment agreement. The Commissioners did not interview a short-listed candidate to replace Mr Gillan; this was done by Board Officers. A replacement for Mr Gillan's post was routinely ratified by the Commissioners in December. When Mr Gillan requested a return to his original post with the Board this was facilitated.

It is standard procedure to issue a P45 to an employee moving to a new employer to ensure the paying authority has the correct tax code, gross and net pay for the employee. There was no termination of Mr Gillan's pension.

Tá tugtha le fios dom ag an Bord go bhfuil foireann SEELB eolach ar threoirphrionsabail an Choimisiúin um Sheirbhísí Phoiblí

The Board has also advised me that SEELB staff are aware of the Public Services Commission guiding principles.

South Eastern Education and Library Board

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 7593/09, to confirm (i) that commissioners at the South Eastern Education and Library Board are aware that a secondment for Mr Joe Gilan from the South Eastern Education and Library Board to the Department of Health, which they ratified on 18 December 2008 was withdrawn in January 2009; and (ii) what date they ratified this withdrawal. (AQW 8557/09)

Minister of Education: The Chief Executive of the South Eastern Education and Library Board has advised that the issues you raise are operational matters regarding an employee at the Board. Such matters would not normally involve the Commissioners but fall within the responsibility of Board Officers. The Commissioners are not aware of the details of this case. The Chief Executive of the Board has also advised that:

The Board did not withdraw Mr Gillan's secondment agreement. The Commissioners did not interview a short-listed candidate to replace Mr Gillan; this was done by Board Officers. A replacement for Mr Gillan's post was routinely ratified by the Commissioners in December. When Mr Gillan requested a return to his original post with the Board this was facilitated.

It is standard procedure to issue a P45 to an employee moving to a new employer to ensure the paying authority has the correct tax code, gross and net pay for the employee. There was no termination of Mr Gillan's pension.

Tá tugtha le fios dom ag an Bord go bhfuil foireann SEELB eolach ar threoirphrionsabail an Choimisiúin um Sheirbhísí Phoiblí

The Board has also advised me that SEELB staff are aware of the Public Services Commission guiding principles.

South Eastern Education and Library Board

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 7593/09, whether all board officers at the South Eastern Education and Library Board, including human resource officers and line managers, are aware of, and understand, the guiding principles established by the Public Services Commission, in relation to the secondment of staff between the Review of Public Administration affected bodies. (AQW 8560/09)

Minister of Education: The Chief Executive of the South Eastern Education and Library Board has advised that the issues you raise are operational matters regarding an employee at the Board. Such matters would not normally involve the Commissioners but fall within the responsibility of Board Officers. The Commissioners are not aware of the details of this case. The Chief Executive of the Board has also advised that:

The Board did not withdraw Mr Gillan's secondment agreement. The Commissioners did not interview a short-listed candidate to replace Mr Gillan; this was done by Board Officers. A replacement for Mr Gillan's post was routinely ratified by the Commissioners in December. When Mr Gillan requested a return to his original post with the Board this was facilitated.

It is standard procedure to issue a P45 to an employee moving to a new employer to ensure the paying authority has the correct tax code, gross and net pay for the employee. There was no termination of Mr Gillan's pension.

Tá tugtha le fios dom ag an Bord go bhfuil foireann SEELB eolach ar threoirphrionsabail an Choimisiúin um Sheirbhísí Phoiblí

The Board has also advised me that SEELB staff are aware of the Public Services Commission guiding principles.

Holocaust Education Trust

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister of Education to outline any engagement between her Department and the Holocaust Education Trust; and to indicate any plans to introduce the "Lessons from Auschwitz" Project for schools. (AQW 8577/09)

Minister of Education: Níl baint dhíreach ag an Roinn Oideachais leis an Iontabhas Oideachais um Uileloscadh, ach tá a fhios agam faoi na hacmhainní oideachais agus na deiseanna foghlama a chuireann an Iontabhas ar fáil. Soláthraíonn an curaclam athbhreithnithe i dTuaisceart na hÉireann réimse deiseanna do scoileanna le ceisteanna an Uileloiscithe agus eile a phlé, agus socraíonn na scoileanna iad féin faoin bhaint a bheidh acu le comhlachtaí ón taobh amuigh, le rannpháirtíocht i dtionscnaimh cosúil le Lessons from Auschwitz.

The Department of Education has had no direct engagement with the Holocaust Education Trust, although I am aware of the educational resources and learning opportunities the Trust provides. The revised curriculum in the north of Ireland provides schools with a range of opportunities to explore the Holocaust and related issues, and it is a matter for schools to determine their involvement with outside bodies, including their participation in projects such as Lessons from Auschwitz..

Post Primary Transfer

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Education what assistance she will offer to Year 7 pupils in the 2009/10 academic year, to help them cope with the uncertainties caused by Post Primary Transfer (AQW 8609/09)

Minister of Education: Tá Treoir soléir agus mionsonraithe um Aistriú 2010 foilsithe agam. Má leanann gach scoil an Treoir seo, ní bheidh sé riachtanach teisteanna iontrála a bheith ann agus ní bheidh aon neamhchinnteacht maidir leis an phróiseas aistriú ann. Bainfidh daltaí tairbhe as an bhliain dheireanach ar an bhunscoil agus an curaclam athbhreithnithe á mhúineadh dóibh gan athruithe le freastal a dhéanamh ar thástáil atá as dáta.

I have published clear and detailed Guidance for Transfer 2010. If all schools follow that Guidance there will be no need for entrance tests and no uncertainty about the transfer process. Pupils will benefit from a fulfilling final year in primary school being taught the revised curriculum without distortion to accommodate outdated testing.

Glastry School, Ballyhalbert

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Education if she would consider extending the number of Year 8 pupils being accepted into Glastry School, Ballyhalbert. (AQW 8667/09)

Minister of Education: Déanfaidh an Roinn measúnú ar iarrtas ó Bhord Gobharnóirí maidir le hathrú sealadach dá líon iontrála trí chomhairliúchán leis an Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne agus, más cuí, le Comhairle na Scoileanna Caitliceacha faoi Chothabháil.

The Department will consider a request from a school Board of Governors for a temporary variation to its admissions numbers in consultation with the appropriate Education and Library Board and, where appropriate, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools.

You will appreciate however that the Department is obliged to have regard to the availability of surplus places at suitable alternative schools and in such instances would not increase a school's admissions number to the detriment of another school.

South Eastern Education and Library Board

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to the answer to AQW 7593/09, whether the Commissioners at the South Eastern Education and Library Board are fully aware and understand all of the Guiding Principles established by the Public Services Commission in relation to the secondment of staff between bodies affected by the Review of Public Administration. (AQW 8677/09)

Minister of Education: Tá tughtha le fios dom ag Príomhfheidhmeannach Bhord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Oirdheiscirt go bhfuil na Coimisinéirí lán eolach ar, agus go dtuigeann siad, na Treoirphrionsabail a bhí bunaithe ag an Coimisiún um Sheirvhísí Phoiblí maidir le hiasacht fhoirne idir comhlachtaí a bhfuil difir déanta ag an Athbhreithniú ar Riarachán Poiblí orthu.

I have been advised by the Chief Executive of the South Eastern and Education Library Board that the Commissioners are fully aware and understand all of the Guiding Principles established by the Public Services Commission in relation to the secondment of staff between bodies affected by the Review of Public Administration.

Job Advertisements

Mr D Kennedy asked the Minister of Education to outline (i) her Department's guidelines on job advertisements; and (ii) how the job advertisement which appeared in the Irish News on 25 June 2009 for a Programme Director in her Department meets these guidelines. (AQW 8703/09)

Minister of Education: Is í an treoir atá ag mo Roinn maidir le fógraí poist ná go mbeidh postanna fógraithe lasmuigh den Roinn, sna meáin áitiúla i mBéarla agus i nGaeilge mar is cuí, nuair nach bhfuil na scileanna a bhaineann leis na postanna áirithe sin ar fáil laistigh den Roinn.

My Department's guidelines on job advertisements are that where the skills for particular posts are not available in-house, they are advertised externally in the local media in both English and Irish as appropriate.

The job advertisement in question relates to a post where my Department is working with Strategic Investment Board Ltd as a partner in developing a Shared Educational Campus in Omagh. The job advertisement for a Programme Director is fully consistent with my Department's guidelines.

Education Welfare Officers

Mr W Irwin asked the Minister of Education (i) to define the role of an Education Welfare Officer in the remit of home schooling; and (ii) if Education Welfare Officer home visitations are required by law. (AQW 8704/09)

Minister of Education: Parents of every child of compulsory school age are legally required to ensure that the child receives full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Parents can choose to home educate and it is important to note that there is no legal requirement for them to advise their Education and Library Board or the Department of their decision.

Each Board also has a statutory duty under Schedule 13 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 to ensure that pupils in its area are receiving efficient full-time education appropriate to his or her age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs that he or she may have, and that parents fulfil their duty with this regard.

Although the law does not specify that Board officers are required to make home visitations, the Order places a duty on the Boards to ensure that the education of pupils in their area is appropriate. This can necessitate a home visit for those pupils whose parents have chosen to home educate.

Should a Board receive notification of a child who is being home educated, an officer will make an initial call to the child's parent to clarify the situation. At times, this initial call may lead to the parent having a change of mind. If not, the parent is offered a range of dates for a home visit by the officer, often accompanied by an Education Welfare Officer.

The officer will check what education provision is offered, provide general guidance on appropriate materials and exam types and will also provide a contact number for any future advice. Annual home visits are undertaken to discuss the provision and determine if the education provided is suited to the child's age, aptitude and ability. Parents are also often asked to submit an annual report to the Board to ensure the child is progressing.

Any concerns an officer may have regarding the adequacy of the education provision are reported to Curriculum Advisory Support Service (CASS). CASS will then provide advice on curricular provision.

Má fheictear don Bhord gur theip ar thuismitheoir oideachas oiriúnach a sholáthar, is féidir an Bord ordú um fhreastal scoile a thabhairt don thuismitheoir a dhéanfaidh éileamh ar an thuismitheoir an páiste a chlarú mar dhalta ag an scoil atá ainmnithe san ordú.

If it appears to a Board that a parent is failing to provide suitable education, the Board may serve the parent with a school attendance order requiring the parent to cause the child to become a registered pupil at the school named in the order.

Nursery Places

Mrs N Long asked the Minister of Education for her assessment on the process for obtaining nursery places where the first choice is over-subscribed. (AQW 8743/09)

Minister of Education: Caithfidh naonraí agus scoileanna a bhfuil naonra acu gach iarratas iontrála a mheas agus daltaí a ghlacadh suas go dtí an líon rollaithe atá faofa dóibh.

Nursery schools and schools with nursery units are required to consider all applications for admissions and admit pupils up to their approved enrolment number.

Whilst policy enables parents to state their preferences for the schools they wish their children to attend, if oversubscribed with applications, Boards of Governors of individual schools are required to apply the schools published admissions criteria to decide which pupils to admit. Responsibility for drawing up these criteria rests entirely with the Board of Governors of each school and reflects the Governors' priorities for admission to their school. The Board of Governors must compile a list of all applicants in rank order, regardless of whether the school is their first, second or third preference.

If oversubscribed, application forms for pupils who have not been accepted for admission to their first preference school are made available to the parents' second preference school via the Education and Library Board. This process is repeated for third preference schools etc until all places have been filled.

DEPARTMENT FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING

Employment Agencies

Mr D O'Loan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning (i) to detail the role of his Department in the regulation of employment agencies; and (ii) to state whether it investigates and issues decisions on individual complaints against employment agencies. (AQW 8357/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning (Sir Reg Empey): My Department is responsible for regulating NI-based employment agencies. Agencies must comply with the Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1981 ("the 1981 Order") and the Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations (NI) 2005 ("the Conduct Regulations"). The Conduct Regulations are designed to protect work seekers and employers using services provided by an agency and put in place minimum standards for agencies, such as agreeing terms and conditions with work-seekers and hirers and checking identification and qualifications of work-seekers.

My Department received powers of entry and inspection of agencies in January 2006. In a pilot exercise, Trading Standards Service carried out 35 inspections on the Department's behalf in 2006/07. DEL's first employment agency inspector was appointed in October 2007, with a second appointed in June 2008. The inspectors carry out a programme of routine inspections of all NI agencies to check for compliance with the Conduct Regulations. The inspectors also investigate complaints made against agencies. A table detailing numbers of inspections and complaints since October 2007 is attached at Annex A.

My Department's inspectors investigate individual complaints against agencies and ensure that any infringements of the legislation are rectified. Most agencies co-operate with inspectors and rectify any infringements within two weeks. In these circumstances the Department takes no further action against the agency concerned. My Department does have powers to prosecute non-compliant agencies in the Magistrates' Court. No prosecutions

have been taken to date. My Department can also apply to an Industrial Tribunal to prohibit an individual from operating an agency for up to ten years. One application has been heard by a Tribunal and a further application has recently been made to the office of the Industrial Tribunal.

Inspectors will notify a complainant of the general outcome of an investigation, for example, that where infringements of the legislation were discovered corrective action has been insisted upon, or that there was no evidence that an agency had acted inappropriately. Complainants are advised that specific findings of an investigation cannot be made available to them as article 7B(10) of the 1981 Order makes it a criminal offence for officers to disclose information found in the course of their duties except in limited circumstances.

ANNEX A

INSPECTIONS AND COMPLAINTS INVESTIGATED BY DEL EMPLOYMENT AGENCY INSPECTORS SINCE OCTOBER 2007

	Oct 07-Mar 08	Apr 08-Mar 09	Apr 09-Present (May 09)
Inspections carried out	40	76	14
Complaints received (all investigated)	1	59*	5

*Increase mainly attributable to a significant rise in the number of inter-agency complaints.

Belfast Metropolitan College

Mr P Butler asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to provide details of the efficiency review carried out into Belfast Metropolitan College and what steps his Department is taking to implement the review findings. (AQW 8373/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: As a result of concerns about the financial performance of Belfast Metropolitan College, my Department commissioned a comprehensive efficiency review to examine the management and operation of the College. The review has been completed and the draft report has been formally presented to the College Governing Body.

The College has been asked to draw up, and submit to the Department for approval, a business improvement plan setting out how the report's findings, which include detailed recommendations relating to corporate planning, management information processes and financial management and control, will be implemented.

My Department will work closely with the Governing Body to monitor progress against the plan and ensure that all findings are implemented effectively and that the financial health and stability of the College is assured.

University Students

Mr T Burns asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for each of the last 10 years (i) how many students completed a degree course in University where the award of the degree is currently being withheld; and (ii) to detail the reasons for the withholding the award.. (AQW 8388/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning:

- (i) Information provided by Queen's University and the University of Ulster is attached at Annex A. There were no instances at Stranmillis or St Mary's University Colleges where the award of a degree has been withheld in the last ten years.
- (ii) Queen's University advises that one award was withheld as a result of non-payment of fees. The University of Ulster advises that the award of a degree is normally only withheld where graduating students who have successfully completed their course are in debt to the University.

ANNEX A

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

Graduation Restrictions – 10 year period (98-99 – 07-08)		
Qualifiers – Degree Restriction		
Year	Number Restricted	Reason
07-08	1	Fees (*)
06-07	0	n/a
05-06	0	n/a
04-05	0	n/a
03-04	0	n/a
02-03	0	n/a
01-02	0	n/a
00-01	0	n/a
99-00	0	n/a
98-99	0	n/a

(*) Non payment of Fees

By way of context, approximately 4,800 students graduate each year.

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

Academic Year in which Degree withheld	Number of Degrees currently withheld
02/03	2
03/04	1
04/05	5
05/06	6
06/07	16
07/08	21
08/09	8
Total	59

Proposed Merger of Stranmillis College and Queen's University

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the stage the business case for the proposed merger of Stranmillis College and Queen's University is at. (AQW 8425/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The business case was received in the Department in May. The business case is currently being reviewed internally and work is ongoing, in conjunction with Stranmillis University College, to finalise it. Once officials within my Department are content with it, the business case will be forwarded to DFP for its consideration.

GSCE Classes at the Northern Regional College

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many students were enrolled in GSCE classes at the Northern Regional college campuses in (i) Limavady; and (ii) Coleraine, in 2008/2009. (AQW 8434/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: In the 2008/09 academic year there were 296 student enrolments on GCSE classes at the Limavady campus of the North West Regional College, and 190 student enrolments on GCSE classes at the Coleraine campus of the Northern Regional College. This is 'snapshot' data as at 1 February 2009. Validated full-year data will be available in December 2009.

It is important to note that the Limavady campus is part of the North West Regional College and not the Northern Regional College as the question suggests.

Source: Further Education Statistical Record

Night Classes

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what action his Department is taking to maximise the number of people enrolling in night classes in 2009/10. (AQW 8435/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Each Further Education College has responsibility for the marketing of its courses. Colleges employ various incentives to encourage enrolment in evening classes including:

- increasing the availability of provision in community settings;
- engaging with employers in encouraging staff to consider Further Education;
- offering fee reductions where appropriate; and
- advertising through local media campaigns to raise awareness.

College promotional material is also displayed in Jobs and Benefits Offices, Careers Offices, libraries, and other public buildings and venues.

Access Courses at the Northern Regional College

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many students were enrolled on Access courses at the Northern Regional College campuses in (i) Limavady; and (ii) Coleraine in 2008/09. (AQW 8436/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: In the 2008/09 Academic year there were 66 student enrolments on Access to HE courses at the Limavady campus of the North West Regional College, and 112 student enrolments on Access to HE courses at the Coleraine campus of Northern Regional College. This is 'snapshot' data as at 1 February 2009. Validated full-year validated data will be available in December 2009.

It is important to note that the Limavady campus is part of the North West Regional College and not the Northern Regional College as the question suggests.

Source: Further Education Statistical Record

Education Provision in West Belfast

Mr P Butler asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline what plans his Department has to develop further education provision in west Belfast over the next 5 years. (AQW 8442/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Belfast Metropolitan College and South Eastern Regional College remain committed to providing a wide range of provision tailored to meet local needs, through their campuses and outreach centres in the Greater West Belfast area. Courses will continue to be offered at community level where it is practicable and viable to do so.

Planning approval has been granted and the final design is nearing completion for a new £16m, 4800m² BMC Economic Development Campus, at Springvale. The new campus will cater for higher education students, adult learners, start-up companies, local businesses and community organisations in the Greater West Belfast area.

Apprenticeships

Ms C Ní Chuilín asked the Minister for Employment and Learning (i) how many apprenticeships have been affected since the economic crisis; and (ii) which constituency has been most affected. (AQW 8446/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Management Information collected by the Department in relation to apprentices who have left the Apprenticeship provision is included in a broader “early leaver” destination category. Consequently, the Department cannot say categorically whether these apprentices have left due to the current economic crisis, as people leave both training and employment for a wide variety of reasons. The Department is not in a position to break these numbers down by constituency. However, the following table provides a breakdown by City/Town based on the address given of each apprentice.

