

Written Answers to Questions

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Friday 10 December 2010

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Contents

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister195

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development201

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure209

Department of Education212

Department for Employment and Learning.....225

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment230

Department of the Environment.....237

Department of Finance and Personnel241

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.....249

Department of Justice263

Department for Regional Development.....271

Department for Social Development289

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission.....297

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to arrive not later than two weeks after publication of this report.

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Wilson, Sammy (East Antrim)

Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 10 December 2010

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Legal Services

Mr P McGlone asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how much their Department and its agencies have paid for legal services in each of the last five years; and to detail the firms engaged. **(AQW 1583/11)**

First Minister and deputy First Minister (Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness): The total amount our Department has paid for legal services in each of the last five financial years and the names of the legal firms engaged are set out in the table below.

Year	Amount paid (£)	Legal firm(s) engaged
2005-06	100,165.96	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O'Reilly Stewart Solicitors; • Departmental Solicitor's Office (DSO).
2006-07	319,414.45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O'Reilly Stewart Solicitors; • Crown Solicitor's Office (CSO); Treasury Solicitor's Office, London; McBurney & Co.; DSO.
2007-08	189,715.80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSO; • O'Reilly Stewart Solicitors; • Bernard McCloskey QC; • Aidan Sands (Barrister); • Hewitt & Gilpin Solicitors; • Stephen Shaw QC.
2008-09	277,318.36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSO; • O'Reilly Stewart Solicitors; • David McMillen (Barrister); • Hewitt & Gilpin Solicitors; • Paul Maguire QC; • Stephen Shaw QC.

Year	Amount paid (£)	Legal firm(s) engaged
2009-10	334,526.81	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DKW (Belgian based law firm); • DSO; • Martin Wolfe (Barrister); • O'Reilly Stewart Solicitors; • David McMillen (Barrister); • Hewitt & Gilpin Solicitors; • Paul Maguire QC; • Stephen Shaw QC; • McCann Fitzgerald Solicitors.

Childcare Strategy

Ms D Purvis asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Childcare Strategy, including when the draft strategy paper will be published and when public consultation will begin.

(AQW 1678/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People identified childcare as a priority issue and agreed that a policy and economic appraisal should be carried out on a range of strategic options.

A paper on the appraisal report has now been prepared for the Executive. It outlines the key findings and when the Executive has had an opportunity to consider the paper, the next phase of the work on the development of a Childcare Strategy will begin. This work will include a public consultation.

The appraisal report contains a timetable of actions and estimates of the financial implications of these actions. It is expected that the report will form part of the evidence base underpinning the public consultation.

Community Relations Council

Mr S Anderson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 1426/11, whether the under-representation of any communities in funding awards by the Community Relations Council will be taken into account when deciding on how to move forward with those aspects of the draft Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration; and for their assessment of how such under-representation might impact on the continuing role of the CRC in such funding awards.

(AQW 1815/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The public consultation on the draft Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration ended on 29 October 2010. An independent analysis of the consultation responses is underway. Options for future funding arrangements, including those of the Community Relations Council, may form part of the recommendations we will be asked to consider in due course.

It is important that future funding is awarded fairly and appropriately on the basis of greatest need, maximum impact and value for money; it is unlikely that it will be awarded on a per-capita basis as this could potentially have a negative impact on some minority groups.

Interns

Mr P Weir asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many interns their Department has facilitated in 2010/11 and how many it intends to facilitate in 2011/12.

(AQW 2357/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Department has not facilitated any intern placements during 2010/2011. The position will be reviewed before the 2011/2012 academic year but, at the moment, no decision has been taken.

Capital Projects in the Strangford Constituency

Mr S Hamilton asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how much their Department has spent on capital projects in the Strangford constituency in each of the last three financial years.
(AQW 2396/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Department has incurred no expenditure on capital projects within the Strangford constituency boundaries in the last three years.

Maze Development Corporation

Mr S Gardiner asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail any progress on the Maze Development Corporation; and whether any blueprints or plans exist for regeneration schemes in advance of the Maze Development Corporation becoming operational next April.
(AQW 2458/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: We are currently considering the appointment process to establish the Maze/Long Kesh Development Corporation Chair and Board members. The aim is that the Corporation will be operational as soon as possible.

The Development Corporation will be tasked with building upon the work previously undertaken by OFMDFM and the all-party Maze/Long Kesh Consultation Panel to maximise the economic, historical and reconciliation potential of the site.

A masterplanning framework is being developed for consideration by the Development Corporation when appointed. In order to ensure there is no loss of momentum pending the creation of the Corporation, the Maze/Long Kesh Programme Delivery Unit continues with early preparatory work and has developed an interim Corporate Plan which will be provided to the Development Corporation Board for consideration.

The first phases of the interim Corporate Plan will include taking forward the development of a Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre along with, potentially, the relocation of the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society (RUAS) for its 2012 Agricultural Show subject to the outcome of current negotiations.

Representations to Sir Jon Shortridge by Senior Civil Servants

Mr P McGlone asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 2370/11, whether they can confirm that no senior civil servants (i) requested; or (ii) were authorised to make representations to Sir Jon Shortridge regarding his investigation into the Department for Regional Development and NI Water.
(AQW 2493/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: As answered in AQW 2370/11, Sir Jon Shortridge conducted his own independent investigation. We had no involvement in relation to the members of staff who may have made representations to the investigation.

Phoenix Project Offices

Mr A Bresland asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how much has been spent on the refurbishment of each Phoenix Project office in the last 12 months.
(AQW 2580/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Phoenix Project has received funding under the PEACE III Programme for the purchase of IT equipment and office furniture for the six regional Phoenix Offices and one central Phoenix Office. Over the last twelve months, this funding amounted to £24,886. This

funding was distributed to the South East Fermanagh Foundation as lead partner for the Phoenix Project.

The Phoenix Projects have also received funding from the Community Relations Council's (CRC's) Victims and Survivors Capital Grant Scheme for capital expenditure items and refurbishment costs of the offices.

Over the last 12 months, the funding administered to the Phoenix Offices by CRC was as follows:

Group	Allocation
Tyrone West Phoenix	£12,435.14
Tyrone East Phoenix	£2,071.27
Ards and North Down Phoenix	£3,387.77
Fermanagh Phoenix	£3,890.20
Armagh Phoenix	£1,527.50
Total	£23,311.88

North-South Postal Arrangements

Ms M Ritchie asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what action will be taken at the institutional sectoral meetings of the North-South Ministerial Council to discuss North-South postal arrangements, and in particular to address the delays in receiving post experienced by customers in both jurisdictions; and if they will make a statement on this matter.

(AQW 2653/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The July 2010 NSMC Plenary noted that the NSMC Joint Secretariat had identified a number of potential new/emerging cross border mobility issues, including concerns about cross border postal services. This matter is now being examined in greater depth in consultation with relevant departments and agencies and progress will be reported to a future NSMC Institutional meeting.

In accordance with Section 52C(2) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 we will make a Statement to the Assembly following any future NSMC Institutional meetings.

Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration: Education

Mr T Lunn asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister if they can give an assurance that the draft Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration will include a section on shared education.

(AQO 665/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The draft Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Programme, which includes a section on education, is continuing to be developed following the consultation process which closed on 29 October.

The consultation attracted 290 written responses and these are currently being analysed. The subsequent report will reflect the wealth of views and material gathered from 11 public meetings and 15 targeted sectoral meetings, which were held at a range of different locations throughout September and October. We have no doubt the findings of the report will include people's views on education.

We expect to receive the draft consultation report this month, following which we will begin the process of considering how we will build on and strengthen the document in light of the outcome of the analysis of the consultation.

This is a cross departmental document, and will receive further input from departments before we bring it to the Executive again.

Government: Revenue

Mr M McLaughlin asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the measures being considered by the Budget Review Group to maximise revenue generation.

(AQO 666/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Budget Review Group has met six times to date and is continuing to meet. As part of our discussions we are looking at potential revenue raising options.

However, it has to be remembered that the Executive has very limited powers to raise revenue.

Our considerations to date have included examination of the level of the regional rate as well as exploring the scope for other types of revenue generation and leveraging of funds.

A number of the parties in this Assembly have put forward their ideas and these are being examined.

The potential implications and impacts of options would have to be carefully considered.

These discussions are continuing as part of developing a Budget.

Northern Ireland Electricity: Network

Mr D McNarry asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in light of the agreed bail-out of the Republic of Ireland, what representations have been made to the Irish Government in relation to the potential sale of Northern Ireland Electricity's grid network to the Electricity Supply Board.

(AQO 667/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: Completion of the sale of the Northern Ireland Electricity grid system to the Electricity Supply Board is well underway and we do not expect that it will be affected by the bail-out.

The ESB is a semi-state owned company. This means that it has a separate Board, balance sheet and raises debt independently of the Irish Government. It is not dependent on Government funding and all of its transactions and investment plans are underpinned by borrowing from the external money markets. In this regard, ESB advise (and it was reported widely in the media) that in September it secured financing for the acquisition of NIE, through a 2.5billion euro facility. Therefore, current events should not have any bearing on the acquisition.

Joint Ministerial Committee

Mr W Irwin asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the most recent meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee.

(AQO 668/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: On 22 November we attended a meeting of the Joint Ministerial Council in Domestic format chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg.

The main items on the Agenda were a discussion on possible changes to the dispute resolution protocol provided by the Memorandum of Understanding and an update from Francis Maude, the Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General, on proposals for the Reform of Public Bodies.

The Member will also be aware from our subsequent press statement that we also took the opportunity to raise with the Deputy Prime Minister our concerns about the result of the spending review, and in particular the reduction in capital expenditure. The Deputy Prime Minister acknowledged that the figures are in dispute and gave an undertaking that they will be re-examined by the Northern Ireland Office and the Treasury

We made clear our intention to pursue this matter, if necessary, through the dispute mechanism.

Child Poverty Strategy

Mr S Hamilton asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the timescale for the implementation of the Child Poverty Strategy.

(AQO 669/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The provisions of the Child Poverty Act will be a significant step towards focusing efforts within government to meet our challenging Programme for Government commitment of eradicating child poverty by 2020.

The provisions of the Act specifically require us to produce and present to the Assembly, by 24 March 2011, a Child Poverty Strategy. The strategy will outline those actions that departments here are taking to ensure its associated targets are met.

The Act further places an ongoing requirement for child poverty strategies to be produced every three years and for annual reports to be made to the Assembly.

Our officials have been progressing the necessary work in this area and following a successful pre-consultation stakeholder event in September, the draft strategy has been issued today for a period of formal public consultation.

The public consultation period, during which we will be seeking the views of all stakeholders, including children and young people themselves, will conclude on 6 February 2011.

Following an assessment of the consultation responses, the updated draft strategy will be shared with departments and the OFMDFM Committee for consideration before being laid before the Assembly in March 2011.

Children's Issues

Mr R Beggs asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, following the demise of cross-cutting funding for children's issues, for their assessment of how effectively these issues are being addressed by Departments and the Executive collectively.

(AQO 671/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: We established the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People with the ultimate aim of improving the lives of our children and young people.

Through the workings of this cross-departmental Committee, the six key outcome areas contained in the Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People are placed at the heart of Government's agenda.

The Champions for Children and Young People act as a senior point of contact within departments in relation to the Ministerial Sub-Committee and help to take forward agreed policy.

Additionally, all Ministers are committed to the Programme for Government and delivering on the associated PSA targets, and the Ministerial Sub-Committee provides a forum to co-operate in meeting these targets.

It is, of course, for each Minister to manage the funding allocation for their own department and this joint working does not compromise the respective roles and responsibilities of individual Ministers.

Our own department does not deliver direct services to children and young people and therefore the majority of the key issues requiring action will fall to, and require funding by, other departments. We will continue to encourage departmental Ministers to keep children and young people's issues high on their list of priorities.

We will be tabling the issue of budget implications for children's services for discussion at the next meeting of the Ministerial Sub-Committee and the Children's Champions group.

Whilst future departmental budget allocations are not yet known, whatever the outcome, we will continue to promote children and young people's issues and to highlight the need to jointly improve outcomes in key areas of our children and young people's lives.

Investment Strategy

Mr S Anderson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline any recent discussions they have had with the UK Government about the Investment Strategy.

(AQO 673/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: We wrote to the Prime Minister on 28 October to ask for a meeting to discuss the Spending Review and the assurances given about the £18 billion funding commitment made by the former Prime Minister in 2007 and agreed by the then Chancellor following the St Andrews Agreement.

In his response, the Prime Minister said that the Treasury were confident that his government is on course to deliver the £18 billion package. The Chief Secretary to the Treasury said that the Executive will have invested £9.8 billion by the end of 2010/11. However, all of this is at odds with our understanding. The Finance Minister met the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on Wednesday 1 December to discuss this issue.

Child Poverty Strategy

Mr S Neeson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Child Poverty Strategy.

(AQO 674/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The provisions of the Child Poverty Act will be a significant step towards focusing efforts within government to meet our challenging Programme for Government commitment of eradicating child poverty by 2020.

The provisions of the Act specifically require us to produce and present to the Assembly, by 24 March 2011, a Child Poverty Strategy. The strategy will outline those actions that departments are taking to ensure its associated targets are met.

The Act further places an ongoing requirement for child poverty strategies to be produced every three years and for annual reports to be made to the Assembly.

Our officials have been progressing the necessary work in this area and following a successful pre-consultation stakeholder event in September, the draft strategy has been issued today for a period of formal public consultation.

The public consultation period, during which we will be seeking the views of all stakeholders, including children and young people themselves, will conclude on 6 February 2011.

Following an assessment of the consultation responses, the updated draft strategy will be shared with departments and the OFMDFM Committee for consideration before being laid before the Assembly in March 2011.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Horses

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why horses are not considered to be rural or farm animals; and whether she has any plans to seek its redesignation and the inclusion of horses within her remit.

(AQW 2318/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (Ms M Gildernew): Horses are not considered to be agricultural animals as they are not defined as such in the Agriculture Act (NI) 1949.

The re-designation of the horse is one of a number of issues identified for consideration in the "Strategy for the Equine Industry in Northern Ireland", developed by the equine sector and supported and published by my Department in March 2007. The actions from the Strategy are to be delivered through the Equine Council for NI (ECNI). I expect this particular issue to be taken forward by ECNI in due course.

Brucellosis Outbreak in Keady

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether a DNA sample was extracted from the brucellosis-infected foetus which was dumped on farmland in Keady; and whether this has led to the identification of the herd from which the foetus came.

(AQW 2337/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The foetus was found on farmland in Lislea, Co. Armagh, geographically separate from Keady. DNA analysis was carried out on the foetus and comparison made with stored samples from previous reactor animals and with new samples from current breakdowns. To date 2135 samples have been compared with the foetal DNA, none has provided a match. Relevant samples will continue to be compared to the foetal sample.