From 1st September 2008 until 18 June 2009, the following numbers of apprentices have been recorded as being “early leavers”:

AGHADOWEY	1	FINTONA	1
ANTRIM	47	FIVEMILETOWN	10
ARDGLASS	1	FLORENCECOURT	3
ARMAGH	25	GARRISON	1
ARTICLAVE	2	GARVAGH	2
AUGHER	3	GLENGORMLEY	4
AUGHNACLOY	2	GREENISLAND	1
BALLINAMALLARD	2	GREYSTEEL	1
BALLYCASTLE	15	HILLSBOROUGH	4
BALLYCLARE	19	HOLYWOOD	6
BALLYGOWAN	1	IRVINESTOWN	7
BALLYHALBERT	2	KEADY	3
BALLYMENA	84	KESH	9
BALLYMONEY	31	KILKEEL	3
BALLYNAHINCH	13	KILREA	1
BALLYNURE	1	LARNE	21
BANBRIDGE	15	LIFFORD	1
BANGOR	23	LIMAVADY	28
BELCOO	3	LISBELLAW	3
BELFAST	292	LISBURN	39
BELLEEK	2	LISNASKEA	5
BENBURB	2	LONDONDERRY	97
BESSBROOK	1	LOUGHGALL	1
BREADY	1	LURGAN	10
BUSHMILLS	2	MACOSQUIN	1
CALEDON	3	MAGHERA	17
CARRICKFERGUS	28	MAGHERAFELT	38
CARRYDUFF	1	MAGHERALIN	1
CASTLEDAWSON	2	MAGUIRESBRIDGE	1
CASTLEDERG	13	MILLISLE	1
CASTLEWELLAN	3	MOIRA	1

CLOGHER	12	MONEYMORE	2
CO.ANTRIM	1	NEWBUILDINGS	1
CLOUGHEY	1	NEWCASTLE	5
CO TYRONE	2	NEWRY	53
CO.FERMANAGH	1	NEWTOWNABBEY	53
COLERAINE	52	NEWTOWNARDS	28
COMBER	2	NEWTOWNBUTLER	2
COOKSTOWN	19	OMAGH	67
CRAIGAVON	32	PORTADOWN	20
CROSSMAGLEN	1	PORTAVOGIE	1
CRUMLIN	15	PORTGLENONE	1
CULLYBACKEY	1	PORTRUSH	10
CUSHENDALL	1	PORTSTEWART	2
DERRY	1	RANDALSTOWN	12
DERRYGONNELLY	1	RASHARKIN	1
DERRYLIN	2	REDHILLS	1
DERVOCK	1	ROSLEA	3
DOAGH	2	ROSSINVER	1
DONAGHADEE	7	ROSTREVOR	1
DOWNPATRICK	32	SEAPATRICK	2
DRAPERSTOWN	1	SION MILLS	2
DROMARA	1	SIXMILECROSS	1
DROMORE	12	STEWARTSTOWN	3
DRUMQUIN	1	STRABANE	33
DUNDALK	1	TEMPO	3
DUNDONALD	5	TOBERMORE	3
DUNGANNON	42	TOOMEBRIDGE	5
DUNGIVEN	2	TRILICK	6
DUNMURRY	2	WHITEHEAD	1
ENNISKILLEN	43		

Furthermore, many of the apprentices listed above will have found alternative employment, or will have availed of the Department's contingency arrangements for redundant apprentices for those affected in the key skills areas of Motor Vehicle, Engineering and Construction. A survey of those areas has shown that since 1 April 2009, 493 apprentices have been made redundant. This total can be broken down as follows:

- Construction – 288
- Engineering – 161
- Motor Vehicle – 44

SIR REG EMPEY MLA

Minister for Employment and Learning

Apprenticeships

Ms C Ní Chuilín asked the Minister for Employment and Learning (i) to detail the number of apprenticeships of which his Department is aware, broken down by constituency; and (ii) how many apprenticeships his Department has supported since May 2007. (AQW 8447/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The Department has supported 13,867 apprentices between 1 May 2007 and 17 June 2009. Annex A reflects the current occupancy at 19 June 2009 for Apprenticeships programmes. The Department is not in a position to break these numbers down by constituency. The data provides a breakdown by City/Town based on the address given by each apprentice.

ANNEX A

CURRENT OCCUPANCY AT 18 JUNE 2008 FOR APPRENTICESHIPS PROGRAMMES

*APPRENTICESHIPS OCCUPANCY BY TOWN AT 17 JUNE 2009

	Sum		Sum
AGHADOWEY	2	GARRISON	5
AGHALEE	2	GARVAGH	5
AHOGHILL	8	GARVARY	1
ALDERGROVE	1	GILFORD	12
ANNALONG	2	GLARRYFORD	1
ANTRIM	220	GLENARM	1
ARDBOE	2	GLENNAVY	5
ARDGLASS	2	GLENGORMLEY	17
ARMAGH	242	GORTIN	1
ARMOY	1	GREENISLAND	3
ARNEY	1	GREENWOOD	1
ARTICLAVE	1	GREYABBEY	6
AUGHER	8	GREYSTEEL	7
AUGHNACLOY	20	GROOMSPORT	1
BALLINAMALLARD	16	HAMILTONSBAWN	1
BALLYCARRY	3	HILLSBOROUGH	22
BALLYCASSIDY	1	HILLTOWN	1
BALLYCASTLE	40	HOLYWOOD	39
BALLYCLARE	152	IRVINESTOWN	40
BALLYGAWLEY	5	ISLANDMAGEE	3
BALLYGOWAN	9	KEADY	12
BALLYHALBERT	4	KELLS	3
BALLYKELLY	11	KESH	17
BALLYKINLAR	3	KILKEEL	28
BALLYMAGORRY	3	KILLEA	1
BALLYMARTIN	1	KILLEN	1
BALLYMENA	498	KILLINCHY	1
BALLYMONEY	139	KILLOUGH	1
BALLYNAHINCH	95	KILLYLEAGH	11

	Sum		Sum
BALLYROBERT	1	KILREA	5
BALLYSHANNON	1	KINAWLEY	7
BALLYWALTER	3	KIRCUBBIN	1
BALNAMORE	1	KNOCKLOUGHRIM	1
BALYMENA	1	LACK	2
BANBRIDGE	144	LAMBEG	2
BANGOR	237	LARNE	162
BELCOO	6	LAWRENCETOWN	1
BELFAST	1897	LEITRIM	1
BELLAGHY	4	LENADERG	1
BELLANALECK	1	LETTERBREEN	3
BELLEEK	7	LETTERKENNY	2
BERAGH	5	LIFFORD	4
BESSBROOK	2	LIMAVADY	149
BLEARY	2	LINASKEA	1
BOA ISLAND	1	LISAHALLY	1
BOHO	1	LISBELLAW	11
BRIDGEND	1	LISBURN	314
BROOKEBOROUGH	9	LISNARICK	1
BROUGHSHANE	1	LISNASKEA	70
BUNCRANA	2	LONDONDERRY	521
BURNFOOT	1	LOUGHGALL	3
BUSHMILLS	12	LOUGHGUILLE	1
CALEDON	2	LURGAN	119
CAMLOUGH	1	MACKEN	1
CARNDONAGH	1	MAGHABERRY	4
CARNLOUGH	4	MAGHERA	67
CARNMONEY	1	MAGHERAFELT	185
CARRICKFERGUS	227	MAGHERALIN	1
CARRICKMORE	2	MAGHERAVEELY	2
CARRIGANS	1	MAGILLIGAN	1
CARROWDORE	2	MAGUIRESBRIDGE	19
CARRYDUFF	4	MALLUSK	2
CASTLEBLAYNEY	2	MARKETHILL	4
CASTLEDAWSON	10	MAYOBRIDGE	4
CASTLEDERG	53	MEIGH	2
CASTLEREAGH	1	MIDDLETOWN	2
CASTLEROCK	4	MILFORD	2
CASTLESHANE	1	MILLISLE	9

	Sum		Sum
CASTLEWELLAN	43	MOIRA	10
CAVAN	2	MONAGHAN	1
CHANTERHILL	1	MONEA	1
CLADY	1	MONEYMORE	9
CLAUDY	2	MONEYREAGH	1
CLOGHER	17	MONKSTOWN	2
CLONES	2	MOORTOWN	1
CLONMANY	1	MOUNTFIELD	1
CLOUGH	1	MOY	1
CLOUGHEY	1	MUFF	1
CLOUGHMILLS	2	NEWBUILDINGS	1
CO ANTRIM	10	NEWCASTLE	48
CO ARMAGH	5	NEWMILLS	1
CO DOWN	39	NEW MOSSLEY	1
CO FERMANAGH	26	NEWRY	518
CO LONDONDERRY/DERRY	34	NEWTOWNABBEY	357
CO TYRONE	25	NEWTOWNARDS	281
COAGH	4	NEWTOWNBUTLER	16
COALISLAND	7	NEWTOWNHAMILTON	1
COLERAINE	217	NEWTOWNSTEWART	10
COMBER	22	OMAGH	331
CONLIG	1	OMEATH	2
COOKSTOWN	172	PARKGATE	1
CRAIGAVON	228	PETTIGO	1
CRAWFORDSBURN	2	POMEROY	1
CROSSGAR	10	PORTADOWN	134
CROSSMAGLEN	1	PORTAFERRY	3
CRUMLIN	63	PORTAVOGIE	2
CULLYBACKEY	4	PORTGLENONE	10
CULLYHANNA	1	PORTRUSH	29
CUSHENDALL	2	PORTSTEWART	23
CUSHENDUN	2	RANDALSTOWN	51
DERRIAGHY	1	RAPHOE	1
DERRY	25	RASHARKIN	1
DERRYBEG	1	RATHFRILAND	9
DERRYGONNELLY	5	REDHILLS	1
DERRYLIN	11	RICHHILL	5
DERVOCK	1	ROSLEA	20
DESERTMARTIN	1	ROSSINVER	1

	Sum		Sum
DOAGH	6	ROSTREVOR	4
DOLLINGSTOWN	2	SAINTFIELD	5
DONAGHADEE	40	SCARVA	2
DONAGHCLONEY	13	SEAFORDE	1
DONEGAL	1	SILVERBRIDGE	2
DONEMANA	6	SION MILLS	7
DOWNPATRICK	166	SIXMILECROSS	2
DRAPERSTOWN	9	ST JOHNSTON	3
DROMARA	9	STEWARTSTOWN	3
DROMORE	75	STONEFYORD	1
DRUMAHOE	1	STRABANE	172
DRUMANESS	1	STRANGFORD	1
DRUMBO	3	STRATHFOYLE	1
DRUMQUIN	3	SWANLINBAR	1
DUNAMANAGH	2	SWATRAGH	2
DUNDALK	3	TANDRAGEE	10
DUNDONALD	30	TAUGHMONAGH	1
DUNDROD	2	TEMPLEPATRICK	5
DUNGANNON	338	TEMPO	18
DUNGIVEN	26	TOBERMORE	4
DUNMURRY	25	TOOMEBRIDGE	31
DUNDONALD	1	TRILICK	13
EDERNEY	4	TULLY	1
EGLINTON	3	UPPER BALLINDERRY	1
EMYVALE	1	UPPERLANDS	3
ENNISKILLEN	172	WARINGSTOWN	3
FEENY	2	WARRENPOINT	15
FERMANAGH	1	WHITEABBEY	4
FINAGHY	1	WHITECROSS	1
FINTONA	6	WHITEHEAD	6
FIVEMILETOWN	27		
FLORENCECOURT	2		
FROSSAS	1	Sum	10269

Enterprise Ulster

Ms C Ní Chuilín asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline any plans his Department has to replace Enterprise Ulster. (AQW 8448/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: My Department has no plans to establish a body to replace Enterprise Ulster. All of the Department's employment and training programmes are now procured via competitive tendering processes. This approach offers best value for money.

Foreign Students Attending University

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many foreign students are attending university, in the academic year 2008/09. (AQW 8477/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: In the 2007/08 academic year there were 5,030 students enrolled at Northern Ireland Higher Education institutions whose domicile was outside the UK. Of these 5,030 students, 3,720 were domiciled inside the European Union.

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Notes:

- (1) This figure has been rounded to the nearest 5.
- (2) The latest available data are for 2007/08.

Proposed Merger of Stranmillis College and Queen's University

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what would be the financial cost if the proposed merger between Stranmillis College and Queens University goes ahead. (AQW 8479/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: You will understand that I can only comment on costs that will affect my Department. It is my understanding that should the merger proceed, it will be neutral in budgetary terms. Both Stranmillis University College and Queen's University are funded on the basis of student numbers and research activity carried out. There are no proposals that the number of students at the merged institution will be greater than the number attending both institutions at present. My Department will also need to await the outcome of the next research assessment exercise, which is several years off, to learn if there is any impact on overall research funding.

People with Disabilities Seeking Employment

Mr P Butler asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the barriers facing people with disabilities seeking to move from benefits to employment. (AQW 8496/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: There is a wide range of possible barriers facing people with disabilities moving from benefits to employment. The barriers faced by each disabled person will be individual to them and may consist of one or multiple barriers to moving from benefit to enter and sustain work. Some of the barriers, which may be real or perceived, include the following: lack of qualifications, skills, potential loss of benefits, nature of disability, level of disability, employer attitudes, lack of confidence, fear of moving from their comfort zone, lack of information about in-work benefits, lack of knowledge of support, lack of knowledge of local/wider job opportunities, economic downturn, age, travel difficulties, carers/parents concerns, low self esteem, etc.

Disablement Employment Advisors

Mr P Butler asked the Minister for Employment and Learning in relation to Disablement Employment Advisors (i) how many there are at present; (ii) how many there were prior to 2006; and (iii) the reasons for this function being withdrawn. (AQW 8497/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: There is presently a complement of 33 Pathways Team Leaders and 130 Pathways Personal Advisers delivering services to the Department's clients who have a disability or a health condition. Prior to 2006 there was a complement of 25 Disablement Employment Advisors in place.

The functions of the Disablement Employment Advisors were not withdrawn, but integrated with those of the Pathways to Work Team Leaders. This decision was made to utilise the knowledge and experience of the Disablement Employment Advisors in relation to disability and employment and enable them to share their expertise with their teams of Pathways Personal Advisers in order to provide a service to the much larger customer group.

Pathways Advisory Service

Mr P Butler asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether his Department will be carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment of the new employment service delivery model, Pathways Advisory Service. (AQW 8498/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The Department carried out a Preliminary Equality Impact Assessment of Pathways to Work for Incapacity Benefit clients in December 2007. The assessment found that there were no significant adverse implications for equality of opportunity.

Employment and Training Sectors

Mr P Butler asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether or not his Department, in conjunction with other Departments will mainstream funding for the supported employment and training sectors when European funding comes to an end in 2013. (AQW 8499/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: With the uncertainty over both the level of public sector funding available post 2011 and the availability to Northern Ireland of European funding when the current Programmes cease in 2013; it is not possible to make firm commitments on funding of specific sectors beyond the current Budget 2008-11.

Employment Service Delivery Model

Mr D Hilditch asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the interim evaluation of the employment service delivery model carried out in August 2008. (AQW 8501/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The Employment Service piloted a number of new initiatives and approaches to the way it delivers its business. The pilot grouped together innovations including new services for Lone Parents through Pathways for Lone Parents, the new Steps to Work provision and a delivery model which tested new training arrangements for Personal Advisers and some internal organisational restructuring designed to ensure that a client retains the same Personal Adviser as far as possible.

The Interim Evaluation found some positive points, identified some areas where the Department could improve and found that in some areas more information was required before a definitive conclusion could be made on whether aspects of the pilot were successful. Following the interim evaluation, new provision has been introduced for lone parents for example a 'Return to Work' credit and Steps to Work has been rolled out. The Department has learned from the Interim Evaluation and is taking forward its findings as part of ongoing organisational development.

Fostering Scheme for Apprentices

Mr D Hilditch asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the companies that are involved in the fostering scheme for apprentices. (AQW 8502/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: To date one engineering company in the North West has taken up the Fostering Scheme and has employed one apprentice.

Stranmillis University College and Queen's University

Mr D Hilditch asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for an update on the merger of Stranmillis University College and Queen's University. (AQW 8503/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Before such a merger can proceed, a business case for the proposal must be considered and approved by my Department and the Department of Finance and Personnel to ensure that it meets HM Treasury 'Green Book' standards. Work on a business case has been progressing over several months and a final copy was submitted to my Department by Stranmillis in May. This is currently being

considered by officials and, if found to be in order, will be forwarded to DFP for consideration and approval, and then to myself, as Minister.

If the business case is approved, the Department will have to take a policy decision on the proposal before any further steps are taken.

Steps to Work

Mr D Kennedy asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many people successfully started each of the Steps to Work, strand 2 options within the recommended 4 week period, broken down by each office area in Co. Antrim. (AQW 8564/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: At 29 May 2009 a total of 1,221 starts were recorded on the Steps to Work programme Step 2 within the recommended 4 week period since the programme started on 29 September 2008. A breakdown by office area within County Antrim is set out below:

County Antrim Offices	Back To Work	Essential Skills	NVQs	Qualifications	Self Employment Test Trading	Total
Antrim	1	0	2	7	2	12
Ballymena	16	4	4	1	2	27
Belfast North	88	10	23	13	1	135
Ballymoney	7	1	16	3	1	28
Carrickfergus	3	0	1	3	1	8
Falls Road	147	50	65	52	1	315
Andersonstown	234	30	60	25	7	356
Larne	25	3	2	0	5	35
Lisburn	28	7	11	14	1	61
Newtownabbey	45	6	15	6	7	79
Shankill	60	42	10	16	1	129
Shaftesbury Square	10	1	6	15	4	36
Total	664	154	215	155	33	1,221

Steps to Work

Mr D Kennedy asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many people did not start any of the Steps to Work, strand options within the recommended 4 week period, broken down by each office area in Co. Antrim and to give the reason. (AQW 8565/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: At 29 May 2009 a total of 1,994 people had not started the Steps to Work Strand 2 options within the recommended 4 week period. A breakdown by office area within County Antrim is set out below. The reasons for not meeting the 4 week threshold are not gathered, though feedback from Lead Contractors and Departmental staff would indicate that the economic downturn, layoffs and redundancies have had a significant adverse impact on the number of work placements available and on the volume of work in offices.