Brucellosis Outbreak in Keady

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to the brucellosis outbreak in Keady, the date on which the first case of the infection was confirmed.

(AQW 2339/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The first outbreak of Brucellosis was confirmed this year on 21 January 2010 from an animal test carried out on 12 January. Hitherto, infection had not been confirmed in the area since September 2006. The last confirmed outbreak of disease in the Keady Control Zone was reported on 17 August 2010.

Brucellosis Outbreak in Keady

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether the particular strain of brucellosis found in the infected foetus dumped on farmland in Keady has been identified; and when the last incidence of this strain was found in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 2340/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The dumped foetus was found on farmland in Lislea, Co. Armagh in late December 2009. Using molecular strain typing techniques at AFBI Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute, the *Brucella abortus* culture from the foetus was identified as Strain 12, in the nomenclature system used by AFBI.

This strain was first seen in a single breakdown in Enniskillen in 2006; in 2007 and 2008 it had been identified in 31 separate breakdowns. By 2009, it was considered to be on the wane, with only 4 confirmed breakdowns showing this strain, prior to the foetus in late December.

However, in 2010, of the 24 confirmed breakdowns, 20 have been classified as strain 12. The most recent example was found in August of this year.

Interns

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many interns her Department has facilitated in 2010/11 and how many it intends to facilitate in 2011/12.

(AQW 2356/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: For 2010/11 the Department received no requests to facilitate interns.

For 2011/12 the Department has been approached by two interns. Options are currently being considered for facilitating one formal request and an informal enquiry from another is being dealt with.

Northern Ireland Scrapie Plan

Mr A Bresland asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much has been spent on the Northern Ireland Scrapie Plan in each of the last four years.

(AQW 2464/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The table below shows the total spend on the NI Scrapie Plan in each of the last four years.

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total Spend (£)	348,057	209,057	152,513	111,427*

(* up to and including 30 November 2010)

Scrapie

Mr A Bresland asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how she intends to eradicate scrapie in the sheep flock.

(AQW 2465/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Scrapie is a complex disease which by its nature can lay dormant for a number of years. The aim of my Department's scrapie programme is to eliminate scrapie from the sheep flock in the north of Ireland. Current control measures have seen a steady decline in the incidents of scrapie since a high of 16 classical and 2 atypical incidents in 2006. One incident of classical scrapie was identified in 2009 and there have been no cases identified to date this year.

Under the 2008 TSE Regulations, scrapie in sheep and goats is a notifiable disease and as such suspicion of the disease must be reported to my Department. Movement restrictions are placed on suspect flocks and herds and if scrapie is confirmed a compulsory programme of controls under the Compulsory Scrapie Flocks Scheme will take place in accordance with EU 999/2001 and domestic legislation. Under this Scheme my Department will genotype, kill and destroy scrapie susceptible sheep and goats and TSE sample a proportion of those animals destroyed. All fallen and human consumption sheep and goats over 18 months from the flock or herd will be TSE sampled for a two year period following the scrapie outbreak. In addition, movement restrictions to and from the flock or herd will remain in place for a minimum of two years, during which time only sheep or goats with scrapie resistant genotypes may be moved in or out.

My Department also implements monitoring control measures for a two year period on a flock/herd following confirmation of atypical scrapie.

In accordance with EU requirements my Department also undertakes an annual surveillance programme in which a random sample of fallen sheep and goats and sheep for human consumption are TSE sampled and tested.

The new TSE Regulations, which will come into force later this month in the north, will provide for additional powers to restrict the movement of milk from sheep flocks and goat herds where classical scrapie is suspected or confirmed.

Scrapie

Mr A Bresland asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many cases of scrapie have been identified in each of the last four years.

(AQW 2466/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: I have provided in the table below the number of classical and atypical scrapie cases identified in each of the last four years and the number of flocks affected.

Year	Classical		Atypical	
	No. of cases	No. of flocks affected	No. of cases	No. of flocks affected
2007	4	2	3	3
2008	1	1*	2	2
2009	1	1*	0	0
2010	0	0	0	0

(* This was the same flock in which a case of classical scrapie was identified in each of these years.)

Artworks

Mr A McQuillan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail the value of the artworks that her Department currently has (i) on display; and (ii) in storage.

(AQW 2574/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The only artwork on display or in storage in the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development belongs to Properties Division in the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP), which manages the NICS Art Collection. As the artwork is a DFP asset, DFP will provide the required information on artworks on loan to this and any other NICS Departments in responding to this question.

Northern Ireland Executive's European Office in Brussels

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail any communication her Department has had with the Northern Ireland Executive Office in Brussels in each of the past 24 months.

(AQW 2627/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: I refer to my previous answer to AQW 1620/10. The Executive's Brussels office is an important resource offering key support on European matters. My Department has a member of staff based in that office who is dedicated to dealing with agri-food, veterinary, fisheries and rural development issues. There has been daily contact between DARD staff based in the north of Ireland and the DARD staff member in Brussels over the last two years on issues ranging right across my Department's responsibilities.

Woodland Creation

Mr R Beggs asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether the Public Service Agreement target for the conversion of an additional 1650 hectares of agricultural and non-agricultural land to woodland by March 2011 is likely to be achieved.

(AQW 2645/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The current Programme for Government (PfG) target for woodland creation was always going to be a challenging target, not least because of the current pressures faced by farmers and landowners. By the end of November this year, 655 hectares of new woodland have been created. This is less than I had planned at this stage of the PfG period, and it is now unlikely that the woodland creation target will be achieved by March 2011. However, I remain committed to the long term aim of the Forestry Strategy of doubling the area of woodland in the north of Ireland. In November last year, I announced increases in grant rates of up to 30 per cent and since

then, there has been a steep rise in the area of woodland creation applied for - 70 % higher compared with the same period last year. I expect this increased interest in applications to result in more woodland creation, but not all of which will be in the PfG target period. My Department will increase its efforts to promote woodland creation, recognising the many benefits it offers for the people of the north of Ireland.

Woodland Creation

Mr R Beggs asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many hectares of woodland have been created in each year since 2007.

(AQW 2646/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The area of woodland created under my Department's Woodland Grant Scheme since 2007 is 1,054 hectares and for each year, is as follows:

Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	Total
Area (hectares)	552	289	213	1054

Rural Development Programme Funding

Mr W Irwin asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 2454/11, whether a deadline exists for the submission to the EU of any changes in the Department's delivery structure for the distribution of Rural Development Programme funding; and how long before any deadline will she consult with Local Action Groups on possible changes.

(AQW 2657/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: As I advised in response to AQW 2454/11, I have asked officials to undertake a review of Axis 3 delivery and of what and where the blockages are. This work will review processes and procedures within the operation of the programme not its structure.

The Mid Term Evaluation of the programme has recently been submitted to the EU Commission in advance of its end of December 2010 deadline, however there is no EU deadline for submission of any changes to implementation of Axis 3 or other changes to the programme.

I will as explained, receive a report from officials later this month. Where practices need changed to improve efficiency of delivery these will be introduced in consultation with Joint Council Committees and Local Action Groups.

Budget: DARD

Rev Dr R Coulter asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on her Department's budget proposals.

(AQO 690/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The outcome of the Spending Review means that we know the level of budget available to the Executive at Block level. The Executive's Budget Review Group continues to assess the implications of this for the wider budget. It is too early to say with certainty what this will mean for the DARD budget. However, with less money available, the Executive will have to make savings, and DARD will be expected to play its part. During the Budget period 2011-2015, the Department faces a number of challenges. Evidently, there is a risk that there will be insufficient resources to carry forward the current level of services and meet customer expectations. My priority is to maintain the efficient provision of priority front line services, and bear down on administration. At this stage, it is too early to say how my Department would deliver any savings the Executive decides upon and it would be premature to speculate further.

Agriculture: Bureaucracy

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what measures her Department has taken to reduce bureaucracy in the agricultural industry.

(AQO 703/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: My Department issued its response to the Better Regulation Review on 18 May 2010. Since then the department has been actively taking forward an extensive programme of work to give effect to the 61 recommendations put forward by the Independent Panel which have been accepted or accepted in principle.

Part of my department's response was a commitment to develop an action plan to implement, monitor and review the accepted recommendations. Systems have been put in place which will measure these outcomes in due course. The action plan has been scrutinised by the ARD Committee and will be published in early December.

We have not waited until now to improve our approach, for instance we have put in place an electronic identification system for sheep and goats which was supported and welcomed by the industry.

Moreover in July 2009, we secured a very important derogation from Brussels benefiting flock keepers with the introduction of the sheep electronic identification system (EID); the concession provides central points of recording reducing the administrative burden on flockkeepers, who will not need in general to purchase EID readers. More than 1,100 sheep farmers attended EID training events in 13 markets across the north, this was in addition to information evenings delivered by staff from CAFRE, Veterinary Service and Animal Health and Welfare policy.

I can assure you that I and my department remain committed to reducing the level of red tape. There is also evidence that farmers are reacting positively to new initiatives for example the new application process for the Farm Modernisation Programme. The Department received approximately 7000 on-line applications for Tranche 2 of the Programme and this represents in the region of 90% of the total applications submitted. This is another real step forward in reducing the time and cost farmers are asked to spend on paperwork.

As you are aware my Department has committed to a PSA Target to reduce the administrative burden on the agri-food sector by 25% by 2013 – with an interim target of 15% by 2011. I have put in place a dedicated Better Regulation Advisory Unit within the Department which is providing a strong advisory and co-ordination function across all departmental business areas to support the work towards achieving the very challenging targets we have set ourselves.

Townland Names

Mr B McElduff asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the progress made by her Department in promoting the use of townland names.

(AQO 695/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: As I have previously stated I very much recognise and value the historic, cultural and linguistic importance of townland names, particularly to the rural community. They are a significant part of our shared local heritage and I am therefore keen to support their promotion and preservation.

My Department moved to include townland names within the addresses of all DARD offices in March of this year. This was in response to an initiative being undertaken by the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure, under your chairmanship.

Guidance along with a list of DARD Offices and the relevant townland name,

was issued to all business areas in my Department to advise them of this change and to ensure that it was implemented appropriately.

In order to minimise waste and save cost changes to the address have been phased in as current supplies of pre-printed documents, including headed paper, compliment slips, business cards, pre-printed paid envelopes and other pre-printed forms, are exhausted.

Both the Department's Customer Information System (CIS) and Grants & Subsidies System (G&S) have the townland name as part of the DARD building/office addresses.

The CIS system is the system on which customer data is maintained and staff have the facility to incorporate a townland into an address if the customer so wishes.

The legacy Grants & Subsidies system is the system on which farm business data is maintained and staff have the facility to incorporate a townland into an address if the customer so wishes. This business data is copied to the CIS system on a daily basis.

Any new application that is developed on CIS, therefore, can make use of this information on screen or on paper forms.

Dogs (Amendment) Bill

Mr P Butler asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline progress made on the Dogs (Amendment) Bill.

(AQO 698/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The Dogs (Amendment) Bill, which I introduced in the Assembly last May, remains one of my key priorities. The Bill has now completed its Committee stage and I want to thank the Committee for their hard work in scrutinising the Bill.

The Bill introduces compulsory microchipping making it more likely that lost or stolen dogs will be returned to their owners. The Bill also includes a system of control conditions to improve the management of problem dogs. Taken together, microchipping and control conditions will increase the accountability of dog owners and help reduce many of the problems caused by irresponsible owners.

The Bill will also introduce a long-overdue rise in the cost of a dog licence (from £5 to £12.50) and so increase the resources available to council dog warden services. In addition, irresponsible owners will face stiffer fixed penalties as a result of the Bill. Finally, the Bill recognises the rights of other pet owners to be protected by making it an offence to set a dog on or let it attack and injure any domestic animal.

I have agreed some amendments with the Committee, which I believe will result in the legislation being stronger, and will, in turn, further improve the dog control system established by the 1983 Dogs Order.

It is my hope that the Bill will move to Consideration stage very shortly and, with the support of the Assembly, to be enacted by spring next year.

EU Quotas: Farming and Fishing

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the impact that European quotas currently have on dairy farmers and fishermen.

(AQO 699/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: In recent years milk quotas have become increasingly irrelevant across the EU. Provisional data for the 2009/10 milk quota year indicates that deliveries were 7% below quota. A similar position pertained in Britain and here where in 2009/10 production was 1.77 billion litres or 12% below quota. However, in the current milk quota year up to the end of October 2010 there has been an increase in production of 297 million litres compared to the same period last year which, although still well below quota levels, indicates that dairy farmers are now more responsive to market signals than to quota restraints. This is a welcome development which should enable the dairy industry to build a sustainable future.

With regard to fish quotas, these are established not for marketing reasons, but to protect fish stocks from overfishing. Fish quotas are set after consideration of the scientific assessments of fish stocks by the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas. Across European waters many fish stocks are considered to be fished above sustainable levels and such stocks are therefore subject to annual quota reductions. The health of the stock determines the quota and this in turn determines the size of the fishing fleet and its support industry.

Woodland

Mr T Lunn asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action her Department is taking to ensure that there is no further net loss of ancient or long-established woodland.

(AQO 700/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: My Department's Forest Service developed a strategy in 2008 for the management of ancient and long established woodland, identified on the Ancient Woodland Inventory, within its forests. Forest Service implements this strategy by protecting ancient and long established woodland remnant features and reinforcing existing habitat networks in such woodland. This work is agreed in conjunction with Forest Service management plans.

Increased protection for ancient and long established woodland, outside Forest Service managed woodland, will be provided by new measures that are included in the Forestry Act (NI) 2010. The Act requires the Department to have regard to maintaining the special character of ancient and long established woodland when considering applications for felling licences.

Potatoes

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether the local potato industry is in a position to benefit from the demand from Russia for Irish potatoes.

(AQO 701/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The local ware potato industry is responding to increased demand for Irish potatoes from Russia. Exporters from the local industry have fulfilled an initial export order for ware potatoes. Officials from my department worked in support of this trade through inspections and assistance to ensure the consignment complies with the Russian plant health regulations.

Rural Development Programme

Mr P Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what steps her Department is taking to reduce bureaucracy in the Rural Development Programme so that funding can be easily accessed.

(AQO 702/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: I am pleased to reiterate my determination to cut all unnecessary bureaucracy from my Department, including from the Rural Development Programme. I do not accept that there is too much bureaucracy. In fact, access to funding under Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme is easier than under any previous programme, thanks to an extremely simple application form.

That simplified application process has yielded substantial applications, and at a rate that none of us could have anticipated; in fact, there have been over 3,300 applications under the Axis so far.