County Antrim Offices	Outside 4 week period
Antrim	117
Ballymena	137
Belfast North	286

County Antrim Offices	Outside 4 week period
Ballymoney	173
Carrickfergus	73
Falls Road	220
Andersonstown	367
Larne	81
Lisburn	102
Newtownabbey	123
Shankill	108
Shaftesbury Square	207
Total	1,994

Steps to Work

Mr D Kennedy asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many people from the Steps to Work provision, successfully gained employment, in each office area in Co. Antrim. (AQW 8566/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: As participation on Steps to Work can last up to a maximum of 52 weeks, it is too early at this stage to provide any meaningful information on employment outcomes.

Adults with Learning Disabilities

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline what strategies and programmes are in place to deliver education and training to adults with learning disabilities. (AQW 8654/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The Department has a range of programmes and support in place to deliver education and training to adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Further Education

Further Education (FE) Colleges offer a wide range of mainstream and discrete courses for adults with learning difficulties. The Department, through the Additional Support Fund, provides £3.5m to meet any additional technical and/or personal support required for these FE students.

Disablement Advisory Service

The Department's Disability Advisory Service funds residential training provision for people with disabilities, including those with learning disabilities.

Careers Service

The Department's Careers Service provides impartial, all-age Careers Information, Advice and Guidance service to adults with learning disabilities.

Training Programmes

The Department's Training for Success and Apprenticeship training programmes are accessible to adults with learning disabilities. Specialist support is available to such participants, based on an assessment of their additional training needs.

PhD Research Students

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning (i) to outline progress against the PfG goal of increasing by 300 the number of PhD research students at local universities by 2010; and (ii) to detail the subject areas being researched by the new PhD students. (AQW 8657/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The Programme for Government commitment to increase by 300 the number of PhD research students at local universities by 2010 remains on target. The initial uplift of 100 students in the annual intake took place as scheduled in Academic Year 2008/09 while the increase for Academic Year 2009/10 is currently being progressed. The target will be completed with the final intake of 100 additional PhD students in Academic Year 2010/11.

Students enrolled through these additional awards are carrying out research within economic priority areas as agreed with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment and informed by MATRIX, the Northern Ireland Science and Industry Panel. These include agri-food, life and health sciences (including behavioural), advanced materials, engineering, information and communication technologies, electronics, software engineering, construction, creative media and financial services.

Skillfast-UK

Mr R Newton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the role being played by Skillfast-UK in assisting fashion and textile companies to develop the skills of their workforce; and if he will support its bid to be re-licensed. (AQW 8660/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Arrangements are in place to take forward the Sector Skills Council Reform and Relicensing process. The Department is fully involved in this, and along with the other devolved nations and sponsor Whitehall Departments, provides the National Audit Office with feedback on Sector Skills Council performance, as part of the assessment exercise. The UK Commission for Employment and Skills then comes to a view and makes a recommendation to the government sponsors; in advance of this recommendation a Sector Skills Council has the opportunity to appeal the UK Commission's recommendation.

Skillfast-UK is currently appealing the UK Commission for Employment and Skills' recommendation that they have not met the required standard for relicensing. The other co-sponsor Ministers and I are currently awaiting the outcome of this appeal, and the subsequent UK Commission recommendation to government. Until then, it is inappropriate for me to comment further.

Queen's University and Stranmillis University College

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether the proposed merger of Queen's University and Stranmillis University College will result in any compulsory redundancies of lecturers and teaching fellows employed by Stranmillis University College. (AQW 8726/09)

Minister for Employment and Learning: When Stranmillis University College and Queen's University voluntarily agreed to merge, the Governing Bodies of both institutions agreed a set of guiding principles for the merger process. The second principle states that, "there will be full consultation with all staff and Trade Unions. Staff will transfer under TUPE with their terms and conditions protected and will remain in their current pension schemes. No compulsory redundancies will arise as a direct result of this merger." Queen's has also separately stated that there will be no compulsory redundancies arising from its recently approved 2009 Academic Plan and that the announced redundancies at Queens University apply only to Queens University staff.

DEPARTMENT OF ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Marine Issues

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the number of staff, and their relevant grade, in her Department who have responsibility for marine issues; and (ii) the annual total cost of marine specific work to her Department. (AQW 8462/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Mrs A Foster): Please see table below.

(i) No. of staff and relevant grade within DETI* who have responsibility for marine issues	(ii) Total annual cost of marine specific work (2008/09)
HSENI	£5120
2 Principal Health and Safety Inspectors - 10 % of time (combined)	
1 Senior Medical Employment Adviser (SMEA)	**
Energy Market	
1 x Grade 5 – 5%	£3734
Sustainable Energy	
2 x Grade 7 - 5%	£5848
1 x Deputy Principal - 5%	£2171
1 x Staff Officer - 5%	£1665
1 x Grade 7 (part time) – 10%,	£4094
1 x Deputy Principal - 60%	£26056
Total	£48,688

* Includes NDPBs

** The SMEA is seconded long term from DHSSPS and salary costs are not incurred by DETI and hence have not been included in the total overall total costs

Invest NI

Mr P Butler asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the efforts of Invest NI to secure inward investment in the west Belfast constituency, in each of the last 5 years. (AQW 8466/09)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Invest NI's efforts to market the attractions of the West Belfast PCA have been rewarded in that during the 5 year period from 2004-05 to 2008-09, it offered nearly £10 million of assistance to externally-owned projects (inward investment) willing to locate there. These projects planned to invest £37 million in the area and included five employment-related offers of support. These five offers amounted to nearly £8 million of assistance, which contributed towards projects that planned to invest £28.3 million and create nearly 900 new jobs in companies such as LBM Holdings. The remaining £2 million was offered to innovation projects by externally-owned clients that planned to invest £9 million in West Belfast.

Invest NI's commitment to attract investment to the area is witnessed by its investment in industrial land. 7 out of Invest NI's 40 industrial parks across Northern Ireland are located in the constituency. These account for 190 acres of which 31.5 acres remain available to clients. This includes the Forthriver Business Park where Invest NI has invested in excess of £12m in acquisition, clearance and development of the site, delivering 12.7 acres of serviced sites. Specifically between April 2004 and March 2009, Invest NI sold or leased 15.4 acres of land to clients and almost 96,000 square feet of workspace

While support to externally-owned clients is important so is that to locally-owned clients. In the same five year period Invest NI offered over £8 million of assistance to 261 locally-owned projects that planned to invest nearly £29 million in West Belfast. Furthermore, 612 offers, amounting to £255,000, were made to local individuals intending to set up a business in West Belfast through the Start A Business programme.

Turning to Belfast as a whole, between 2004 - 05 and 2008 - 09, Invest NI offered £195 million of assistance to externally-owned projects in the Belfast Travel To Work Area (TTWA). These projects planned to invest almost £1.5 billion in the area and included 111 employment-related offers of support. These 111 projects were offered nearly £150 million and planned to create nearly 10,700 new jobs and safeguard almost 2,500 existing jobs, whilst investing £1.3 billion in the area. Invest NI offered the remaining support of £45 million to innovation projects by externally-owned clients that planned to invest £191 million in the area.

The benefits associated with business development are not constrained by local boundaries, which are not self-contained labour markets. 61% of the inward investment projects locating within the Belfast TTWA were concentrated within a 3 mile radius of the city centre which, because of its accessible central location, provides readily accessible employment opportunities for those living in West Belfast, across the city and, indeed, throughout the wider region. NI Census, data, for example, shows that 55% of those who work in Belfast DCA reside in other areas.

Assistance patterns are largely demand-led by businesses wishing to improve their competitiveness and gain a larger share of international markets and Invest NI's role is therefore to promote all of Northern Ireland as an attractive and viable location for inward investment opportunities. As such, its promotional effort is not subdivided into regions as to do so would be ineffective, inefficient and ultimately confusing to the client.

Invest NI is conscious of the impact of global economic conditions and, despite the fact that there is evidence of companies deferring investment decisions and reviewing business strategies, the agency continues to pursue opportunities in new and emerging sectors where there is potential for further foreign direct investment to Northern Ireland.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Taxis Act

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment how the Taxis Act has benefited reputable taxi depots and licensed drivers. (AQW 8394/09)

Minister of the Environment (Mr S Wilson): As the Taxis Act still has to be implemented no benefits have been seen yet. However, I have agreed that my officials will develop an operator registration scheme by December 2009. This voluntary scheme will allow taxi depot owners to register their businesses free of charge and this in turn will enable the Department to build up a more comprehensive picture of the industry and keep operators and drivers up to date with the changes as they are happening. Following the implementation of this scheme, legislation will be put in place to provide for a permit scheme and we intend to move to full operator licensing by 2012-13. This Autumn my Department hopes to make the first Commencement Order for the Taxis Act. This will improve powers to deal with illegal taxis and ease the burden on legitimate taxi drivers and operators. In addition, we have been working to increase significantly the resources devoted to taxi enforcement. Officials have also been developing proposals for a new taximeter specification which will help those drivers/owners intending to buy taximeters to decide what to purchase. Alongside work on the Act we have developed a suite of taxi fixed penalty offences for inclusion in the recent consultation on a fixed penalty and deposit scheme. It is intended that these fixed penalties will be in place by March 2010 and that, by making enforcement easier, they will free up officers to deal with illegal taxiing more effectively.

Taxis Act

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the progress of introducing a taxi operator's licence. (AQW 8395/09)

Minister of the Environment: When the Taxis Act was enacted it was proposed that operator licensing would be one of the first changes the industry would experience. However, the resources available for the implementation of the Act have been limited and other priorities such as the day care nursery exemption scheme and a wider review of courtesy and incidental transport have prevented the Department from making as much progress as expected. However, on 15 June I agreed that my officials should develop and implement a taxi operator registration scheme by December 2009. This voluntary scheme will be free to operators and will serve as a forerunner first to a permit scheme and then to full operator licensing. It will allow the Department to build up a more comprehensive picture of the industry and facilitate the introduction in due course of a more effective licensing scheme. The permit scheme and full operator licensing will require new regulations and work will begin on these as soon as possible after the effectiveness of the registration scheme has been assessed. It is hoped that full operator licensing will be in place by 2012-13.

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Mr D Ford asked the Minister of the Environment what independent scrutiny measures he intends to introduce to monitor the success of the revised Northern Ireland Environment Agency Enforcement and Prosecution policy. (AQW 8419/09)

Minister of the Environment: The purpose of the revised Enforcement Policy is to ensure a balanced approach to regulation and enforcement as part of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency's Better Regulation Programme and to outline the powers employed by enforcement staff. The Criminal Justice Inspectorate provides an important scrutiny role for DOE enforcement, their first inspection report having been published in October 2007. A follow up inspection of the Department's policies and procedures is scheduled for December 2009.

Office of Environmental Enforcement

Mr D Ford asked the Minister of the Environment (i) how many staff have been recruited to work in the Office of Environmental Enforcement; and (ii) how much funding has been allocated annually to this office. (AQW 8420/09)

Minister of the Environment: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency's Environmental Crime Unit currently employs 33 staff. Its total budget for this year is £1.6m.

Office of Environmental Enforcement

Mr D Ford asked the Minister of the Environment (i) how many successful prosecutions for environmental crimes have been taken; and (ii) how many cases are pending, since the Office of Environmental Enforcement was set up in December 2008. (AQW 8421/09)

Minister of the Environment: Since December 2008, NIEA's Environmental Crime Unit has overseen 22 successful prosecutions for environmental crimes; 56 further cases are currently going through the court system.

Marine Issues

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) the number of staff, and their relevant grade, in his Department who have responsibility for marine issues; and (ii) the annual total cost of marine specific work to his Department. (AQW 8460/09)

Minister of the Environment: The details requested are as follows and cover the 2008/09 financial year:

Planning and Natural Resources Division

- (i) Unified Grade 6 (x 1)
Unified Grade 7 (x 2)
Principal Legal Officer (x 1)
Deputy Principal (x 3)
Staff Officer (x 2)
- (ii) The annual total cost of marine-specific work for this Division was £281,000.

Conservation Science

- (i) Unified Grade 7 (x 1)
Senior Scientific Officer (x 2)
Higher Scientific Officer (x 2)
Scientific Officer (x 1)
- (ii) The annual total cost of marine-specific work for this unit was £423,000.

Protecting Historic Monuments

- (i) Curatorial D (x 1)
Curatorial E (x 1)
Contract staff (x 3)
- (ii) The annual total cost of marine-specific work for this unit was £175,000.

Water Management Unit

- (i) Principal Scientific Officer (x 1)
Senior Scientific Officer (x 3)

Higher Scientific Officer (x 10)
 Scientific Officer (x 15)
 Assistant Scientific Officer (x 1)
 Support Grade Band 2 (x 1)
 Administrative Assistant (x 1)
 Professional & Technical Officer (x 1)

(ii) The annual total cost of marine-specific work for this unit was £1,680,294.

The above figures include staff costs which have been calculated using the Department's Ready Reckoner for the 2008/09 financial year.

Habitat for Cormorants

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment what steps he is taking to improve the habitat for cormorants; and are there any areas in Northern Ireland where they thrive. (AQW 8488/09)

Minister of the Environment: Cormorants breed at Sheep Island and The Gobbins, both in Co Antrim and at Bird Island, Co Down.

In winter, important populations occur in Lough Neagh, along the Outer Ards coast and in Strangford, Belfast and Carlingford Loughs.

To date no positive habitat management has been undertaken at locations where Cormorants breed.

A decline in breeding numbers currently being observed at one site may result in future site based intervention.

Feeding areas used year round by Cormorant benefit from wider measures addressing water quality.

Habitat for Cormorants

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment how many cormorants inhabit Northern Ireland. (AQW 8490/09)

Minister of the Environment: Cormorant occurs in Northern Ireland both as a breeding and wintering species.

Not all Cormorant breeding sites are surveyed annually. The full breeding population was last surveyed as part of the Seabird 2000 programme. The total population in Northern Ireland at that time was 663 pairs.

Annual counts of breeding birds take place at Sheep Island, Co Antrim. This has been the most important breeding site for this species. Here the population has declined from 344 pairs ten years ago, to 287 pairs in 2005. This year 187 pairs were recorded. The reason for this decline is not clear.

In winter, important populations occur in Lough Neagh, along the Outer Ards coast and in Strangford, Belfast and Carlingford Loughs.

The most recent comprehensive estimate for the wintering population in Northern Ireland is from 2006/07 when a total of 3,100 birds were counted. This is close to the average population noted for the period 2002/03 – 2006/07.

Control of Raptors

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment if he is aware of the result of the NOP market research, that 57% of people feel that the control of raptors is necessary and that 80% of those polled agree that all help must be given to maintain birds that are being reduced by rising number of raptors. (AQW 8491/09)

Minister of the Environment: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) is not aware of this market research.

There is a view among certain groups that populations of birds of prey (raptors) are increasing and that they are impacting on other populations of birds, especially songbirds.

It must be noted that many of our raptor species are the subject of special conservation measures both nationally and at a European level.

Sparrowhawk has particularly been singled out as a raptor impacting on songbird populations.

Studies have shown that at a national level, there is no evidence that increased numbers of Sparrowhawks have caused declines in songbirds.

A range of studies led the RSPB to conclude that there is no scientific evidence that Sparrowhawks or other birds of prey have had an effect on populations of songbirds.

A range of organisations involved in bird conservation (including the various United Kingdom and government advisory bodies) believe that the recorded declines in a wide range of non-raptor bird populations in the United Kingdom, Ireland and elsewhere in Europe are due to a number of factors including loss of habitat, changes in agricultural practices, climate change and changes in conditions at wintering grounds for migratory species breeding here.

Specialists in this field agree that there is a need to restore features of the countryside on which songbirds depend and that this is the only means for addressing declines in these populations.

Red Squirrel Population

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment what steps he is taking to protect the red squirrel population. (AQW 8515/09)

Minister of the Environment: The native Red Squirrel population in Northern Ireland is declining in numbers and distribution.

It is widely accepted that the presence of the Grey Squirrel is the biggest threat to the conservation of the Red Squirrel.

A Species Action Plan (SAP) for the Red Squirrel is currently being prepared by officials and should be issued for public consultation later this year.

One of the measures likely to be recommended in the SAP is the creation of Red Squirrel Reserves which will be defended against the ingress of the Grey Squirrel.

Illegal Landfill Sites

Mr P Butler asked the Minister of the Environment (i) how many illegal landfill sites his Department has dealt with; and (ii) what court action and other action his Department has taken against those who operate illegal landfill sites, in each of the last five years. (AQW 8561/09)

Minister of the Environment: NIEA's Environmental Crime Unit (ECU), which oversees enforcement against illegal waste offences, does not collect data in terms of the number of illegal landfill sites dealt with. There is no definition of "illegal landfill" in law. Its enforcement data is instead collated within the parameters of its governing legislation, the Waste and Contaminated Land Order (Northern Ireland) 1997; this directs prosecutions in the following categories:

- depositing (or permitting the deposit of) waste,
- treating, keeping, or disposing of waste without a licence
- treating, keeping or disposing of waste in a manner likely to cause pollution of the environment or harm to human health (this being the most serious)

The prosecution cases that ECU oversees can also relate to waste transfer stations or waste treatment facilities and it is therefore not possible to differentiate cases only involving landfill sites.

Although the majority of convictions reported relate to deposit of waste without a licence, many others do not, e.g. transporting waste without a carriers' licence, and Duty of Care charges.

Since late 2003, NIEA has overseen 365 successful prosecutions, generating fines of over £984,515, securing 13 prison sentences and £1 million in confiscation orders. Broken down by year, this equates to:

Year	Prosecutions	Fines (£)
2003 – 05	88	131,215
2006	116	305,400
2007	68	276,850
2008	72	177,100
2009	21	93,950

Statistics on “other actions” have been kept since 2007. In 2007, 135 warning letters, Article 27 and Article 44s (notices requiring the removal of illegally dumped waste by legal means) were issued; in 2008, 234 were issued.

Derry City Council Equality Consultation

Mr R Beggs asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 8156/09, if his Department has taken a position on renaming the City of Londonderry and, if so, has this been communicated to Derry City Council. (AQW 8570/09)

Minister of the Environment: My Department has not taken a position on the renaming of the City of Londonderry and has not taken any steps to bring this matter to a definitive conclusion.

Derry City Council Equality Consultation

Mr R Beggs asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 8156/09, what steps he has taken to bring the matter of renaming the City of Londonderry to a definitive conclusion. (AQW 8572/09)

Minister of the Environment: My Department has not taken a position on the renaming of the City of Londonderry and has not taken any steps to bring this matter to a definitive conclusion.

Election Posters

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of the Environment to outline all his Department’s legislation that relates to the erection of election posters. (AQW 8575/09)

Minister of the Environment: My Department’s legislation in relation to the erection of election posters is the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991, insofar as it relates to advertisements, and the Planning (Control of Advertisement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992.