The same philosophy holds true for the other elements in the RDP. In particular, I draw the Member's attention to the simplified online application system for the second tranche of the Farm Modernisation Programme; the computerisation of the application process for agri-environment schemes; and the introduction of telephone applications

My officials are aware of their responsibilities to the rural public in this regard, and I remain personally committed to the simplest application and assessment process possible within the legal framework of an EU programme.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Capital Projects in the Strangford Constituency

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much his Department has spent on capital projects in the Strangford constituency in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 2393/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (Mr N McCausland): DCAL has made no expenditure on capital projects in the Strangford constituency in each of the last three financial years.

Agenda NI

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much his Department and its agencies have spent on (i) articles and adverts in Agenda NI; (ii) subscriptions to Agenda NI; and (iii) payments for staff attending conferences organised by BMF Conferences since May 2007.

(AQW 2472/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: In the period May 2007 to November 2010, the Department has paid the following amounts in relation to the Agenda NI publication and conferences organised by BMF Conferences:

Articles and adverts in Agenda NI	Subscriptions to Agenda NI	Conferences organised by BMF Conferences
£795	£35	£5,780

Libraries in North Antrim and East Antrim

Mr P Frew asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the number of (i) visitors to; (ii) members of; and (iii) books lent by each library in (a) North Antrim; and (b) East Antrim in each of the last three years.

(AQW 2532/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The tables at Annex A show the number of people who visited, are members of, and the number of books lent by each library in the North Antrim area in each of the last three years. The libraries within the North Antrim Parliamentary Constituency are; Ballymena, Ballycastle, Ballymoney, Broughshane, Cushendall, Kells & Connor, Kilrea and Portglenone.

The tables at Annex B show the number of people who visited, are members of, and the number of books lent by each library in the East Antrim area in each of the last three years. The libraries within the East Antrim Parliamentary Constituency are; Carnlough, Carrickfergus, Cloughfern, Greenisland, Larne and Whitehead.

ANNEX A**TABLE 1: NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO VISITED EACH LIBRARY IN NORTH ANTRIM IN EACH OF THE LAST THREE YEARS.**

Location	(i) Number of Visits		
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Ballycastle Library	46,110	48,921	54,116
Ballymena Central Library	173,087	168,869	166,531
Ballymoney Library	71,098	67,408	69,090
Broughshane Library	25,364	17,346	17,509
Cushendall Library	19,086	14,817	16,844
Kells & Connor Library	15,819	16,877	13,377
Portglenone Library	18,552	15,033	13,363

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF ACTIVE MEMBERS OF EACH LIBRARY IN NORTH ANTRIM IN EACH OF THE LAST THREE YEARS.

Location	(ii) Number of Active Members		
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Ballycastle Library	2,874	854	1,405
Ballymena Central Library	11,549	3,530	5,011
Ballymoney Library	5,455	1,650	2,361
Broughshane Library	1,541	395	592
Cushendall Library	1,283	428	509
Kells & Connor Library	1,008	329	377
Portglenone Library	1,349	402	579

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF BOOKS LENT BY EACH LIBRARY IN NORTH ANTRIM IN EACH OF THE LAST THREE YEARS.

Location	(iii) Number of Books Lent		
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Ballycastle Library	30,600	32,197	32,005
Ballymena Central Library	102,520	105,731	107,223
Ballymoney Library	58,951	59,036	57,189
Broughshane Library	17,539	18,336	15,858
Cushendall Library	17,108	18,514	16,363
Kells & Connor Library	12,429	10,880	7,680
Portglenone Library	13,214	15,171	14,320

ANNEX B**TABLE 1: NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO VISITED EACH LIBRARY IN EAST ANTRIM IN EACH OF THE LAST THREE YEARS.**

Location	(i) Number of Visits		
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Carnlough Library	14,092	15,117	17,300
Carrickfergus Library	152,203	147,267	139,780
Cloughfern Library	32,612	36,673	34,895
Greenisland Library	32,029	33,763	37,970
Larne Library	90,630	100,744	103,723
Whitehead Library	33,070	32,206	14,100*

* Based on a sample week as per CIPFA methodology

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF EACH LIBRARY IN EAST ANTRIM IN EACH OF THE LAST THREE YEARS.

Location	(ii) Number of Active Members		
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Carnlough Library	650	218	306
Carrickfergus Library	8,129	2,368	3,438
Cloughfern Library	1,742	463	695
Greenisland Library	1,857	537	901
Larne Library	6,278	1,822	2,869
Whitehead Library	2,212	559	802

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF BOOKS LENT BY EACH LIBRARY IN NORTH ANTRIM IN EACH OF THE LAST THREE YEARS.

Location	(iii) Number of Books Lent		
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Carnlough Library	6,650	6,919	7,807
Carrickfergus Library	79,527	79,723	80,441
Cloughfern Library	17,132	16,010	14,845
Greenisland Library	19,578	21,145	21,771
Larne Library	66,070	64,207	66,120
Whitehead Library	22,429	22,323	18,259

HMS Caroline

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what discussions departmental officials have had with other Departments, non-departmental public bodies, agencies, the Royal Navy and others

in relation to the importance of the HMS Caroline in the portrayal of Belfast's maritime history and the addition of the ship to the range of attractions displayed in the Queen's Island area of the Titanic Quarter.

(AQW 2579/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: I have been fully apprised by my departmental officials on the issues surrounding HMS Caroline and I am aware of the growing interest in our maritime heritage. As you will appreciate Maritime heritage covers a wide range of activities and the engagement of various stakeholders.

Regarding discussions at official level pertaining to HMS Caroline, on 20 January 2010 the former DCAL Permanent Secretary convened a meeting, on a without prejudice basis, to discuss the options for the vessel. The meeting involved Royal Navy stakeholders and local stakeholders such as Belfast City Council (BCC), the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB), the Department of Social Development (DSD), the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and the Belfast Harbour Commission (BHC). You will note that no further similar meeting has been held although the various stakeholders have continued discussions on the issues in various formats.

The consensus stakeholder view was that the future of the vessel could not be viewed in isolation but needed to be considered as part of a wider strategy for maritime heritage. Consequently BCC, NITB and DSD, who are all making very significant investments in Belfast's Titanic and maritime heritage, commissioned a study by CHL Consulting Company Ltd.

It is my understanding that the Belfast Titanic and Maritime Heritage Strategy will soon be finalised.

Northern Ireland Executive's European Office in Brussels

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail any communication his Department has had with the Northern Ireland Executive Office in Brussels in each of the past 24 months.

(AQW 2626/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: My Department has not communicated directly with the Office of the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels (ONIEB) during the past two years.

However, periodically ONIEB issue updates on issues which they feel may be of interest to DCAL.

Department of Education

Sure Start Programme

Mrs M O'Neill asked the Minister of Education how many children who are severely or profoundly deaf are currently receiving educational services through the Sure Start Programme.

(AQW 2426/11)

Minister of Education (Ms C Ruane): Léiríonn taifid a choinnítear mar chuid de na Cláir Tús Cinnte go bhfuil 9 páistí ag freastal i mbliana a bhfuil bodhaire throm orthu nó atá faoi ollbhodhaire, agus tá measúnú á dhéanamh ar pháiste amháin eile faoi láthair.

Records maintained within Sure Start Programmes indicate that there are 9 children attending in the current year who are severely or profoundly deaf, with one other child currently undergoing assessment. Sure Start offers support for all children within the designated community, recognising their differing needs. Children with a hearing impairment receive a range of Sure Start services depending on the particular age and needs of the child, and the specific needs of the family.

Agenda NI

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of Education how much her Department and its agencies have spent on (i) articles and adverts in Agenda NI; (ii) subscriptions to Agenda NI; and (iii) payments for staff attending conferences organised by BMF Conferences since May 2007.