The Regulations provide that the display of election posters does not require the Department’s consent provided the posters are removed within 14 days after the close of the poll in the election to which they relate.

Septic Tank and Sewage Sludge

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the methodology for the application of human waste treated with lime to land. (AQW 8597/09)

Minister of the Environment: Septic tank sludge and sewage sludge can be applied by deep burial, injecting into the soil or spreading on the soil, depending on its consistency. In addition to the requirements of The Sludge (Use in Agriculture) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1990, applications of sewage sludge must also comply with the Nitrates Action Programme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006.

The Nitrates Action Programme Regulations define both septic tank and sewage sludge as ‘organic manure’. Application of organic manures must comply with certain conditions which include a closed spreading period (15 October -31 January), the necessity for suitable soil and weather conditions, non-spreading zones around water/ waterways and consideration of the crop nutrient requirements.

Septic Tank and Sewage Sludge

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of the Environment if there is a time delay before grazing livestock is permitted on land that has been spread with human waste treated with lime. (AQW 8598/09)

Minister of the Environment: Paragraph 5 of The Sludge (Use in Agriculture) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1990 states that grazing livestock should not be permitted on land that has been treated with sludge or septic tank sludge for 3 weeks commencing on the date of the spreading.

Septic Tank and Sewage Sludge

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the time-scales for human waste treated with lime being stored until application to land. (AQW 8599/09)

Minister of the Environment: Under the Waste Management Licensing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003 sewage sludge may be stored for up to one year provided the storage site has been registered as a waste exemption with the Department of the Environment. Furthermore, where the Department considers it to be appropriate and acceptable, a waste exemption may be renewed on an annual basis.

Under the Nitrates Action Programme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 sewage sludge cannot be applied to land during the closed spreading period of 15 October -31 January. In addition, outside the closed period it cannot be applied to land in unsuitable soil or weather conditions. It must therefore be stored during these periods.

Septic Tank and Sewage Sludge

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the criteria which must be met before human waste treated with lime can be spread on agricultural land. (AQW 8600/09)

Minister of the Environment: Compliance with The Sludge (Use in Agriculture) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1990 and the requirements of the Nitrates Action Programme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 in relation to the application of organic manures. These requirements include the closed spreading period (15 October -31 January), the necessity for suitable soil and weather conditions, non-spreading zones around water/waterways and consideration of the crop nutrient requirements. Both of the preceding regulations are incorporated in Statutory Management Requirements 4 and 5 under the Common Agricultural Policy Single Payment and Support Schemes (Cross Compliance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005.

The Code of Good Agricultural Practice for the prevention of pollution of water, air and soil recommends that sewage sludge or septic tank sludge should be injected or incorporated into the soil immediately after application. However under The Sludge (Use in Agriculture) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1990 this requirement only applies to untreated sludge.

The spreading of sewage sludge is not permitted on grassland or forage crops under the Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC) Farm Quality Assurance Scheme for Beef and Lamb.

Department of Energy and Climate Change

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of the Environment what discussions his Department has held with the Department of Energy and Climate Change; and on what issues. (AQW 8617/09)

Minister of the Environment: My Department has regular discussions with officials in the Department of Energy and Climate Change on various issues such as the implementation of the Climate Change Act 2008, the Carbon Reduction Commitment, the EU Emissions Trading Scheme and the EU Energy and Climate Change Package.

Copenhagen Climate Change Summit

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of the Environment what consultation his Department intends to have with the Department of Energy and Climate Change, ahead of the Copenhagen Climate Change Summit. (AQW 8620/09)

Minister of the Environment: International negotiations are the responsibility of Whitehall.

My Department has been kept informed of the Department of Energy and Climate Change's (DECC) plans in relation to preparations for the Copenhagen Climate Change Summit. I have asked that DECC continues to keep the devolved administrations informed.

Rose Energy Incinerator in Glenavy

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the planning application from Rose Energy to build an incinerator in Glenavy. (AQW 8636/09)

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

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

Consultations on the new water abstraction planning application and accompanying ES, and on the Addendum to the ES accompanying the power plant application, were issued to all relevant consultees on 18 June 2009.

Neighbour notification in respect of the new water abstraction application and accompanying ES and neighbour re-notification on the power plant application and Addendum, issued on 26 June 2009.

Advertisement in respect of the new application and accompanying ES will take place on 22, 23 and 24 July 2009. Re-advertisement in respect of the power plant application and Addendum will also take place on 22, 23 and 24 July 2009.

Ministerial Cars

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of the Environment if he has ever used his Ministerial car to attend a Council meeting. (AQW 8642/09)

Minister of the Environment: No.

Departmental Officials

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of the Environment if he received advice from his departmental officials prior to a Council meeting he attended on 22 June 2009; and if so to outline that advice. (AQW 8643/09)

Minister of the Environment: No.

Departmental Officials

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the protocol for bringing departmental officials to a Council meeting where a Minister is attending in his capacity as a Councillor. (AQW 8644/09)

Minister of the Environment: The Department is not aware of any protocol for officials attending council meetings.

Departmental Officials

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of the Environment (i) to detail the cost of bringing departmental officials to the Belfast City Council meeting on 22 June 2009; and (ii) to outline what the officials did whilst at the meeting. (AQW 8645/09)

Minister of the Environment: 1. None.

2. The Minister's Press Officer attended the meeting to deal with Departmental press queries following an announcement of the outcome of the meeting.

Driver and Vehicle Agency

Mr R Beggs asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the reasons for the substantial net resources of the Driver and Vehicle Agency shown in the main estimates which indicates that there was £725,000 in 2007/08; £7,915,000 in 2008/09 and £5,567,000 in the current financial year and to advise why such significant funds have been allowed to accumulate. (AQW 8651/09)

Minister of the Environment: The figures quoted above are the 2007/08 Outturn (£725k), and the Estimate figures for 2008/09 (-£7,915,000) and 2009/10 (£5,567,000). These figures represent the net amount required to fund the cost of the DVA Licensing and Enforcement functions taking into account income received for services. The DVA Testing function operates as a self financing trading fund (public corporation) and as such does not require funding from the Department. The cost of DVA Testing is therefore not included in the Estimates.

The Main Estimate figure for 2007/08 was originally £5.224m. However, additional income from licences received throughout the year, which is primarily a demand led function, and revised spending plans resulted in an outturn figure of £0.725m for the funding required from the Department.

The £7.915m for figure 2008/09 is in actual fact a negative figure in the Estimate for this year and is due to the fact that DVA Testing as a trading fund is allowed to accumulate reserves in order to fund existing and future capital projects such as extensions to test centres for Co2 emissions testing and additional lanes for the motorcycle manoeuvring test.

Following an Executive Committee discussion of the 2008/09 December monitoring round departments were asked to identify capital contributions to help stimulate the economy. In line with Treasury guidance on public corporations it was agreed that the Department could in effect borrow spending power from DVA Testing by extracting cash in one year and making spending power available to the Agency in a later year. Although the cost of DVA Testing as a trading fund is not included in the Estimates these 'equity withdrawals' are exceptional payments from accumulated reserves and score as accruing resources (income) in the estimate figures. In line with the Treasury policy £10m extracted from the DVA Testing reserves is included in the Estimates figures for 2008-09. Therefore, the net amount required to fund the cost of the DVA Licensing and Enforcement functions for 2008/09 was estimated at £2.085m (ie £2.085m less the £10m gives the minus figure of £7.915m).

The Main Estimate figure for 2009/10 of the net cost of DVA Licensing and Enforcement (£5.567m) is likely to reduce throughout the year due to additional income from licences and revised spending plans.

Planning Service

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of the Environment (i) how many planning applications are currently with Planning Service regarding motor racing at any location in the vicinity of Nutts Corner, Crumlin; (ii) to provide a brief description of each planning proposal and (iii) to detail the names of the companies that have submitted applications. (AQW 8663/09)

Minister of the Environment: In relation to AQW 8663/09 and AQW 8664, no planning applications are currently with Planning Service at any location in the vicinity of Nutts Corner, Crumlin and no planning applications have been submitted to Planning Service regarding motor racing at any location in the vicinity of Nutts Corner, Crumlin within the last five years.

Planning Service

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of the Environment, in each of the last five years, how many (i) planning applications have been submitted to Planning Service regarding motor racing at any location in the vicinity of Nutts Corner, Crumlin; and (ii) how many of these applications have been (a) approved; (b) rejected; (c) withdrawn; and (d) are awaiting a decision. (AQW 8664/09)

Minister of the Environment: In relation to AQW 8663/09 and AQW 8664, no planning applications are currently with Planning Service at any location in the vicinity of Nutts Corner, Crumlin and no planning applications have been submitted to Planning Service regarding motor racing at any location in the vicinity of Nutts Corner, Crumlin within the last five years.

Planning Service

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of the Environment, in each of the last five years, to outline (i) how many complaints his Department has received regarding motor racing activity at any location in the vicinity of Nutts Corner, Crumlin; (ii) the nature of these complaints; (iii) the action his Department took; and (iv) any sanctions his Department imposed on any individual or party in relation to these complaints. (AQW 8665/09)

Minister of the Environment: In relation to AQW 8665/09 I can advise that Planning Service has received a total of 5 complaints regarding motor racing in the vicinity of Nutts Corner, Crumlin over the last 5 years as follows :-

2004 – No complaints received

2005 – No complaints received

2006 - 1 complaint received, T/2006/0026/CA concerning stock car racing track at 47 Moira Road, Nutts Corner Crumlin. A Certificate of Lawfulness of Existing Use or Development was granted on 6 July 2006 under Article 83A of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 because the track has the benefit of established use rights.

2007 – 1 complaint received, T/2007/0047/CA concerning a Race Track at Nutts Corner, unauthorised portacabin/lorry container and engineering works to create motorcycle track. This case was closed as the site was monitored for some time and did not appear to be used during the week. The portacabin and signage were removed. The use has entitlement for 14 days in any calendar year under the General Development Order. No further evidence was presented that this time limit was exceeded. The case was closed in September 2008.

2008 – No complaints received.

2009 – 3 complaints were received as listed below:-

- T/ 2009/0018/CA received 25/2/09 – Alleged Car Racing (not on established race track), large mound of soil build up. – The situation is currently being monitored.
- T/2009/0055CA received 19/5/09– New Stock Car Racing Track opposite the entrance to existing stockcar racing track, Moira Road, Nutts Corner – Warning letter issued 17 June 2009.
- T/2009/0065CA received 3/6/09 – Site visit carried out. This case is in the early stages of investigation.

If you have further details you wish me to pursue please provide them to enable a more specific search of the Department's records to be carried out.

Horse-Riders

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of the Environment if he has plans to give horse-riders the same rights to free access on publicly owned land as that provided for walkers. (AQW 8673/09)

Minister of the Environment: I have no plans to amend the Access to the Countryside Order 1983 to extend the statutory rights of horse-riders. My Department provides facilities for horse-riders at three of its Country Parks. It is for other Departments to consider whether they can accommodate horse-riders at their properties.

British Association for Shooting and Conservation

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment if he will consider hosting a reception for the British Association for Shooting and Conservation to mark its centenary this year. (AQW 8728/09)

Minister of the Environment: I do not consider that it would be appropriate for me to host a reception to mark the centenary of the British Association for Shooting and Conservation given that it is a UK wide organisation.

I am aware, however, of the good work done by BASC members towards conservation and I would be happy to attend any local event held to mark its centenary.

Shooting for Vermin Control, Game Shooting or Wild Fowling

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of the Environment if he had any consultations during the cold spell, when snow and ice was the worst in 30 years, with reference to curtailing or stopping shooting for vermin control, game shooting or wild fowling during that period. (AQW 8730/09)

Minister of the Environment: Under Article 4(10) of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985, my Department may declare any period (not exceeding 14 days) as a period of special protection for any wild bird included in Part 2 of Schedule 1 or Part 1 of Schedule 2.

These provisions are intended for use during periods of severe weather, when hunting or taking of quarry species could threaten populations. The criteria for instituting the procedure are based on data provided by the Meteorological Office.

During the cold spell at the start of this year my Department consulted with the Meteorological Office regarding provision of the relevant data. Officials also consulted with the British Association for Shooting and Conservation, Countryside Alliance and the National Parks and Wildlife Service in the Republic on the implications of a suspension for shooters. As the cold spell in Northern Ireland ended earlier than in other parts of the UK, the required criteria to implement the suspension were not met and therefore it was not imposed.

Conflicts of Interest: Legal Advice

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the number of occasions that he has sought legal advice since coming into office, because of potential or actual conflicts of interest related to (i) his role as a Belfast City Councillor; and (ii) his lobbying for individual planning applications. (AQO 3070/09)

Minister of the Environment: In relation to the planning application for the Aurora development, the Planning Service Management Board sought legal advice from the Departmental Solicitor's Office regarding the procedural handling of the application post Council consultation. In line with normal protocol this advice is confidential.

Illegal Waste: Garrison/Trillick

Mr T Gallagher asked the Minister of the Environment when work will commence on the removal of illegal waste from the sites at Garrison, Co. Fermanagh and Trillick, Co. Tyrone. (AQO 3071/09)

Minister of the Environment: Dublin City Council is the Republic of Ireland's competent authority on cross-border waste movements and have committed to putting in place the necessary contractual arrangements to remove the waste. The tender process is required to be carried out under EU procurement rules and it is therefore anticipated that it will be some 3-4 months before a contract is in place. Work on site will commence as soon as possible after the award of the contract.

Planning Reform

Mr W Irwin asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on Planning Reform. (AQO 3072/09)

Minister of the Environment: Members will be aware there have been delays for a number of months now in securing Executive consideration of the planning reform consultation paper because we have not been able to resolve a number of issues raised by the deputy First Minister and his party colleagues in relation to the draft consultation paper.

The delay in issuing the planning reform consultation paper has a major knock-on effect on our ability to meet the commitment to deliver the legislative programme for planning reform, including the transfer of planning functions to local government, by 2011.

My officials and I are continuing with our efforts to resolve the outstanding issues and I remain hopeful that we can secure Executive consideration and clearance before Summer recess, thus allowing the consultation process to start towards the end of July.

Wildlife: Endangered Species

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of the Environment if his Department has undertaken or plans to undertake any studies into endangered wildlife species. (AQO 3073/09)

Minister of the Environment: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) has a long track record of undertaking research into nature conservation issues or of commissioning this under contract. A large proportion of these studies have targeted habitats or species of conservation concern, of which some of the latter could be considered locally endangered.

More recently, NIEA has developed long term research arrangements with the two universities in Northern Ireland. For example, since the mid-80s, NIEA, and its predecessors, has funded the University of Ulster to undertake a series of Northern Ireland Countryside Surveys, which complement those undertaken in Great Britain. This is a landscape-scale audit of the countryside and this data has been used in conjunction with species data to provide contextual information on species distributions and to identify where further work is needed to target threatened habitats and their species.

Last year, following competitive tendering in the European Journal, NIEA established a 10-year research partnership with Queen's University, known as the Natural Heritage Research Partnership (NHRP). This NIEA contract has the high level aim of providing high quality research to underpin decisions relating to NIEA's statutory duties relating to the conservation of nature and to help deliver strategic targets relating to the Government's key themes of sustainable development, biodiversity and climate change.

NHRP wildlife projects currently include investigating the causes of diving duck declines in Lough Neagh, the threatened Fresh-water Pearl Mussel reproduction in the wild, annual population estimates of the Irish Hare and the distribution and genetic diversity of River Water-crowfoot.

Furthermore, you may recall that my Department is working with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development on a project to restore the rare horse mussel biogenic reef feature in Strangford Lough to favourable conservation status.

Bullbars

Mr J Wells asked the Minister of the Environment if he has any plans to introduce legislation to make it illegal for non-agricultural vehicles to have bullbars. (AQO 3074/09)

Minister of the Environment: I have no plans to introduce legislation to make it illegal for non-agricultural vehicles to have bull bars.

Current European legislation, which took effect on 25 May 2007, prohibits the sale of all new passenger cars and light vans equipped with bull bars, and bull bars sold as accessories, unless they have been certified to appropriate safety standards.

Plastic Bag Levy

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister of the Environment to outline under what circumstances he would consider introducing a plastic bag levy. (AQO 3075/09)

Minister of the Environment: When the Assembly debated this matter on 4 November 2008 I indicated that, whilst I would not rule out anything, my philosophy for Government is that the least amount of regulation that we impose on people, and the more that we can bring people along and persuade them to do the right thing, the better. Basically that is still my position. I have consistently given my support to the voluntary approach to bring about significant reductions in the number of single use carrier bags handed out to consumers. The latest voluntary agreement with leading supermarkets should result in around 5 billion fewer bags being handed out in the UK. I prefer to await the outcome of the voluntary agreement, the results of which are not expected until later in the summer, before taking any decision on the best way forward for Northern Ireland.

DVA Enforcement Officers: Londonderry

Mr S Moutray asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the current situation regarding the safety of Driver and Vehicle Agency enforcement officers in Londonderry. (AQO 3076/09)

Minister of the Environment: The Health & Safety of the Agency's enforcement officers is of paramount importance. Prior to their deployment on operations anywhere in Northern Ireland, PSNI are consulted and staff are briefed on any relevant control measures being adopted to minimise any potential risk of injury.

There is no intelligence at present to suggest that DVA Enforcement Officers are at any greater risk working in Londonderry than in any other area of the province.

Out-of-Town Development

Mr M Brady asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the current legislation on out of town development. (AQO 3077/09)

Minister of the Environment: There is no planning legislation on out of town retail development.

Hedge-Cutting Season

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on legislation relating to the Local Government aspects of the Reform of Public Administration. (AQO 3078/09)

Minister of the Environment: The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill was introduced in the Assembly on 22 June 2009.

The proposed Local Government (Finance) Bill will, subject to Executive agreement, be issued for consultation in July for a 4-month period. It is anticipated that the Bill will be introduced by January 2010.

The policies which will be included in the proposed Local Government (Reorganisation) Bill will, subject to Executive agreement, be issued for consultation in July for a 4-month period. It is anticipated that the Bill will be introduced in May 2010.

Six Mile Water: Pollution/Fish Kills

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment what steps his Department has taken to reduce the regularity of pollution incidents and fish kills in the Six Mile Water River and its tributaries. (AQO 3079/09)

Minister of the Environment: The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) has redoubled efforts put into ensuring that all pollution risks throughout the Six Mile Water River catchment are identified and resolved. This has resulted in a 20% reduction in the number of confirmed water pollution incidents between the years 2000 and 2008.

NIEA staff are working diligently with site operators to remove any identified pollution risks and where necessary, are serving Enforcement Notices.

A comprehensive programme of pollution prevention inspections has been carried out on business premises throughout the Mallusk Industrial Estate.

A centralised inventory has been drawn up of chemicals stored or used by businesses within the Estate. Passive samplers will soon be sited in the Six Mile Water and Ballymartin Rivers to identify ongoing problems.

NIEA staff are currently carrying out compliance checks with existing Water Order standards of all consented industrial premises and NIW infrastructure in the Six Mile Water River catchment area. A number of additional discharges have been identified and these are being considered for consent.

NIEA's existing routine water monitoring programme in the Six Mile Water has been supplemented with investigative monitoring.

NIEA has contributed £10,000 of funding, and is working closely with anglers, industry and other local interests to establish a River Trust on the Six Mile Water. River Trusts have been very successful in England in turning around pollution-affected rivers.

In addition, NIEA is working closely with Rivers Agency and DCAL to draw up a river restoration scheme for the Blackwater and Ballymartin River tributaries of the Six Mile Water.

Better Regulation and Simplification Review

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the Better Regulation and Simplification Review. (AQO 3080/09)

Minister of the Environment: The Better Regulation and Simplification Review Report was published on 16th June 2009.

DOE, in conjunction with DARD, will now consult informally with stakeholders on the report's recommendations.

Individuals or organisations wishing to comment on the content of the report have until 30 September to submit their responses.

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

Civil Service Equal Pay Claim

Mr L Cree asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in relation to the Civil Service equal pay claim, (i) for an update on the current situation; (ii) why it is necessary to review TG1 and TG2 grades; (iii) how many staff are involved in the review; and (iv) when the review will be completed. (AQW 7912/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel (Mr N Dodds): NIPSA has lodged in excess of 4,500 equal pay claims with the Industrial Tribunal on behalf of female members, which are now the subject of legal processes; Departments have not yet been served with these claims but will have to respond to them in due course.

I met with representatives of the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance NIPSA on 7 May to discuss the equal pay claims. The meeting provided me with the opportunity to hear at first hand the issues of concern to NIPSA and to assure them of my commitment to resolving the Civil Service equal pay issue, if possible, through a negotiated settlement and without the need for litigation. Discussions between officials in the Department of Finance and Personnel and NIPSA are ongoing in an effort to establish as clearly as possible the parameters within which a negotiated settlement might be reached so that I, in conjunction with my Ministerial colleagues in the Executive, can consider how the matter should be taken forward.

The proposal to review Technical Grades is considered as a necessary and integral part of the process of establishing a firm foundation for addressing the equal pay issue.

A sample of between 100 and 150 of posts in the relevant grades will be examined as part of the review. Arrangements are well underway to conduct the review of TG staff, which is expected to take around 3 months once the analysts commence their work, with the cooperation of both the unions and staff.

Civil Service Equal Pay

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in relation to the Civil Service Equal Pay claim, who will be calculating the back pay; and will the Civil Servants affected be given details of the calculation in writing. (AQW 8601/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: To the extent that a settlement to the equal pay issue is reached, officials will calculate any entitlements to staff concerned. Staff would be advised of the details of any entitlement in writing.

Anorexia

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, pursuant to his answer to AQW 8319/09 to detail, (i) the total number of recorded deaths due to anorexia and other eating disorders in each of the last five years (ii) the average age of those who died from these disorders; (iii) a summary of these figures broken down by age groups; (a) under 19; (b) 20-29; (c) 30-39; (d) 40-49; (e) 50-59; (f) 60-69; and (g) 70+. (AQW 8632/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: There was one death in 2004 where an eating disorder¹ was the underlying cause of death and a further one death in 2005, one death in 2006, three deaths in 2007 and five deaths in 2008^p where eating disorders¹ were recorded as a secondary cause of death.

The average age at death for these 11 deaths was 75 years of age.

The attached table gives the number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland where eating disorders¹ were recorded as either the underlying or a secondary cause of death by age group 2004 to 2008^p.

TABLE: THE NUMBER OF DEATHS REGISTERED IN NORTHERN IRELAND WHERE EATING DISORDERS WERE EITHER THE UNDERLYING CAUSE OF DEATH OR A SECONDARY CAUSE OF DEATH BY AGE GROUP, 2004 TO 2008^P

Age Group	Number of Deaths Where Eating Disorders Were Either the Underlying Cause of Death or a Secondary Cause of Death
Under 19	-
20-29	-
30-39	-
40-49	3
50-59	1
60-69	-
70+	7
All Ages	11

¹ Deaths are defined as being due to eating disorders using International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision code F50 (this includes anorexia nervosa and food refusal amongst other eating disorders).

^P 2008 data is provisional

Armed Forces: Access to Public Services

Dr W McCrea asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what action he intends to take to help members of the UK Armed Forces and their families to access public services. (AQO 3085/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Following the launch last year, by the Ministry for Defence, of a new cross-government strategy to improve support for the armed services, past and present, I have initiated a similar approach across the Northern Ireland Departments.

The purpose of the cross-cutting work is to ensure that members of the Armed forces, past and present, should not be disadvantaged by the military lifestyle, in terms of accessing the full range of public services to which they are entitled.

Taking forward this work will require dialogue and co-operation both within Northern Ireland and between local departments and their counterparts in Whitehall and the other Devolved Administrations. I have no doubt that all organisations will work together to ensure that we deliver our obligations.

Economic Climate: Bank Response

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the response of the Northern Ireland banks to the needs of businesses in the present economic climate. (AQO 3086/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Executive Ministers and officials have had extensive engagement with the local banks over recent months. When the global banking crisis broke last autumn, we made robust representations to the banks on the critical issue of maintaining liquidity levels within the local economy.

Unfortunately there is evidence to suggest that the initial reaction of the banks to the crisis was to become more risk-averse in their lending practices with a desire to consolidate their own balance sheets. That approach was detrimental to the local economy. Since then, following strong representations from myself and other Executive Ministers, the position has improved somewhat with banks cognisant of their wider responsibilities. Some banks have been more proactive in helping local industry than others.

I would again impress upon all local banks to fully utilise and market the various UK-wide financial assistance schemes such as the Enterprise Finance Guarantee and the loan facilities from the European Investment Bank.

Tax-Varying Powers

Mr J O'Dowd asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if he has had any discussion with the Executive to bring forward proposals to the Treasury which will give the Executive and the Assembly tax varying powers. (AQO 3088/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: When Sir David Varney was preparing his study into tax varying powers I invited all Executive Ministers to engage and put forward tax policy proposals. The Executive's agreed response to the Varney outcome expressed disappointment at the failure to grant this region a dispensation on taxation and made it clear that we would continue to prioritise economic growth within our Programme for Government.

While we are undoubtedly constrained by our lack of control over tax policy levers the HM Treasury position on granting UK regions a tax derogation will undoubtedly have hardened over recent months as the national fiscal position has deteriorated. Rest assured that I will continue to make robust representations on tax issues that impact negatively on our region. One specific recent example of this is my ongoing negotiations with the Chief Secretary on the need to address the serious consequences of applying inheritance tax on local Conacre land. This tax issue is having a severe negative impact on our local agricultural community.

June Monitoring Round: Budget Redistribution

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the total budgetary amount he is redistributing in the June monitoring round. (AQO 3089/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Following an initial discussion on the 25th of June, the Executive is due to consider my recommendations in respect of the 2009-10 June Monitoring Round on Thursday.

Dormont Bank Account Monies

Mrs M O'Neill asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the legislation to release dormant bank account monies for use within community projects. (AQO 3090/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: On 27 November 2007, the Assembly passed a Legislative Consent Motion agreeing that the provisions in the Dormant Bank and Building Society Accounts Bill relating to the distribution in Northern Ireland of sums released from dormant bank and building society accounts should be considered by the UK Parliament. The Dormant Bank and Building Society Accounts Act received Royal Assent on 26 November 2008.

Under the terms of the legislation, the scheme provides a general definition of “social or environmental purposes” on which unclaimed assets must be spent. The legislation also provides for the devolved

administrations to determine their own priorities for distribution which reflect the needs of the community within this over-arching theme.

Procurement Task Groups

Lord Browne asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to provide an update on the work of the Procurement Task Groups. (AQO 3091/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: In December 2008, I established the Construction Industry Forum – Procurement Task Group to agree the principles to be applied to future Government construction procurement. In particular, the Task Group considered how to:-

- further develop the partnership between Government and the construction industry;
- facilitate the delivery of projects to the marketplace as quickly as possible;
- deliver best value for money projects that meet the sustainability objectives set out in the Programme for Government; and
- provide wider stakeholders with confidence that the procurement process is modern, robust and fair.

The Group’s Report was finalized on 30 April 2009 and presented to the Procurement Board on 7 May 2009. As Chair of the Procurement Board, I have instructed the Central Procurement Directorate to work with all Government Construction Clients to implement the seven key principles agreed by the Group.

These principles aim to:

- enhance the visibility of Government construction procurement opportunities to facilitate industry workload planning;
- provide recurrent opportunities for enterprises of all sizes;
- maximise the opportunities for enterprises to benefit from public sector contracts through participation in the supply chain;
- reduce the cost and timescale of the pre-qualification process for selection of tender short-lists;
- reduce tender bid costs;
- deliver projects that represent best value for money; and
- reduce the likelihood of legal challenge.

The first principle is focused on visibility of opportunity and the importance of providing up-to-date information on the progress of construction related contracts coming to the marketplace.

The Task Group recognised that the ISNI information website, which draws its information from the Delivery Tracking System, would provide the construction industry with appropriate information on projects, including the type, location, value and delivery timescale. The website is now operational and was demonstrated by the Strategic Investment Board to representatives of the construction industry at the Construction Employers’ Federation (CEF) Construction Procurement Conference held on 11 June 2009.

In addition to the seven principles, the report includes some 25 actions with dates for implementation. Whilst some of these actions can be introduced with immediate effect, full implementation of others will require further detailed development work.

A number of Construction Industry Forum - Working Groups are being established to complete this further work and the actions will be introduced in an incremental manner and, in full, by 31 December 2009.

The first of these Working Groups is examining:-

- how the procurement process accommodates applications from joint ventures;
- the setting of proportionate minimum standards for the economic and financial standing of enterprises wishing to be short-listed for tender; and
- how experience of work of a similar nature, scope and complexity should be used to evaluate the technical and professional ability of enterprises to be short-listed for tender.

These actions will benefit SMEs by increasing their opportunities to bid for Government contracts.

Progress on these actions was discussed at the Construction Industry Forum for Northern Ireland (CIFNI) meeting on 24 June 2009 and it is anticipated that the Working Group recommendations on these initial actions will be finalised shortly.

I have instructed Central Procurement Directorate to keep me fully informed of progress on implementing the remaining Task Group actions over the coming weeks and months.

Social Contracts

Mr M Brady asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how social contracts have benefited the socially and economically disadvantaged, in light of Executive and Ministerial initiatives. (AQO 3092/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The Government Construction Clients Group (GCCG) and the construction industry, as represented by the Construction Industry Group for Northern Ireland, have jointly explored at the Construction Industry Forum for Northern Ireland (CIFNI) how sustainability issues could be incorporated into construction contracts.

A CIFNI - Sustainability Task Group has developed 'Proposals for Promoting Equality and Sustainable Development by Sustainable Procurement in Construction'. Endorsed by CIFNI on 17 June 2008 the proposals focus on the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainability. Seven key objectives and some 10 associated contractual requirements are included under the 'social pillar'.

Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) and the other Centres of Procurement Expertise with responsibility for construction procurement agreed at the Procurement Practitioners Group (PPG) to incorporate the contractual requirements set out in the CIFNI proposals, in so far as it is practicable, into all new construction contracts from December 2008. The extent to which the requirements can be effectively incorporated into contracts is dependent upon the nature and scope of specific construction projects. Centres of Procurement Expertise are aware of the need to monitor and record progress against the targets set in the contractual requirements.

Under Principle 6 of the CIFNI Procurement Task Group Report, which was finalised on the 30 April 2009 and was presented to the Procurement Board on 7 May 2009, main contractors and their supply chains have reaffirmed their commitment to deliver these contractual requirements and to provide Government construction clients with monthly project specific reports on their implementation.

CPD has also identified those CIFNI contractual requirements which could be adopted for potential use in supplies and general services contracts.

Given the relatively recent introduction of the contractual requirements and the timescales associated with the procurement and delivery of construction projects, there is currently insufficient information available to assess the full effectiveness of the 'social' measures introduced to date.

CPD has however advised that the economic, social and environmental requirements included in their construction contracts are being monitored and the data collated will be used in due course to evaluate the effectiveness of the measures.

A similar monitoring mechanism is to be incorporated into the Contract Management module of e-Sourcing NI to capture information from the requirements built into supplies and general services contracts.

This data will be used to inform twice yearly reports to the Procurement Board and as Chair of the Board I will monitoring and reviewing the success of the initiatives.

Procurement Process: Indigenous Enterprises

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how, in light of Executive and Ministerial initiatives, is the procurement process benefiting indigenous enterprises in the current economic circumstances. (AQO 3093/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Government recognises the important contribution indigenous enterprises, the majority of which are SMEs, make to the economy of Northern Ireland through the provision of supplies, works and services to the public sector.

Public procurement is subject to the EU Treaty which requires freedom of movement, transparency and non-discrimination on the basis of nationality. Public sector buyers therefore cannot restrict their purchases of goods, works and services to favour local firms.

The Procurement Board, of which I am Chair, has overseen a number of initiatives which offer local enterprises a high degree of opportunity to bid for Government contracts. For example:

Centres of Procurement Expertise are already required to advertise all procurement opportunities in excess of the designated thresholds of £30k on their websites and in the local Press. Where the value of a contract is in excess of the EU thresholds (£90k for goods and services and £3.5m for works), it must also be published in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU).

- The Procurement Board has approved the use of the e-Sourcing NI portal as a single sourcing tool for all Centres of Procurement Expertise. e-Sourcing NI offers all registered firms “24/7” access to view all procurement opportunities and facilitates the submission of electronic tenders. In my Department, the Central Procurement Directorate has been using e Sourcing NI since May of last year. All CoPEs will be using the system by early 2010.
- The Investment Strategy information website is now operational. It has been developed to provide the public, and in particular the construction industry, with specific project information drawn from the Delivery Tracking System.
- CPD and other Centres of Procurement Expertise encourage smaller SMEs to join together as consortia to bid for contracts and compete against applications from single entities.
- CPD provides support to both SMEs and Social Economy Enterprises (SEEs) and has regular engagement with representatives and lead bodies from both groups. The purpose of this engagement is to help SMEs and SEEs by increasing their understanding of the procurement process through, for example, ‘meet the buyer’ events.

In addition, the Construction Industry Forum (CIFNI) – Procurement Task Group has developed a number of principles and associated actions to be applied to Government procurement processes that will directly benefit local firms by increasing their opportunities to bid for Government contracts.

In conclusion, I believe that indigenous enterprises in Northern Ireland are already benefitting from the procurement opportunities offered by Government and that further benefits will accrue from the initiatives that are now being put in place.

NI Direct

Mr S Moutray asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the effectiveness of NI Direct Online. (AQO 3094/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: NI Direct Online or www.nidirect.gov.uk is a key project in the Programme for Government, and greatly improves citizens’ access to government information and services.

The website was launched on 31 March 2009 within the PSA target. Even in advance of any marketing, it has had an encouraging stream of visitors. It has more than 3,000 pages of information and pages were accessed over 200,000 times during the month of May.

The website makes accessing government services and information easier, from employment information to transport and housing. Users can book an MoT test, or find information on job vacancies. Information is all in one place and is arranged in themes according to the way citizens wish to find information, rather than by the Departments which provide the services. This makes the site easy to use and represents a significant improvement in how government interacts with citizens.

Already the value of having the NI Direct website has been demonstrated as an important channel for providing up to date local information about the developing swine flu situation.

It is important to maximise the value of the website by raising awareness and this will be done through advertising in print, online and on buses. This will be followed up in the coming months with a television and bill board advertising campaign.

PEDU: Land and Property Services

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit, in relation to the Land and Property Services. (AQO 3095/09)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Earlier this year, I initiated a Review of Land and Property Services (LPS) to ensure that the agency is structured and managed in a way that is focused on delivery. PEDU commenced work on the Review in March and are to report back to me shortly with details of their findings and recommendations going forward. Alongside this LPS will submit an action plan outlining how they will address all recommendations made.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Health and Social Care Trusts

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many managers who had lost their jobs after the merger of Health and Social Care Trusts, were then re-employed in another position within the Trusts. (AQW 2598/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Mr M McGimpsey): Approximately 140 managers have been given voluntary early retirement or voluntary redundancy under the Trusts' Review of Public Administration restructuring. None of these managers have been re-employed in a managerial position. As part of those arrangements my Department instructed Health and Social Care employers that staff who received early retirement payments should not be re-engaged.

Family Support Workers

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 8127/09, to outline the reasons for the reduction in the numbers of Family Support Workers in the Armagh and Dungannon area, given the rise in the number of families requiring assistance and awaiting referrals since March 2009. (AQW 8280/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Trust has advised that the existing 8 Family Support Workers currently employed in the Armagh and Dungannon area only work on a part time basis subject to casual contracts. They will be aligned to the existing social work teams with each worker on approximately 18 hours per week and on Trust contracts which to date have not been the case.

In relation to existing waiting lists this is an issue which the Trust is endeavouring to resolve. Once the new arrangements are put in place namely that the respective senior social worker will manage the Family Support Workers based in their team, the Trust is confident that waiting lists will not present a problem as the service will be specifically managed within the teams from where the referrals originate from.

As advised previously, the Head of Family Support for the Southern Trust is happy to meet with you to discuss this matter if you would find that helpful.

Adoption

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he proposes to introduce new legislation on adoption in the near future. (AQW 8359/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I am currently finalising my proposals for reforming adoption legislation in Northern Ireland. It is my intention to bring these proposals before the Executive for consideration in the near future.

Inflammatory Bowel Disease

Mrs C Hanna asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will consider creating a register of all patients with Inflammatory Bowel Disease, and giving them biological therapy as recommended by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. (AQW 8361/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: At present, the Northern HSC Trust's Causeway Hospital and Western HSC Trust's Altnagelvin Hospital already have databases of Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) patients, while the other Trusts hold such information within consultants' own records.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has not recommended giving biological therapy to all patients with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). However, the Institute has issued guidance in respect of the treatment of Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis with the biologic drug infliximab. NICE guidance indicates that infliximab is not recommended for the treatment of subacute manifestations of moderate to severe ulcerative colitis. However, the Department is currently considering the applicability of NICE guidance for the use of infliximab for acute exacerbations of ulcerative colitis, and will issue advice to the Health and Social Care Board in due course.