(AQW 2507/11)

Minister of Education: Thabhaigh mo Roinn na costais seo a leanas i ngach bliain le trí bliana airgeadais anuas:

My Department incurred the following costs in each of the past three financial years:

	Articles and adverts in Agenda NI	Subscriptions to Agenda NI	BMF Business Services
2007-08	£Nil	£34.90	£1,115.00
2008-09	£Nil	£34.90	£1,470.00
2009-10	£Nil	£34.90	£1,875.00

The payments to BMF Business Services include amounts for Department of Education staff attending conferences, seminars and courses.

Substitute Teachers

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of teachers, working as substitute teachers, who have not yet been in a full-time permanent position, in each of the last three academic years, broken down by gender.

(AQW 2537/11)

Minister of Education: Le trí bliana acadúla anuas, fostaíodh 3,659 múinteoir san iomlán, is é sin 2,961 bean agus 698 fear, mar mhúinteoirí ionaid ach chan mar mhúinteoirí buana lánaimseartha. Tugtar na figiúirí mar líonta iomlána mar gur féidir go ndearna cuid de na múinteoirí seo ionadaíocht i ngach bliain den trí bliana acadúla sin.

In the last three academic years, a total of 3,659 teachers, 2961 female and 698 male, have been employed in a substitute capacity but not in a full-time permanent position. The figures are provided as a total as it is possible that any number of these teachers has substituted in each of the last three years.

Realignment of GCE A Level Equivalents

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) any correspondence which her Department or the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment have had with the Irish Universities Association in relation to re-aligning GCE A Level equivalents for entry to university in the Republic of Ireland, to take account of the introduction of the A* grade at GCE A2 Level; (ii) her Department's response to any such correspondence; and (iii) what action she intends to take to ensure that students from Northern Ireland are not disadvantaged.

(AQW 2540/11)

Minister of Education: Last February my Department asked the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), in its capacity as Qualifications Regulator, to investigate the matter of the revised university admissions points arrangements for A level grades being adopted in the south for 2010.

CCEA wrote to the Irish Universities Association (IUA) to obtain the rationale behind these arrangements and subsequently to express concern that – as the new A* grade had been introduced to reward outstanding achievement, rather than replace the existing A grade – the revised admissions points arrangements appeared to represent a significant disadvantage to holders of GCE qualifications in applying for places in universities in the south.

The response from the IUA indicated that the decision on the points arrangements had been taken following a review of GCE A Level equivalences and had been approved by the individual academic governing authorities of the universities.

I place the utmost importance on equality of opportunity for all our young people and it is unacceptable for students from the north to be placed at a disadvantage. I therefore wrote to Batt O'Keefe TD and, more recently, his successor as Minister for Education and Skills, Mary Coughlan TD expressing my concern about this matter.

As siocair gurb iad na hollscoileanna i ndeisceart na hÉireann a dhéanann cinntí ar an cheist seo shocraigh mé gur chóir do CCEA leanúint leis an teagmháil le Cumann Ollscoileanna Éireann, d'fhonn comhionannas rochtana ar ollscoileanna an deiscirt a chinntiú do mhic léinn ó gach cuid den oileán.

As decisions on this rest with the Irish universities I have agreed that CCEA should continue to engage with the IUA, with a view to ensuring equality of access to universities in the south for students from across the whole island of Ireland.

Irish Language Qualifying Examination

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education for an update on progress made in providing initial and in-service training for the Irish Language Qualifying Examination for teachers from Northern Ireland who wish to teach in the Republic of Ireland.

(AQW 2541/11)

Minister of Education: Beidh a fhios agat go gcaithfidh múinteoirí Bunscoile a bhfuil cáilíocht oideachais mhúinteoirí déanta acu taobh amuigh de dheisceart na hÉireann (seachas na múinteoirí sin a rinne an Teastas Iarchéime san Oideachas trí mheán na Gaeilge nó an cúrsa ceithre bliana Baitsiléir san Oideachas le Gaeilge ag Coláiste Ollscoile Naomh Muire Béal Feirste), beidh a fhios agat go gcaithfidh siad Triail Inniúlachta (SCG - An Scrúdú le hAghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge) nó Tréimhse Oiriúnaithe (OCG – Oiriúnú le hAghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge) a dhéanamh lena dheimhniú go bhfuil sé ar chumas an iarratasóra Gaeilge a theagasc agus réimse na n-ábhar ar churaclam na mbunscoileanna a theagasc trí mheán na Gaeilge. Ceadaítear clárúchán coinníollach na Comhairle Mhúinteoireachta agus tugtar uastréimhse de thrí bliana ó dháta an chlárúcháin leis an Triail Inniúlachta nó an Tréimhse Oiriúnaithe a dhéanamh. Nuair a fhaightear an SCG nó an OCG, aithnítear na múinteoirí sin mar mhúinteoirí láncháilithe sa deisceart.

You will be aware that Primary teachers who have completed a programme of teacher education outside of the south of Ireland (with the exception of the Post Graduate Certificate in Education through the medium of Irish or the four year Bachelor of Education Irish academic course at St. Mary's University College Belfast), must complete an Aptitude Test (SCG - An Scrúdú le hAghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge) or Adaptation Period (OCG – Oiriúnú le hAghaidh Cáilíochta sa Ghaeilge) which confirms that the applicant is competent to teach the Irish language and to teach the range of primary school curricular subjects through the medium of Irish. Conditional Teaching Council registration is granted and a maximum period of three years from date of registration is set for the completion of the Aptitude Test or the Adaptation Period. On attainment of the SCG or OCG, such teachers are then recognised as fully qualified in the south.

In the case of post-primary schools, the Irish language requirement only applies to teachers employed in Gaeltacht schools, in Irish-medium schools, and to teachers who teach any subject through the medium of Irish.

The 5 Higher Education Institutions in the North were asked if they would be interested in providing, on a full cost recovery basis, SCG courses to interested individuals (including both qualified teachers and student teachers). Both St Mary's University College and the University of Ulster expressed an interest. A meeting was held in Dublin on 10 November 2010 at which Marino College of Education (which currently co-ordinates the delivery of the SCG in the South on behalf of DES) provided St Mary's and the University of Ulster with an overview of the contents of the course, including details of resource materials and assessment procedures.

St Mary's and the University of Ulster are now giving further consideration as to whether or not they wish to deliver the SCG course. Further meetings with St Mary's University College and the University of Ulster will take place in the near future on the way forward.

Strandtown Primary School

Ms D Purvis asked the Minister of Education, in relation to the recent review of the proposed capital works project for Strandtown Primary School to indicate which of the planning principles of the Independent Strategic Review of Education were not fulfilled.

(AQW 2544/11)

Minister of Education: The Report of the Independent Strategic Review of Education undertaken by Sir George Bain was published in 2006 and subsequently informed some of DE policies which were a key focus of the Capital Review. The aims of the capital review, as defined in the Terms of Reference, were 'to ensure capital investment in the education estate is consistent with and supportive of the current DE policy framework, including Every School a Good School, Revised Curriculum, Entitlement Framework, Sustainable Schools, and the Irish Medium Review'.

I dtaca le Strandtown Primary School de, dhíreoinn aird an chomhalta ar an fhreagra a thug mé cheana féin de bhun AQW 2277/11.

In regard to Strandtown Primary School, I refer the member to my previous answer pursuant to AQW 2277/11.

Proposed Closures

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the process in place for consulting parents on the proposed closure of a preparatory school.