Swine Flu

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if there are any suspected cases of swine flu in the East Antrim constituency. (AQW 8366/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Due to the low number of cases of swine flu in Northern Ireland, provision of specific geographical information on these cases may identify individuals. I therefore, refer the Member to the information that has been published on my Department's website: www.dhsspsni.gov.uk. This information is updated frequently.

Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Mr D O'Loan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the effect of efficiency savings on the budget allocated to the Northern Health and Social Care Trust for (i) 2008/09; and (ii) 2009/10. (AQW 8380/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: All Departments must achieve efficiency savings targets of 3% per annum and the Executive gave no dispensation to the DHSSPS. The Northern HSC Trust efficiency targets are £11.7m for 2008/09 and £26.5m for 2009/10.

Counselling Services

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he has taken to regulate counselling services. (AQW 8382/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I am committed to the regulation of counsellors and, in this regard, my Department has been closely monitoring developments in England. As the Health Professions Council (HPC) will be the regulatory body, it is currently working with representative organisations to develop proposals for regulation. This will set the precedent for other jurisdictions to follow. We will not be issuing draft Standards for Counselling Provision for public consultation.

Counselling Services

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when he will issue draft Standards for Counselling Provision for public consultation. (AQW 8384/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I am committed to the regulation of counsellors and, in this regard, my Department has been closely monitoring developments in England. As the Health Professions Council (HPC) will be the regulatory body, it is currently working with representative organisations to develop

proposals for regulation. This will set the precedent for other jurisdictions to follow. We will not be issuing draft Standards for Counselling Provision for public consultation.

Drug Trials

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he is aware of any drug trials taking place at the Ulster Hospital. (AQW 8401/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I am advised by the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust that there are nine investigations of medicinal products currently under way in the Ulster Hospital.

Drug Trials

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if drug trials could take place in the Ulster Hospital without the knowledge of patients or doctors. (AQW 8403/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: This would not be possible. There are very clearly defined national and international legislative instruments and agreements defining the approval and operation of clinical trials involving medicines, including the Medicines for Human Use (Clinical Trials) Regulations 2004 which regulate all clinical trials involving medicines in the UK.

Family Support Workers

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 7078/09, if Family Support Workers in Armagh and Dungannon are to have supervised contact included in their contracts. (AQW 8405/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Southern Health and Social Care Trust has advised that there will be no change in relation to the role of the Family Support worker. It is a change in management arrangements.

Please be advised that, the Head of Family Support for the Southern Trust is happy to meet with you to discuss this matter if you would find that helpful.

Alcohol Consumption During Pregnancy

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the steps he is taking to ensure that all healthcare professionals dealing with expectant mothers highlight the dangers of alcohol consumption during pregnancy. (AQW 8406/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Alcohol consumption during pregnancy is discussed with all pregnant women at their first antenatal appointment. From July 2009, all pregnant women will carry the Northern Ireland Maternity Hand Held Record. This will be given to her by the Maternity Unit with which she books for confinement and the contents discussed. The record contains information on a range of issues, including information of the danger of alcohol consumption during pregnancy and relevant guidelines.

Alcohol Consumption During Pregnancy

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he will introduce an awareness or health promotion campaign to address the dangers of drinking alcohol whilst pregnant. (AQW 8407/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: All relevant materials and resources in relation to sensible drinking message produced by my Department or the Public Health Agency contain information and guidance in relation to alcohol consumption during pregnancy. In addition, the Public Health Agency are giving consideration to the production of a specific booklet on alcohol and pregnancy, and the Northern Ireland Hand

Held Record, which will be given to all pregnant women from July, will include information of the danger of alcohol consumption during pregnancy and relevant guidelines.

Foetal Alcohol Syndrome

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what consideration has been given, or is being giving to the placement of a health warning on bottles of alcohol, similar to those on cigarette packets, to tackle the condition of Foetal Alcohol Syndrome. (AQW 8408/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My Department fully supports the voluntary labelling agreement between the UK Government and the alcohol industry. Through this agreement all alcoholic containers should contain the following key messages:

- the 'Know Your Limits' slogan or agreed alternative;
- icon showing alcohol unit content;
- the sensible drinking guidelines;
- advice on alcohol and pregnancy; and
- the Drinkaware web address.

These health messages are appropriate to the nature and level of harm associated with alcohol, which cannot be directly compared to tobacco.

I understand that a review is currently underway to establish the extent to which the alcohol industry is complying with this agreement. If this monitoring process shows that there is not significant pace of movement towards compliance, then further consideration should be given to UK wide legislation on this issue.

Foetal Alcohol Syndrome

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if his Department has conducted any research on the potential linkages between foetal alcohol syndrome and autism. (AQW 8410/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My Department has not commissioned any research on the potential linkages between foetal alcohol syndrome and autism.

Agenda for Change Arrears

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many former employees of the Health Service have still to get Agenda for Change arrears. (AQW 8433/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Of the 71,273 current and former Health and Social Care staff just over 10,000 former staff have yet to be paid their Agenda for Change arrears.

The payment of arrears requires payroll staff to carry out individual and in many cases complex calculations over a four year period from October 2004.

Inflammatory Bowel Disease

Mr J McCallister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he plans to implement fully the Inflammatory Bowel Disease Service Standards in each Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 8454/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The recently launched standards will be useful benchmarks to help Trusts consider how best to provide services for people with inflammatory bowel diseases. My officials have planned a meeting with the Chief Executive of the National Association of Colitis and Crohn's Disease in order to discuss the issues raised.

Royal Group of Hospitals

Mr J McCallister asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what his Department's plans are for improving car parking provision at the Royal Group of Hospitals. (AQW 8469/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Belfast Health & Social Care Trust is currently in discussions with the car-parking provider, Car Park Services, with a view to increasing car-parking capacity at the Royal Group of Hospitals.

Plural Plaques

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if his Department, the Regional Health Board or any of the Health and Social Care Trusts are conducting public consultations or studies on plural plaques. (AQW 8478/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety is not undertaking a consultation or conducting any studies on pleural plaques. Relevant enquiries indicate that neither the Regional Health and Social Care Board nor any of the five trusts are undertaking any consultations or studies on this topic.

Marine Issues

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he will provide details of (i) the number of staff, and their relevant grade, in his Department who have responsibility for marine issues, and (ii) the annual total cost of marine-specific work to the Department. (AQW 8494/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My Department has no responsibility for marine issues and therefore there is no cost.

Registered Childminders

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of registered childminders in each constituency. (AQW 8513/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information on the number of registered childminders in each constituency, is not available in the format requested.

Registered Childminders

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps he is taking to clear the backlog of applications to become registered childminders in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 8514/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I refer to my previous response to your correspondence on this matter (COR 613/2009 refers).

The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust has experienced an increase in the number of those registering to become childminders. To address this, they have arranged additional courses in May, September and October 2009. The Trust has already added additional courses this year and will keep this option under review and respond if the need arises. In addition, the Trust has offered overtime to social workers to facilitate the registration process and will add further courses as required.

Physiotherapy Services

Mr T Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what plans he has to introduce a designated physiotherapy service for people diagnosed with M.S. (AQW 8524/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My Department has no plans to introduce a designated physiotherapy service for people diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. Health and Social Care Trusts provide physiotherapy services in out-patient, day care settings, local community and domiciliary surroundings for patients, including those with Multiple Sclerosis, commensurate with their assessed individual physiotherapy needs.

Intractable Epilepsy

Mr T Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when his Department last had correspondence with the Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago regarding treatment of children from Northern Ireland with intractable epilepsy. (AQW 8525/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The last direct correspondence between my Department and staff at the Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago was in March 2009.

Physiotherapists

Mr T Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of physiotherapists in each Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 8526/09)

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

NUMBER OF PHYSIOTHERAPISTS BY HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE TRUSTS AT 31ST MARCH 2009.

Physiotherapists		
HSC Trust	Headcount	WTE
Belfast	330	275.0
Northern	179	151.2
South Eastern	176	139.5
Southern	173	142.7
Western	118	106.4
Total	976	814.9

Source: Human Resource Management System.

Notes:

1. Figures exclude staff with a whole-time equivalent of less than or equal to 0.03.
2. WTE = the whole-time equivalent number of staff is calculated by aggregating the total number of hours that staff in a grade are contracted to work, and dividing by the standard hours for that grade.

Prescription Fraud

Mr T Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail his Department's strategy for tackling prescription fraud. (AQW 8527/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My Department has a robust policy in place to tackle prescription fraud. A range of verification checks are undertaken on cases where patients have claimed exemption from prescription charges. Action is taken to recover relevant charges and impose fixed penalty charge fines, where patients do not pay prescription charges when they should. Serious or persistent offenders may be referred for prosecution.

I have announced that prescription charges will be abolished with effect from 1st April 2010.

St Luke's Hospital Site

Mr W Irwin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he will require the Southern Health & Social Care Trust to undertake a comprehensive estates strategy for the St. Luke's site based on viable health services and in consultation with Armagh City and District Council. (AQW 8650/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My response to AQW/7557/09 from Cathal Boylan on 21 May 2009 refers.

I am currently considering the Southern HSC Trust's efficiency proposals, which involve the proposed relocation of some services currently provided on the St Luke's hospital site.

The Southern HSC Trust has advised, subject to my decisions on their proposals and the future of the St Luke's hospital site, that they will work with local stakeholders, including Armagh City and District Council, to develop a strategic plan for the development of the St Luke's / Longstone site.

South Tyrone and Lurgan Hospitals

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what additional capital expenditure will be required at South Tyrone and Lurgan Hospitals arising from the proposed closure of Mullinure Hospital. (AQW 8736/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: There is no proposal to close Mullinure Hospital. The Southern HSC Trust propose that Mullinure will no longer provide non acute inpatient beds. It will instead become a local centre for specialist services for older people and will therefore continue to provide a very valuable resource in supporting the needs of older people in the Armagh area.

It is also important to bear in mind that no final decision has been made. Should a decision be made to relocate non-acute inpatient beds to other hospitals, the Trust will be required to develop the proposal in a business case and it will be only on receipt and assessment of that business case that any additional capital expenditure could be confirmed.

Macular Degeneration

Mr P Doherty asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of people currently diagnosed with macular degeneration in each Health and Social Care Trust area; (ii) the services in place to treat this condition; and (iii) any plans his Department has to develop these services. (AQW 8804/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:

- (i) The number of people currently diagnosed with age-related macular degeneration in each Health and Social Care Trust area is not available.
- (ii) Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) occurs in two forms, "wet" and "dry". Currently there is no proven effective clinical treatment available for dry AMD although patients may be treated with vitamin supplements and dietary advice which has been anecdotally shown to help the condition. Patients will also be referred to a low vision clinic and offered counselling and social support as appropriate.

Treatment with argon laser and photodynamic therapy is available for patients with the wet form of AMD who are clinically suitable for these treatments. Treatment with Lucentis (ranibizumab) for wet AMD is also currently available to patients with the greatest clinical priority.

- (iii) The HSC is in the process of expanding existing macular services to provide treatment with Lucentis in line with National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidance endorsed by my Department in October 2008.

Social Work Degree Courses

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) what financial assistance is available to students from Northern Ireland pursuing accredited social work degree courses in England and Wales; and (ii) whether his Department has any plans to extend the assistance currently available. (AQW 8843/09)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Northern Ireland students undertaking higher education courses in social work are entitled to receive support in accordance with the Education (Student Support) Regulations. All students, subject to eligibility, can apply for a student loan from their relevant Education and Library Board.

In addition, this Department offers a student incentive scheme to encourage high quality applicants domiciled in Northern Ireland to study for the Honours Degree in Social Work here. There are no plans to extend this Scheme to people from Northern Ireland who chose to study for a Degree in Social Work elsewhere in the UK.

DEPARTMENT FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Safer Routes to School Programme

Mr P Butler asked the Minister for Regional Development how much his Department has spent on the safer routes to school programme in (i) primary schools in urban areas; (ii) primary schools in rural areas; (iii) post primary schools in urban areas; and (iv) post primary schools in rural areas, in the last two years. (AQW 8336/09)

Minister for Regional Development (Mr C Murphy): In the last two years 59 schools across the North have participated in the Safer Routes to Schools initiative:-

- 44 primary schools of which 35 were in urban areas and 9 in rural areas; and
- 15 post primary schools of which 14 were in urban areas and 1 in a rural area.

The table below details my Department's Roads Service spend on the Safer Routes to Schools programme, broken down into urban and rural areas for primary and post primary schools, for the last two years.

		2007/2008	2008/09
(i)	Primary schools in urban areas:	£213,103.00	£297,968.00
(ii)	Primary schools in rural areas:	£328,274.00	£272,217.00
(iii)	Post primary schools in urban areas:	£71,771.00	£43,819.00
(iv)	Post primary schools in rural areas:	Nil	Nil

In addition to this the total cost spent on promotional resources and marketing for this initiative for the last two years was £60,000. However, this spending is not apportioned by school type.

I can further advise that Roads Service also contributed £263,000 to the EU funded DARD/Sustrans Rural Safe Routes to Schools initiative, which introduced School Travel Plans and associated traffic calming infrastructure, at 18 rural primary schools across the North.

Castle Street and Mill Street in Comber

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development when the improvement scheme for Castle Street and Mill Street in Comber will commence. (AQW 8369/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that a traffic management survey for Comber commenced in January 2009, and a preliminary report should be available by the end of June 2009. Roads Service will then commence consultations with traders and residents on the options contained within the report.

An improvement scheme for Castle Street and Mill Street could be delivered in the current 2009/10 financial year, subject to the outcome of consultations, satisfactory completion of statutory procedures and availability of finance.

Vandalism of Buses

Mr P Butler asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) what has the cost of vandalism of buses been to his Department in the last 5 years; and (ii) how much has been spent on repairs following vandalism of buses in the West Belfast constituency in the last 5 years. (AQW 8375/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink has informed me that the information requested is only readily available for the last four financial years.

The cost of vandalism/malicious damage to buses across the entire Translink fleet was as follows:-

2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
£747,633	£801,027	£694,588	£679,628

It should be noted that these costs are for labour and materials only and do not include associated costs such as staff sickness or lost revenue as a result of buses being out of service.

The cost of repairs following vandalism to buses in West Belfast, since 2005 is as follows:-

2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
£167,480	£136,958	£ 95,112	£ 90,406

NI Railway

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development if air traffic control or NI Railway control the railway signals adjacent to the airport in Londonderry, (AQW 8379/09)

Minister for Regional Development: The railway signalling system adjacent to the City of Derry Airport includes colour light signals fitted with automatic train warning systems, controlled from an NIR signal cabin. In order to provide protection while aircraft movements are taking place, the system additionally requires air traffic controllers at the airport to operate a line status switch which prevents the signaller from changing the signals to green.

The design of the new signalling equipment has been considered and approved by the Office of Rail Regulation's Railway Safety Inspectorate. The procedures for use of this signalling system have been agreed between NIR and City of Derry Airport and have been audited and approved by the Civil Aviation Authority.

EU Funding

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) what EU funding he is currently seeking; and (ii) to identify the recipient projects. (AQW 8381/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department is currently seeking funding under the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) Programme 2007-2013.

A call for proposals was issued by the EU on 30 March 2009 and the deadline for submission to the EU Commission was 15 May 2009.

An application, under the Annual Works Programme (AWP), was submitted through the Department for Transport (DfT), London and relates to the following three projects:-

	A5 Western Transport Corridor	A6 Londonderry to Dungiven	A8 Belfast to Larne	Total
Estimated Eligible Cost	€20 million	€ 6 million	€ 4.5 million	€30.5 million

In response to President Barroso's EU Taskforce Report, one of the Executive's key objectives is to "increase the number and value of NI projects securing funding from competitive EU funding programmes". In support of this, my Department will continue to explore all avenues for EU Funding including through the INTERREG IV, TEN-T and CIVITAS programmes.

Cycle Lanes

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment on how well cycle lanes are used, and what efforts his Department has made to encourage more people to use bicycles rather than their cars. (AQW 8387/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that cycle usage is measured through the Northern Ireland Annual Cycle Usage Report, which is compiled by Roads Service. Figures indicate that, between 2000 and 2008, overall cycle usage has increased by an encouraging 57%, and in Belfast the increase is 116%.

Roads Service launched the Travelwise NI initiative in October 2003, to encourage greater use of more sustainable transport modes, including cycling. A dedicated team is currently working in the employer, commuter and school sectors to take the message forward. I am also pleased to be able to advise the Member that the Bike Week promotional campaign, which ran from 13-21 June 2009, attracted more participating cyclists than in previous years. Further information about Roads Service's work to promote sustainable travel can be found at www.travelwiseni.co.uk.

Upgraded A5 and A6 Routes

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 5774/09, when will the report on primary road network connections around Derry city be completed. (AQW 8422/09)

Minister for Regional Development: I am advised that work on the report is progressing satisfactorily and shall be completed later this summer.

NI Railway

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans are in place for the provision of toilet facilities for people with disabilities at the NI Railway station in Portrush. (AQW 8423/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink advise that there are currently no plans to upgrade the toilet facilities for people with disabilities at Portrush railway station. As part of the overall DDA programme approximately £200k of work was previously carried out on Portrush station. This was limited to safety related issues as the local Council were considering a Masterplan for the general area, which will impact on the Portrush station. Translink are awaiting developments around this before committing to any refurbishment of the station facilities.

NI Railway

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans are in place for the modernisation of the toilet facilities at the NI Railway station in Portrush. (AQW 8424/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink advise that in the short-term there are no plans to modernise the toilet facilities at Portrush railway station. The local Council is currently considering a Masterplan for the general area which will impact on the station and Translink are awaiting further developments before committing to any refurbishment of the station facilities. You will understand that it is essential to prioritise capital projects to live within the funding allocation and in this instance it makes sense to await further developments.

Car Parking Fines

Mr P Butler asked the Minister for Regional Development, since the NSL Services Group was awarded the contract how many (i) car parking fines have been issued in west Belfast; (ii) appeals regarding parking fines have there been in west Belfast; and (iii) of these appeals were successful. (AQW 8439/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that figures for Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued in Belfast are collated on a city wide basis and that it is not possible to

provide figures in respect of any one area. However, I can advise that from the commencement of the parking enforcement contract, at the end of October 2006, to 31 March 2009, the number of PCNs issued in the Belfast area, including Castlereagh, was 111,028. This totals 30.9% of all PCNs issued throughout the North for the same period.

The administration of appeals against PCNs is not collated on an area by area basis within the North. For the same period, the total number of PCNs issued is 359,704. Of this number, 42,930 challenges were received and 28,376 (66%) were accepted. Following the issue of a Notice to Owner, 11,859 representations were received and 7,628 (64%) were accepted. Of 538 formal appeals, completed by independent adjudication, 80 (14.9%) were successful.