(AQW 2563/11)

Minister of Education: Any significant change in the character or size of a school, including a proposed closure of a preparatory department of a grammar school, requires the publication of a development proposal. The main purpose of the development proposal process is to ensure that all interested parties are informed about the proposed changes and that they have an opportunity to comment before decisions are taken by the Minister.

Sula bhfoilsítear moladh forbartha, bíonn ceanglas reachtúil ar an mholtóir dul i ndáil chomhairle le Boird Ghobharnóirí, le tuismitheoirí agus le múinteoirí. Nuair a fhoilsítear moladh forbartha, bíonn tréimhse reachtúil dhá mhí ann agus is féidir le duine ar bith tuairimí ar an mholadh a chur in iúl don Roinn le linn na tréimhse seo.

Prior to the publication of the development proposal, there is a statutory requirement for the proposer to consult with Boards of Governors, parents and teachers. Once a development proposal is published, there is also a statutory 2-month period during which whoever wishes to do so may offer their views on the proposal to the Department.

The Guidance on Development Proposals (available on the Department's website) states that 'it is particularly recommended that all parents should be notified individually in writing, by the proposer of the development proposal, of the effects which the proposal would have for the education of their children'.

Connor House Preparatory School, Bangor

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Education whether an Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on the proposed closure of Connor House Preparatory School, Bangor.

(AQW 2564/11)

Minister of Education: Rachaidh druidim bheartaithe Connor House Preparatory School tríd an phróiseas reachtúil molta forbartha. As siocair go gcuimsíonn an próiseas reachtúil seo comhairliúchán cuimsitheach

agus as siocair go gcaithfidh an Roinn aird chuí a thabhairt dá cuid dualgas faoi Alt 75 den NI Act 1998 agus an moladh forbartha á bhreithniú aici, níl aon cheanglas ar an Roinn Measúnacht Tionchair Chomhionannais ar leith a dhéanamh.

The proposed closure of Connor House Preparatory School will be progressed through the statutory development proposal process. As this statutory process includes a comprehensive consultation exercise and the Department, in considering the development proposal, will have proper regard to its duties under Section 75 of the NI Act 1998, there is no requirement to conduct a separate Equality Impact Assessment exercise.

Primary Languages Programme

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Education what consideration she has given to including German within the Primary Languages Programme.

(AQW 2572/11)

Minister of Education: Thug mé isteach Clár na dTeangacha Bunscoile le tacaíocht a thabhairt do na bunscoileanna sin a bhí ag iarraidh nuatheangacha a theagasc. Faoi láthair, tá an Spáinnis, an Ghaeilge, agus an Pholainnis ar fáil. Níl sé beartaithe agam an Ghearmáinis a thabhairt isteach ar an chlár.

I introduced the Primary Languages Programme to provide support for those primary schools who wished to make available modern languages. Currently, Spanish, Irish, and more recently, Polish are available. I have no plans to introduce German into the programme.

It is of course open to schools to offer additional language learning opportunities outside of the Primary Languages Programme, and I am pleased that many already do so. There is a range of existing support arrangements in place for those primary schools wishing to offer German, including through the education and library boards and CCEA, which has developed material in French, German, Spanish and Irish to assist Primary teachers to develop and integrate an element of language teaching into their classrooms. These resources are available to all schools via the primary languages resource section of the Curriculum website.

Primary School Teachers

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Education, to list the primary schools in each Education and Library Board area which do not currently have any male teachers; and the percentage of all primary schools in Northern Ireland this figure represents.

(AQW 2584/11)

Minister of Education: Tá an t-eolas le fáil sna táblaí thíos.

The information is contained in the tables below.

LIST OF PRIMARY¹ SCHOOLS WHICH DID NOT HAVE ANY MALE TEACHERS AS AT NOVEMBER 2009

BELFAST EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD AREA

School Name	Location
Ballysillan Primary School	Belfast
Belmont Primary School	Belfast
Bloomfield Collegiate Prep. Dept.	Belfast
Donegall Road Primary School	Belfast
Dundela Infants School	Belfast
Edenbrooke Primary School	Belfast

School Name	Location
Euston Street Primary School	Belfast
Forth River Primary School	Belfast
Greenwood Primary School	Belfast
Grove Primary School	Belfast
Holy Cross Girls' Primary School	Belfast
Knocknagoney Primary School	Belfast
Malvern Primary School	Belfast
St Bernadette's Primary School	Belfast
St John The Baptist Girls' Primary School	Belfast
Star Of The Sea Girls' Primary School	Belfast
Strathearn School Prep. Dept.	Belfast
Taughmonagh Primary School	Belfast
Victoria College Prep. Dept.	Belfast

NORTH EASTERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD AREA

School Name	Location
Altayeskey Primary School	Magherafelt
Armoy Primary School	Ballymoney
Ballycastle Primary School	Ballycastle
Ballycraigy Primary School	Antrim
Ballyhackett Primary School	Coleraine
Ballymoney Integrated Primary School	Ballymoney
Ballynease Primary School	Ballymena
Ballytober Primary School	Bushmills
Balnamore Primary School	Ballymoney
Barnish Primary School	Ballycastle
Bellaghy Primary School	Magherafelt
Cairncastle Primary School	Larne
Carhill Integrated Primary School	Coleraine
Carnalbanagh Primary School	Ballymena
Carnlough Controlled Integrated Primary School	Ballymena
Castledawson Primary School	Magherafelt
Creavery Primary School	Antrim
Culcrow Primary School	Coleraine

School Name	Location
Culnady Primary School	Maghera
Dalriada School Prep. Dept.	Ballymoney
Damhead Primary School	Coleraine
Desertmartin Primary School	Magherafelt
Duneane Primary School	Antrim
Gaelscoil Éanna	Baile Nua na Mainistreach
Gaelscoil An Chaistil	Baile an Chaistil
Gaelscoil Na Speiríní	Machaire Fíolta
Garryduff Primary School	Ballymoney
Glynn Primary School	Larne
Gorran Primary School	Coleraine
Harryville Primary School	Ballymena
Hazelbank Primary School	Ballymena
Kilbride Primary School	Ballyclare
Kilcoan Primary School	Larne
Killowen Primary School	Coleraine
Kilmoyle Primary School	Ballymoney
Kilross Primary School	Magherafelt
Kirkinriola Primary School	Ballymena
Landhead Primary School	Ballymoney
Longstone Primary School	Ballymena
Lourdes Primary School	Carrickfergus
Maine Integrated Primary School	Randalstown
Mallusk Primary School	Newtownabbey
Moneynick Primary School	Antrim
Moorfields Primary School	Ballymena
Mullaghduh Primary School	Larne
Parkgate Primary School	Ballyclare
Rasharkin Primary School	Ballymena
Rathenraw Integrated Primary School	Antrim
Silverstream Primary School	Carrickfergus
St Brigid's Primary School Tirkane	Maghera
St Ciaran's Primary School	Ballymena
St Columba's Primary School, Boleran Road	Coleraine

School Name	Location
St Columb's Primary School (Cullion)	Magherafelt
St Joseph's Primary School	Antrim
St Macnisius' Primary School	Antrim
St Mary's Primary School	Ballycastle
St Mary's Primary School, Ballymena Road	Ballymena
St Olcan's Primary School	Ballymoney
St Paul's Primary School	Ballymena
Straidbilly Primary School	Ballymoney
Straidhavern Primary School	Crumlin
The Wm Pinkerton Memorial Primary School	Ballymoney
Thompson Primary School	Ballyclare
Tildarg Primary School	Ballyclare
Tír-Na-Nóg Primary School	Ballyclare
Toreagh Primary School	Larne
Upper Ballyboley Primary School	Ballyclare
Woodburn Primary School	Carrickfergus