Safer Routes to School Programme

Mr P Butler asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) how much has been spent in west Belfast on the Safer Routes to School programme; (ii) how many schools in west Belfast have benefited from the Safer Routes to School project; and (iii) all the schools in west Belfast that have been involved in the programme. (AQW 8440/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that some £98,000 has been spent on the provision of Safer Routes to School measures at eight schools in the West Belfast constituency. The participating schools are:

- La Salle Boy's Secondary School, Glen Road
- St.Teresa's Primary School, Glen Road
- Christian Brothers Secondary School, Glen Road
- St. Mary's Christian Brothers Grammar School, Glen Road
- St Louise's Comprehensive College, Falls Road
- St. Kevin's Primary School, Falls Road,
- Holy Trinity Primary School, Monagh Link, Monagh Road
- St Aidan's Christian Brothers Primary School, Whiterock Road

Major Projects Planned for West Belfast

Mr P Butler asked the Minister for Regional Development what major projects his Department has planned for the west Belfast constituency over the next 5 years. (AQW 8441/09)

Minister for Regional Development: NI Water has advised that it does not hold details of Capital Infrastructure projects broken down by parliamentary constituency. However, the table below details investment in the west Belfast area until the end of the current financial year, 2009/10.

Project	Estimated Cost
West Belfast/North Lisburn – Crewhill Service Reservoir	£1,320,000
Dunmurry Wastewater Treatment Works Modifications	£8,970,000

NI Water's development plans from 2010/11 onwards will depend on the outcome of the price control review, which will be undertaken in 2010. Following the outcome of this review a prioritised programme of capital works will be developed.

I can also advise that the Department has plans to include the west Belfast area in a bus rapid transit network, within the next five years.

Although there are no major road projects programmed for the West Belfast constituency over the next 5 years, I am sure you will appreciate that although the actual spend on a major work scheme may be within one constituency, the benefits of such schemes are not confined to the immediate area of that constituency or county, in which it is located.

Marine Issues

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the number of staff, and their relevant grade, in his Department who have responsibility for marine issues; and (ii) the annual total cost of marine specific work to his Department. (AQW 8461/09)

Minister for Regional Development: The table below outlines the grade and number of my Department's Roads Service staff directly operating the ferry service across Strangford Lough.

Grade	HPTO	AO and analagous	EOII analagous	AA analagous	Ferry Operative	Roadworker II
Number of staff	1	4	6	4	1	2

In addition to these staff there are also management and support staff involved on a part-time basis. The grades range from Grade 6 to AA, approximately equivalent to three full time staff.

The full cost of the service in 2008/09 was £1,924,743. This included fuel, staff costs, vessel maintenance and maintenance of the ferry-related infrastructure at Strangford and Portaferry. An income of £968,088, from the operation of the ferry, partly offset the full cost.

Grade	Grade 5	Grade 7	Deputy Principal	Staff Officer	EOI and analagous	EOII and analagous	AO and analagous	Support Grade Band 2
Number of staff	1	2	4	1	2	2	1	2

The table below outlines the grade and number of my Department's Core staff who have responsibility for marine-related issues, although most also work on other matters.

The total cost of marine-related work for the core Department during 2008/09 was as follows:

Warrenpoint Harbour grant	Trust Port loans	Rathlin ferry	Legislation costs	Donaghadee harbour	Staff costs
£5,950,000	£3,000,000	£755,000	£65,000	£75,000	£438,000

Pedestrian Facilities in West Belfast

Mr P Butler asked the Minister for Regional Development how much his Department has invested in new cycle lanes and pedestrian facilities in west Belfast over the last 2 years. (AQW 8464/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that in West Belfast, expenditure over the last two financial years on cycle lanes and pedestrian facilities has been approximately £77,000 and £251,000 respectively.

I should advise that these figures do not include expenditure on cycle lanes and pedestrian facilities provided as part of other road schemes, for example, the Westlink improvement scheme.

Rapid Transport System in West Belfast

Mr P Butler asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the progress made to date to develop a rapid transport system in west Belfast. (AQW 8465/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Following the Executive's endorsement of the findings of the Strategic Outline Case (SOC), a dedicated Rapid Transit Division was established in January 2009 and has held introductory meetings with several stakeholders in West Belfast. As part of the preliminary design, the division is considering a range of route options to best meet the objectives within the SOC, and, at present, is carrying out the necessary on-site surveys. As this work will take some time to complete, it is likely to be towards the latter part of this year before preliminary plans are available and formal consultation can take place.

GPS Tracking Systems

Mr J McCallister asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 8113/09 and AQW 8114/09, to outline the reasons why punctuality statistics from the GPS tracking system is not collected, retained and analysed by Translink. (AQW 8472/09)

Minister for Regional Development: As I explained in my answers to AQW8113/09 and 8114/09 the GPS systems on Translink vehicles have been installed to identify fare stages for ticketing purposes. They are not vehicle tracking systems.

Water Supply at Crawfordsburn Road, Newtownards

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the reasons for the interruption in water supply at the Crawfordsburn Road area, Newtownards on Friday 12 May 2009, at 1am that lasted through to 11.30pm. (AQW 8492/09)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the interruption to the water supply at Crawfordsburn Road, Newtownards on Friday 15 May 2009 was caused by a major burst on a trunk watermain at the junction of Tullygardy Road. The burst was isolated and the majority of properties supplied by the watermain were re-supplied with water from another watermain. Around 50 properties supplied direct by the burst watermain could not be supplied from an alternative watermain but supplies were restored to most by 5 pm when the repair was completed. The supply to a small number of properties, mainly in elevated positions, was restored later as a result of the time taken for pressure to build in the system.

GPS Tracking Systems

Mr J McCallister asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 8113/09 and AQW 8114/09, if the road position of buses is sent to a central point by the GPS tracking system at any point in a working day. (AQW 8500/09)

Minister for Regional Development: As I explained in my answers to AQW8113/09 and 8114/09 the GPS systems on Translink vehicles have been installed to identify fare stages for ticketing purposes. They are not vehicle tracking systems.

The Beeches, Newtownabbey

Mr T Burns asked the Minister for Regional Development in relation to The Beeches, Newtownabbey, to outline (i) the current adoption status of the roads and sewers; (ii) any outstanding work to be undertaken if the roads and sewers need to be improved before adoption; (iii) the approximate cost and timescale of any outstanding work; (iv) if the developer of these properties gone into administration ; if so, (v) what legal options are open to his Department to recover the costs of undertaking any remedial work. (AQW 8523/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that after issuing an enforcement notice, under the Private Streets legislation, in April 2009, Roads Service was informed, on 16 May 2009, by Administrators PricewaterhouseCoopers, that the development company undertaking the construction of The Beeches, Newtownabbey, had ceased trading.

Although a preliminary certificate of adoption was issued in March 2006, the development at The Beeches, is not adopted. However, I can confirm that the sewers were adopted by Water Service in August 2005.

There are currently a number of defects which need to be repaired before the site can be adopted by Roads Service. As the development company is no longer trading, Roads Service has appointed a contractor to complete the outstanding work and it is anticipated that the road will be adopted by the end of August 2009. The cost of the outstanding work is approximately £2,000.

As the developer had put in place a road bond before work commenced, this is available to Roads Service to recover the costs of any work undertaken. I can confirm that this bond will be used to fund the completion of the outstanding work.

NIW has also advised that there is approximately 100 metres of both foul and storm sewer, located in private roadways, which is not covered by the agreement. This section of sewer was not offered for adoption by the developer, who consequently retained responsibility for its operation and maintenance. NIW will consider a written application from residents to adopt these sewers, provided they are constructed to the required adoption standard and the conditions of the Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 are met. However, the cost of the application will have to be borne by the residents.

Northern Ireland Water

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the remit and terms of reference of the group within NI Water that is reviewing telemetry and the work control centre functions at Altnagelvin. (AQW 8538/09)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the remit of the group reviewing telemetry and the work control centre functions at Altnagelvin is to examine the case for introducing a single new Operational Control Centre (OCC) for the whole of the North, incorporating Telemetry and Work Control, taking into account the benefits to customers and the company and all relevant financial and operational factors.

The terms of reference for the project are:-

- to consider the integration of NIW's existing Telemetry centres, currently located at Altnagelvin in Derry and Westland in North Belfast, in order to drive further efficiency;
- to consider the integration of NIW's existing Work Control centres, currently located at Altnagelvin in Derry and Westland in North Belfast, in order to drive further efficiency;
- to evaluate the options for consolidating the integrated Telemetry and Work Control centres at a single Operational Control Centre in order to improve operational effectiveness and efficiency and provide an enhanced service to customers at all times.

Parking Fines

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 4982/09, for a breakdown of the 25,484 successfully challenged parking fines since the inception of the NCP contract, by each of the 26 local council areas. (AQW 8563/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it does not collate the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) by council or regional area. However, Roads Service can provide the Member with an update on the number of Challenges to PCNs received by its Parking Enforcement Processing Unit. From commencement of the current parking enforcement contract with NSL Services Group, formerly NCP Services Ltd, at the end of October 2006 to 31 May 2009, the total has risen to 42,812, of which 28,349 were accepted.

Election Posters

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline all his Department's legislation belonging to that relates to the erection of election posters. (AQW 8573/09)

Minister for Regional Development: The Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1992 allow election posters relating to pending Parliamentary, European Parliamentary, Northern Ireland Assembly or district council elections to be displayed.

I understand that the Department of the Environment's Planning Service practice is to write to all political parties prior to elections, advising of the Regulations for the display of election posters. It is a condition of the Regulations that all election posters are removed within 14 days after the close of the relevant poll to which they relate.

There has been no change to my Department's Roads Service policy regarding the erection of election posters. Although permission is not required from Roads Service, for parties to erect election posters on its property, it

does have powers to remove advertising signs, including election posters, from its property, to seek the recovery of costs and to prosecute those responsible for the signs.

In practice, Roads Service would normally approach the individual or organisation concerned, to try to persuade those responsible to remove such signs themselves and would only take further action if this proves necessary.

Interruption to Water Supply in Strangford

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister for Regional Development how many people in Strangford were without water for longer than 24 hours during the recent breakages in the system, in each of the last 3 months.

(AQW 8592/09)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that over the period from 1 March to 31 May 2009, 553 people in Strangford were without water for more than 24 hours as a result of unplanned interruptions. Of these, 550 people were affected by interruptions in March and 3 were affected in May. There were no interruptions in April.

The interruption to the water supply during March was caused by a defect on the mid Ards Trunk watermain.

Water Supply

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 7193/09, how many households have had unplanned interruptions to the water supply, per constituency, in the last three months.

(AQW 8594/09)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the number of households in each constituency experiencing unplanned interruptions in each of the last 3 months is as follows:-

Constituency	March	April	May
North Belfast	286	38	3
East Belfast	328	37	83
South Belfast	73	0	65
West Belfast	495	739	79
North Down	65	49	22
Strangford	339	447	398
South Down	102	261	191
Lagan Valley	331	471	83
Upper Bann	447	175	169
Newry & Armagh	2719	915	1433
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	451	547	631
West Tyrone	115	298	157
Mid Ulster	787	533	388
South Antrim	1	165	158
East Antrim	379	303	119
Foyle	260	383	0
East Derry	589	0	0
North Antrim	277	441	200
Total	8044	5802	4179

Road Calming Measures

Lord Browne asked the Minister for Regional Development if his Department carries out impact assessments after new road calming measures are put in place. (AQW 8596/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it does carry out impact assessments after new road calming measures are put in place.

When undertaking such an assessment, Roads Service will routinely monitor the volume and speed of vehicles at the subject site, following the completion of the scheme. In addition to this, the collision history for the three year period prior to the implementation of a traffic calming scheme is compared against the collisions in the three years following completion of the scheme.

Roads Service has published the Road Safety Engineering Report for 2006/07, which details the engineering measures, including collision histories, undertaken within the Collision Remedial and Traffic Calming programme of works. The report can be viewed at the following website: www.roadsni.gov.uk/2006-07_rdsafetyreport.pdf.

A2 Shore Road

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development what measures have been included in the scheme to upgrade the A2 Shore road, adjacent to Belfast High School to ensure that (i) vehicles entering and exiting the school may do so safely, without impeding traffic flow on the proposed new carriageway; (ii) vehicles can park in the vicinity without disrupting traffic flows; and (iii) a lay-by will be assessed as part of any discussions aimed at alleviating road safety considerations in the vicinity of the school. (AQW 8607/09)

Minister for Regional Development: With regard to the scheme to upgrade the A2 Shore Road, adjacent to Belfast High School, my Department's Roads Service has advised that the proposal for this scheme includes a dual carriageway with a central reserve. All local access to this road will be on a 'left in/left out' basis and there will be no right turn manoeuvres from local accesses. Turning manoeuvres will be accommodated at three locations, on this section of the carriageway, at Shore Avenue, Shorelands and Station Road.

The proposals have been considered in association with Belfast High School and include an entrance and exit onto the Carrickfergus bound carriageway, which will be constructed to appropriate standards.

With regard to vehicles parking in the vicinity, there will be no specific provision, within the current design, for vehicles to park on the carriageway at this location. However, the design does include a lay-by for buses on the Belfast bound carriageway.

In relation to a lay-by, Belfast High School made representations to the Public Inquiry held in October 2007, that a lay-by should be provided in the proposed design. This resulted in the Inspector recommending that an assessment be carried out on the provision of a lay-by at this location. A detailed assessment was subsequently carried out by Roads Service officials and a decision was made, that a lay-by for private cars would not be included in the proposal.

Full details of the 'Response to Public Inquiry Inspectors' Report' can be viewed on the Roads Service website at the following address:

http://roadimprovements.roadsni.gov.uk/response_report.pdf

Knockmore Railway Line

Mr T Burns asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail any work or studies which have been carried out on the Knockmore Railway line in the Crumlin area within the past 3 months. (AQW 8661/09)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink has not carried out any work or studies on the Knockmore Railway Line in the Crumlin area within the past 3 months and any studies undertaken by outside parties would need to involve liaison with the relevant authorities.

I commissioned a study to consider the possible long term social, physical and economic developments which could be achieved through the enhancement of the railway line along the Northern Railways Corridor. The study

will include the Knockmore to Antrim railway line. The report on the findings of the study is expected later this year.

In 2007 a study by an inter-departmental steering group, which looked at the options for future railways investment here, found that there was no case, at that time, for bringing that section of the line back into service. There are limits to the amount of public funding that can be reasonably expected to be allocated to railway services and thus prioritisation of projects within the context of overall capital priorities is necessary. Additionally the revenue consequences of running such a line and the impact on the public service obligation would need to be considered.

Resurfacing on the M5

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 8426/09, to outline the reasons why erecting a crash barrier on the city bound carriageway of the M5, on the adjacent stretch of the Sustrans path was not considered, given that major resurfacing on the M5 is scheduled for 27-28 June 2009.

(AQW 8683/09)

Minister for Regional Development: As I advised the Member in my reply to Assembly Question, AQW 8426/09, my Department's Roads Service was planning to resurface a length of the M5 at the end of June 2009 during overnight road closures. Roads Service has advised that this resurfacing was a surface course repair, which did not alter the existing road profile, and was completed, as scheduled, during the weekend 27-28 June 2009.

Roads Service considers that the application of current standards in relation to a safety barrier, when carrying out resurfacing works, depends on a number of factors. One of these factors is a change to the profile of the existing road. As this resurfacing work did not change the road profile, a review of the safety barrier under current standards was not required.

Braniel Primary School

Lord Browne asked the Minister for Regional Development what consultation his Department has had with Translink and the PSNI regarding the safety of children when exiting from the main entrance at the Braniel Primary School in east Belfast.

(AQW 8684/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that as part of the Travelwise Safer Routes to Schools initiative, it has been proactive in providing flashing school warning signs and banded red surfacing with lettering, near the Braniel Primary School entrances on both the Lower Braniel Road and Ravenswood Park.

The road markings, including the 'School Keep Clear' sign, in the vicinity of the school, have recently been refreshed and a section of pedestrian guardrail has been provided directly outside the school pedestrian access.

In order to assess the effectiveness of the existing road humps, Roads Service are also arranging for a traffic survey on Ravenswood Park around the school.

I am further advised that the PSNI is fully aware of the above measures and have also attended recent meetings with the school and other interested parties.

Roads Service

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the total grassed area maintained by Roads Service; and (ii) the total cost to Roads Service of maintaining their grassed areas. (AQW 8686/09)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the total grassed area maintained by Roads Service equates to some 7,240 hectares. The total cost of maintaining these grassed areas, in the 2008/09 financial year, amounted to £5.4 million.

Braniel Primary School

Lord Browne asked the Minister for Regional Development what measures his Department is proposing to improve the safety of children when exiting from the main entrance at the Braniel Primary School in east Belfast. (AQW 8724/09)

Minister for Regional Development: In my response to the Member's previous Assembly Question regarding this issue (AQW 8684/09), I advised that my Department's Roads Service has already undertaken measures to improve road safety at this location and that it proposes to carry out a further traffic survey on Ravenswood Park close to the school. The results of this survey will be used to assess the need for any additional measures.

In addition, I am further advised that Roads Service officials have also met with the school authorities and suggested that the safety of children could be enhanced, if they were to consider minor changes to the pedestrian access to the school. This is a matter for the South Eastern Education and Library Board to consider.

DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Renovation Grants

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister for Social Development if applications already received and approved for renovation grants will be time-limited by Building Control & Planning Service due to the current freeze on these grants, or if those applicants will be offered an extension. (AQW 8414/09)

Minister for Social Development (Ms M Ritchie): Formal approvals issued by the Housing Executive to applicants for Renovation Grants specify that works should commence within six months and be completed within one year.

Under Article 34 of the Planning (NI) Order 1991, planning permissions are issued with a condition requiring development to commence within five years of the date on which permission is granted. Planning Service has no legal power to extend planning permission, in addition, the Building Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 (as amended) require either plans to be submitted to a District Council for building regulations approval, or a description of the intended work (building notice) to be given to the Council in accordance with the regulations.

If that work has not commenced within three years of the deposit being received the Council may declare the plans to be of no effect (as if they had never been deposited). In the case of a building notice, it automatically becomes invalid after three years.

Red Sky Contractors

Mr P Butler asked the Minister for Social Development to provide details of the number of complaints made to the Housing Executive regarding work carried out by Red Sky contractors. (AQW 8452/09)

Minister for Social Development: Since August 2004 the Housing Executive has investigated 316 complaints through its formal complaints management procedure regarding work completed by the contractor. During this period the contractor has completed more than 230,000 repair jobs across six of the Housing Executive's District Office areas.

Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister for Social Development what assessment she has made of public concern over the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division, and if she intends to initiate a review or inquiry into its work, particularly in relation to fathers who are not fulfilling their legal obligations. (AQW 8506/09)

Minister for Social Development: I receive regular briefings on the performance of the Division, and was pleased to note that in the last Quarterly Report, the majority of the Division's targets had been achieved, and indeed exceeded. These include £2.81 million in child maintenance debt collected in 2008/09 (against a target

of £2.5 million), demonstrating the success of the Division's increased focus on Enforcement activity. I will of course continue to examine the Division's performance to ensure this progress is maintained.

Parents who have not fully met their child maintenance obligations are, in effect, robbing their children. In September 2008, I launched an Enforcement media campaign aimed at Non Resident Parents (NRPs), particularly those not meeting their financial responsibilities. This campaign, entitled "You Owe Your Child", highlighted the enforcement powers that the Division can and will apply if a Non Resident Parent fails to pay the full amount of child maintenance.

Enforcement powers available to the Division include the ability to request that an employer deduct regular maintenance and arrears from an NRP's salary, and to apply to the Courts for a liability order. Through the Northern Ireland Child Maintenance Act, which I brought to the Assembly and which received Royal Assent in July 2008, the Division's Enforcement powers were enhanced. From August 2009, the Act provides the facility to impose lump sum deduction orders and regular deduction orders on NRPs' bank accounts. Prosecutions for failure to provide information rose from 16 last year to 36 in 2008-09; an increase of over 100%. In addition, 213 liability orders were secured. This is evidence of my ongoing commitment and the commitment of staff in my Division to getting money to the children who are entitled to it and I am determined that we will use all the enforcement powers at our disposal to deliver for children.

Pension Credit Application Forms

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister for Social Development to detail how many pension credit application forms submitted to HM Revenue and Customs in Londonderry are currently logged as lost or misplaced.

(AQW 8519/09)

Minister for Social Development: State Pension Credit is administered by the Social Security Agency through the Pension Service at Carlisle House in Londonderry. The administration process does not involve the referral of application forms to HM Revenue & Customs.

Social Housing

Lord Browne asked the Minister for Social Development how many social houses have been built in east Belfast, in each of the last three years; and if any of them are vacant.

(AQW 8542/09)

Minister for Social Development: The number of social housing units either built or acquired by Housing Associations in each of the last three years in the parliamentary constituency of East Belfast, on the basis of housing starts, is as follows:-

2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
99 units	224 units	59 units

Ten of these are vacant. There are also 128 properties included in the above figures which are not classed as vacant as these have not yet been handed over by the developers to the Housing Associations for occupation.

Small Pockets of Deprivation Fund

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to Small Pockets of Deprivation funding and Local Communities funding prior to the implementation of RPA in 2011, to detail which councils or council groups are involved with her Department in pilot projects.

(AQW 8587/09)

Minister for Social Development: There are no pilot projects in relation to Small Pockets of Deprivation or the Local Community Fund.

Small Pockets of Deprivation Fund

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Social Development until what date will her Department continue to fund the Small Pockets of Deprivation Fund and the Local Communities Fund. (AQW 8589/09)

Minister for Social Development: The Small Pockets of Deprivation funding will continue until 31 March 2010. An evaluation of the funding up to 31 March 2009 is being finalised. I will make a decision on the future of this programme before the end of this year. It is expected that the Local Community Fund will close at the end of this financial year.

Small Pockets of Deprivation Fund

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how much funding will transfer to local councils with the transfer of funds for Small Pockets of Deprivation and the Local Communities Fund; and will any of this funding be available to councils before 2011. (AQW 8595/09)

Minister for Social Development: As I have not yet made a decision on the future of the Small Pockets of Deprivation Programme after 31 March 2010, it would be premature to speculate on the role of District Councils post 2011. Some Councils currently benefit from this programme. The Local Community Fund is currently available in 18 District Council areas, and will provide £1 million during this financial year. It is expected that the fund will close at the end of this financial year.

Dungannon District Housing at Old Ballygawley Road

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister for Social Development (i) what assessment she has made of the approved Dungannon District Housing at Old Ballygawley Road; (ii) to provide the background to the scheme; (iii) what the current situation is; and (iv) to outline the proposed timetable for progress. (AQW 8626/09)

Minister for Social Development: A formal application was submitted to the Housing Executive in February 2009 for approval to include this scheme on the Social Housing Development Programme. In April 2009 the Housing Executive advised Dungannon and District Housing Association that the scheme was potentially in breach of EU Procurement law. Further discussions have since taken place to ascertain the exact status of this scheme and to clarify the procurement issues. I understand the Housing Executive is currently assessing the application and a formal decision will be issued to Dungannon and District Housing Association within the next week.

Media Training

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister for Social Development how much her Department has spent on media training for (i) the Minister; and (ii) senior officials since May 2007. (AQW 8649/09)

Minister for Social Development: Since May 2007 Department for Social Development expenditure on media training is

- (i) £3232 for the Minister and
- (ii) 21 senior officials have undergone media training at a total cost of £5300.

Glen Estate, Newtownards

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister for Social Development when the Housing Executive will start and complete the one and two bedroom bungalow scheme in the Glen Estate, Newtownards. (AQW 8669/09)

Minister for Social Development: The Housing Executive recently reviewed its programme of planned improvement schemes and is unable to confirm when this work will commence. The delivery of their programmes of activity is dependent on obtaining appropriate approvals and the availability of finance. There is currently a £100million shortfall in the Housing Budget and this inevitably impacts on a wide range of planned projects and programmes.

Social Housing

Mr M Brady asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 7709/09, to outline how the amount of money paid out by her Department to individual contractors is deemed “commercially sensitive”, and withheld from the public. (AQW 8700/09)

Minister for Social Development: I have been advised by the Housing Executive that if the cost information sought were to be requested under Freedom of Information, it would most likely refuse to disclose this information, relying on Section 43(2) “Information is exempt information if its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it).” This exemption is a ‘qualified’ exemption and is subject to what is known as a ‘Public Interest Test’.

In all recent cases the Housing Executive has tended to take the view that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure. On this basis, the Housing Executive is minded not to disclose individual scheme cost details on the grounds that the information is likely to be prejudicial to the successful negotiation of commercial contracts.

Social Security Tribunal Hearing

Mr M Brady asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the average cost to her Department of a Social Security Tribunal hearing; (ii) the cost to her Department of holding tribunals in the last twelve months, including wages and travel and catering costs for the sitting panel, and room hire; and (iii) the number of tribunals that have taken place in the last 12 months. (AQW 8701/09)

Minister for Social Development: The average cost to my Department of a Social Security Tribunal hearing, for the financial year 2008/09, was £280. This included all costs relating to appeals from the point of receipt within The Appeals Service to the issue of any determinations by a Social Security Commissioner.

The cost to my Department of holding tribunals in the 2008/09 financial year was £4,735,877. This included £2,259,279 fees and expenses for the tribunal panel and £104,754 for room hire. There were no catering costs incurred.

The number of tribunal hearings arranged in 2008/09 was 16,940. Cancellations are included in this figure as these also represent a cost to my Department.

Social Housing

Mr M Brady asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the amount paid by her Department to individual contractors and companies for Social Housing since she took office. (AQW 8702/09)

Minister for Social Development: The amount paid to individual contractors and companies is deemed commercially sensitive and has not been provided. However, the total amount of cash spend for the Social Housing Development Programme, including “Off the Shelf” purchases is as follows:-

2007/08	2008/09
£172m	£143m

Queen’s Parade Redevelopment

Mr B Wilson asked the Minister for Social Development how many submissions were received during the two week consultation on the Queen’s Parade redevelopment; and what percentage of these submissions expressed concern at some aspect of the development. (AQW 8718/09)

Minister for Social Development: Due to an exceptionally high level of interest in the Queen’s Parade proposals, I have decided to extend the public consultation on the scheme from two weeks to six weeks. My Department received 501 responses during the initial two week period from 10 June to 24 June. An evaluation of all responses will start once the consultation period ends on 24 July 2009.

Queen's Parade Methodist Church

Mr B Wilson asked the Minister for Social Development if her Department had any discussions with the Queen's Parade Methodist Church about the impact on the activities of the church of the proposed development on Queen's Parade. (AQW 8720/09)

Minister for Social Development: My Department is currently carrying out a public consultation exercise to gather the views of all interested parties on the proposed development plans for Queen's Parade. During the course of this consultation, officials in my Department have had discussions with representatives of the Methodist Church on Queen's Parade, who highlighted issues that may impact on the activities of the church. These will be taken into account as part of the evaluation process of the public consultation.

Social Security Agency

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister for Social Development (i) what assessment has been carried out of the performance of the Medical Support Service of the Social Security Agency; (ii) what was the outcome of that assessment; (iii) whether her Department is bringing forward plans in respect of reform of this service; and (iv) to detail the basis for any such plans. (AQW 8744/09)

Minister for Social Development: In view of the changing Welfare Reform agenda, the Agency carried out a business focused review of Medical Support Services in 2005 to assess its performance and ability to meet current and future business requirements. While the review concluded that the delivery of Medical Support Services at that point was 'fit for purpose' it did highlight significant risks and issues which would result in the service increasingly being unable to deliver the Agency's business needs, particularly given the proposed introduction of Employment and Support Allowance.

An Outline Business Case was completed which considered various options for the future delivery of the service. Based on this Value for Money assessment, the business case concluded that the most cost effective method of ensuring appropriate delivery of the service was to outsource provision to a third party partner.

A procurement exercise is at an advanced stage and it is anticipated that the Invitation to Submit Final Tenders will be issued mid/late August 2009 with contract award to the successful bidder by late October 2009. Based on this timetable, cutover to the new provider will take place in early 2010.

Housing Executive Grant Aided Works

Mr W Irwin asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 8398/09 and in light of a departmental decision not to award grants, (i) what plans she has to assist applicants with the administration costs incurred whilst pursuing an application for grant assistance, such as planning and design fees; and (ii) what options are available to applicants who have been issued with 'urgent works notices' but have not received grant aid. (AQW 8795/09)

Minister for Social Development: In relation to (i) there is no statutory provision to enable the Housing Executive to recompense expenses incurred by applicants for architect and other fees associated with these grant applications as the relevant legislation is quite specific that such fees are only recoverable if the grant is approved and the works are satisfactorily completed.

In relation to (ii) normally a grant applicant may not commence the proposed works before a formal application for grant aid has been made. However, where an applicant identifies a situation where it is beneficial to carry out some works quickly, the Housing Executive can use its discretion, in the form of an urgent works approval. This does not represent any commitment to provide grant aid or the outcome of any application for grant aid, and the notes attached to such an urgent works approval indicate this.

The Housing Executive is reviewing applications, some of which may have urgent works notices, as applications for discretionary grants may be approved where exceptional circumstances apply. For those applications where there are no exceptional circumstances, the information will be held on file in the event that additional funding may become available.

WRITTEN ANSWERS

Department for Regional Development

A2 Shore Road	206
Braniel Primary School	207
Braniel Primary School	208
Car Parking Fines	200
Castle Street and Mill Street in Comber	198
Cycle Lanes	200
Election Posters	204
EU Funding	199
GPS Tracking Systems	203
GPS Tracking Systems	203
Interruption to Water Supply in Strangford	205
Knockmore Railway Line	206
Major Projects Planned for West Belfast	201
Marine Issues	202
NI Railway	199
NI Railway	200
NI Railway	200
Northern Ireland Water	204
Parking Fines	204
Pedestrian Facilities in West Belfast	202
Rapid Transport System in West Belfast	202
Resurfacing on the M5	207
Road Calming Measures	206
Roads Service	207
Safer Routes to School Programme	198
Safer Routes to School Programme	201
The Beeches, Newtownabbey	203
Upgraded A5 and A6 Routes	200
Vandalism of Buses	199
Water Supply	205
Water Supply at Crawfordsburn Road, Newtownards	203

Department for Employment and Learning

Access Courses at the Northern Regional College	160
Adults with Learning Disabilities	170
Apprenticeships	161
Apprenticeships	163
Belfast Metropolitan College	158
Disablement Employment Advisors	167
Education Provision in West Belfast	160
Employment Agencies	157
Employment and Training Sectors	168
Employment Service Delivery Model	168
Enterprise Ulster	166
Foreign Students Attending University	167
Fostering Scheme for Apprentices	168
GSCE Classes at the Northern Regional College	159
Night Classes	160
Pathways Advisory Service	168
People with Disabilities Seeking Employment	167
PhD Research Students	170

Proposed Merger of Stranmillis College and Queen's University	159
Proposed Merger of Stranmillis College and Queen's University	167
Queen's University and Stranmillis University College	171
Skillfast-UK	171
Steps to Work	169
Steps to Work	169
Steps to Work	170
Stranmillis University College and Queen's University	168
University Students	158

Department for Social Development

Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division	208
Dungannon District Housing at Old Ballygawley Road	210
Glen Estate, Newtownards	210
Housing Executive Grant Aided Works	212
Media Training	210
Pension Credit Application Forms	209
Queen's Parade Methodist Church	212
Queen's Parade Redevelopment	211
Red Sky Contractors	208
Renovation Grants	208
Small Pockets of Deprivation Fund	209
Small Pockets of Deprivation Fund	210
Small Pockets of Deprivation Fund	210
Social Housing	209
Social Housing	211
Social Housing	211
Social Security Agency	212
Social Security Tribunal Hearing	211

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Apple Industry	144
Comber Potatoes	141
Fishing Quota	141
Marine Issues	143
Single Farm Payments	142
Tuberculosis	142
UK Status on Food Exports	142
UK Status on Food Exports	142

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

GAA Events	145
Meetings with the GAA	145
National Shooting Week	144
Safety at Sports Grounds	144

Department of Education

Accommodation for Primary Schools	148
Autism	151
Behaviour Analysis	153
Behaviour Analysis	153
Bonuses	146

Class size limits	145	Foetal Alcohol Syndrome	194
Class Size Limits	146	Health and Social Care Trusts	191
Council for Catholic Maintained Schools	145	Inflammatory Bowel Disease	192
Education and Skills Authority	149	Inflammatory Bowel Disease	194
Education Welfare Officers	156	Intractable Epilepsy	196
Glastry School, Ballyhalbert	155	Macular Degeneration	197
Holocaust Education Trust	155	Marine Issues	195
Job Advertisements	156	Northern Health and Social Care Trust	192
Nursery Places	157	Physiotherapists	196
Post Primary Transfer	155	Physiotherapy Services	195
School Meals	149	Plural Plaques	195
School Meals	149	Prescription Fraud	196
South Eastern Education and Library Board	150	Registered Childminders	195
South Eastern Education and Library Board	151	Registered Childminders	195
South Eastern Education and Library Board	151	Royal Group of Hospitals	195
South Eastern Education and Library Board	153	Social Work Degree Courses	197
South Eastern Education and Library Board	153	South Tyrone and Lurgan Hospitals	197
South Eastern Education and Library Board	154	St Luke's Hospital Site	197
South Eastern Education and Library Board	154	Swine Flu	192
South Eastern Education and Library Board	156		
Southern Education and Library Board	146	Department of the Environment	
Teachers' Pensions	147	Better Regulation and Simplification Review	185
Teaching Staff with Disabilities	150	British Association for Shooting and	
Teaching Staff With Disabilities	148	Conservation	182
Transfer 2010	148	Bullbars	183
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment		Conflicts of Interest: Legal Advice	182
Invest NI	172	Control of Raptors	175
Marine Issues	171	Copenhagen Climate Change Summit	178
Department of Finance and Personnel		Departmental Officials	179
Anorexia	186	Departmental Officials	179
Armed Forces: Access to Public Services	186	Departmental Officials	180
Civil Service Equal Pay	186	Department of Energy and Climate Change	178
Civil Service Equal Pay Claim	185	Derry City Council Equality Consultation	177
Dormont Bank Account Monies	187	Derry City Council Equality Consultation	177
Economic Climate: Bank Response	187	Driver and Vehicle Agency	180
June Monitoring Round: Budget		DVA Enforcement Officers: Londonderry	184
Redistribution	187	Election Posters	177
NI Direct	190	Habitat for Cormorants	175
PEDU: Land and Property Services	191	Habitat for Cormorants	175
Procurement Process: Indigenous Enterprises	189	Hedge-Cutting Season	184
Procurement Task Groups	188	Horse-Riders	181
Social Contracts	189	Illegal Landfill Sites	176
Tax-Varying Powers	187	Illegal Waste: Garrison/Trillick	182
Department of Health, Social Services and Public		Marine Issues	174
Safety		Ministerial Cars	179
Adoption	191	Northern Ireland Environment Agency	173
Agenda for Change Arrears	194	Office of Environmental Enforcement	174
Alcohol Consumption During Pregnancy	193	Office of Environmental Enforcement	174
Alcohol Consumption During Pregnancy	193	Out-of-Town Development	184
Counselling Services	192	Planning Reform	182
Counselling Services	192	Planning Service	180
Drug Trials	193	Planning Service	181
Drug Trials	193	Planning Service	181
Family Support Workers	191	Plastic Bag Levy	183
Family Support Workers	193	Red Squirrel Population	176
Foetal Alcohol Syndrome	194	Rose Energy Incinerator in Glenavy	179
		Septic Tank and Sewage Sludge	177
		Septic Tank and Sewage Sludge	178

Septic Tank and Sewage Sludge	178
Septic Tank and Sewage Sludge	178
Shooting for Vermin Control, Game Shooting or Wild Fowling	182
Six Mile Water: Pollution/Fish Kills	184
Taxis Act	173
Taxis Act	173
Wildlife: Endangered Species	183

Office of the First Minister and deputy First

Minister

Bonuses	136
Capital Realisation Task Force	140
Childcare Provision	137
Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy	139
Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy	140
Conflict Transformation Centre	135
Creggan Pre-School Training Trust	136
Cross Departmental Working Group on Childcare	138
Executive Information Service	135
Executive Information Service	135
Holocaust Education Trust	137
Marine Issues	137
Maze/Long Kesh Site	136
Peace III Funding	136
Peace III Funding	136
Planning Appeals Commission	137
Policing and Justice Powers	138
Presbyterian Mutual Society	140
Primary Legislation Programme 2009-2010	138
Racism	141
SIB: Non-Executive Directors	141

Published by TSO (The Stationery Office) and available from:

Online

www.tsoshop.co.uk

Mail, Telephone, Fax & E-mail

TSO

PO Box 29, Norwich, NR3 1GN

Telephone orders/General enquiries: 0870 600 5522

Fax orders: 0870 600 5533

E-mail: customer.services@tso.co.uk

Textphone 0870 240 3701

TSO@Blackwell and other Accredited Agents

Customers can also order publications from:

TSO Ireland

16 Arthur Street, Belfast BT1 4GD

Telephone: 028 9023 8451

Fax: 028 9023 5401

ISBN 978-0-339-70136-6