SOUTH EASTERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD AREA

School Name	Location
Alexander Dickson Primary School	Newtownards
Ballycloughan Primary School	Saintfield
Ballykeigle Primary School	Newtownards
Ballyvester Primary School	Donaghadee
Ballywalter Primary School	Newtownards
Carr Primary School	Lisburn
Carrickmannon Primary School	Newtownards
Cedar Integrated Primary School	Crossgar
Cumran Primary School	Downpatrick
Down High School Prep. Dept.	Downpatrick
Dunmurry Primary School	Belfast
Friends School Prep. Dept.	Lisburn
Glenlola Collegiate Prep. Dept.	Bangor
Hollywood Primary School	Hollywood
Killyleagh Primary School	Downpatrick

School Name	Location
Lead Hill Primary School	Belfast
Newcastle Primary School	Newcastle
Redburn Primary School	Hollywood
Regent House School Prep. Dept.	Newtownards
St Caolan's Primary School	Ballynahinch
St Joseph's Primary School, Ballycruttle Road	Downpatrick
St Macartan's Primary School	Downpatrick
St Malachy's Primary School	Newry
St Mary's Primary School	Saintfield
Tonagh Primary School	Lisburn
Victoria Primary School (Ballyhalbert)	Newtownards

SOUTHERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD AREA

School Name	Location
Aghavilly Primary School	Armagh
Anamar Primary School	Newry
Augher Central Primary School	Augher
Ballylifford Primary School	Cookstown
Ballytrea Primary School	Dungannon
Birches Primary School	Craigavon
Bleary Primary School	Craigavon
Blessed Patrick O'loughran Primary School	Dungannon
Bush Primary School	Dungannon
Carntall Primary School	Clogher
Churchill Primary School	Caledon
Churchtown Primary School	Cookstown
Clare Primary School	Tandragee
Clea Primary School	Keady
Clogher Regional Primary School	Clogher
Clontifleece Primary School	Warrenpoint
Coagh Primary School	Cookstown
Cortamlet Primary School	Newry
Craigavon Primary School	Craigavon
Derrylatinee Primary School	Dungannon

School Name	Location
Donaghey Primary School	Dungannon
Donaghmore Primary School	Dungannon
Dromore Road Primary School	Warrenpoint
Drumsallen Primary School	Armagh
Dungannon Primary School	Dungannon
Hamiltonsbawn Primary School	Armagh
Keady Primary School	Armagh
Kilbroney Integrated Primary School	Newry
Killeen Primary School	Newry
Killyman Primary School	Dungannon
Laghey Primary School	Dungannon
Lisfearthy Primary School	Dungannon
Lisnadill Primary School	Armagh
Milltown Primary School	Banbridge
Moneydarragh Primary School	Newry
Mount St Catherine's Primary School	Armagh
Mountnorris Primary School	Armagh
Moy Regional Primary School	Dungannon
Mullaghglass Primary School	Newry
Mullavilly Primary School	Tandragee
Newmills Primary School	Dungannon
Poyntzpass Primary School	Poyntzpass
Queen Elizabeth II (Pomeroy) Primary School	Dungannon
Richmond Primary School	Dungannon
Royal School Prep. Dept.	Armagh
St Brigid's (Drumilly) Primary School	Belleek
St Brigid's Primary School	Augher
St Clare's Convent Primary School	Newry
St John's Eglisk Primary School	Craigavon
St John's Primary School	Newry
St Joseph's Primary School	Caledon
St Laurence O'toole's Primary School	Belleek
St Macartan's Primary School	Clogher
St Malachy's Primary School	Magherafelt

School Name	Location
St Mary's Primary School	Cookstown
St Mary's Primary School	Fivemiletown
St Patrick's Primary School	Magherafelt
St Patrick's Primary School, Ballymacbredan Road	Craigavon
St Patrick's Primary School, Longstone Road	Newry
St Patrick's Primary School, Mullanahoe Road	Dungannon
The Drelincourt Infants School	Armagh
Woods Primary School	Magherafelt

WESTERN EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD AREA

School Name	Location
Aghadrumsee Primary School	Enniskillen
Altishane Primary School	Strabane
Artigarvan Primary School	Strabane
Ballougry Primary School	Derry
Belleek Controlled Primary School	Enniskillen
Bready Jubilee Primary School	Strabane
Bridgehill Primary School	Castledearg
Brookeborough Primary School	Enniskillen
Christ The King Primary School	Omagh
Cooley Primary School	Omagh
Cornagague Primary School	Enniskillen
Craigbrack Primary School	Derry
Cumber Claudy Primary School	Derry
Denamona Primary School	Omagh
Derrygonnelly Primary School	Enniskillen
Donemana Primary School	Strabane
Dromore Primary School	Omagh
Drumlegagh Primary School	Omagh
Drumlish Primary School	Omagh
Drumnabey Primary School	Castledearg
Drumrane Primary School	Derry
Envagh Primary School	Omagh
Erganagh Primary School	Castledearg

School Name	Location
Evish Primary School	Strabane
Florencecourt Primary School	Enniskillen
Fountain Primary School	Derry
Gaelscoil Na Gcrann	An Ómaigh
Gaelscoil Uí Dhochartaigh	An Srath Bán
Gillygooley Primary School	Omagh
Gortin Primary School	Omagh
Gortnagarn Primary School	Omagh
Gortnaghey Primary School	Derry
Groarty Integrated Primary School	Derry
Irvinestown Primary School	Enniskillen
Jones Memorial Primary School	Enniskillen
Kesh Primary School	Enniskillen
Killyhommon Primary School	Enniskillen
Lack Primary School	Enniskillen
Langfield Primary School	Omagh
Lisbellaw Primary School	Enniskillen
Loreto Convent Primary School	Omagh
Magilligan Primary School	Limavady
Maguiresbridge Primary School	Enniskillen
Newtownbutler Primary School	Enniskillen
Newtownstewart Model Primary School	Omagh
Queen Elizabeth II Primary School	Omagh
Recarson Primary School	Omagh
Roscavey Primary School	Omagh
St Anthony's Primary School	Limavady
St Brigid's Primary School, Glenelly Road	Omagh
St Brigid's Primary School, Lenagh Road	Omagh
St Caireall's Primary School	Castledearg
St Canice's Primary School, Glenedra Road	Derry
St Davog's Scraghey Primary School	Castledearg
St Dympna's Primary School	Omagh
St Eugene's Primary School	Enniskillen
St Eugene's Primary School	Strabane

School Name	Location
St Eugene's Primary School	Omagh
St Finlough's Primary School	Limavady
St John The Baptist Primary School	Enniskillen
St Mary's Girls' Primary School	Strabane
St Mary's Primary School, Kinoughtragh	Enniskillen
St Matthew's Primary School	Dungannon
St Naile's Primary School	Enniskillen
St Patrick's Primary School	Strabane
St Patrick's Primary School, Tonagh Road	Enniskillen
St Paul's Primary School	Enniskillen
St Peter's & St Paul's Primary School	Derry
St Teresa's Primary School	Omagh

28% of all primary¹ schools do not currently employ a male teacher.

Source: Teacher Payroll and Pensions Administration System

Note:

1. Includes preparatory departments of grammar schools.

Springhill Primary School, Belfast

Mr W Humphrey asked the Minister of Education, given that her Department has categorised Springhill Primary School as 'non-compliant' with the Sustainable Schools policy, what action needs to be taken to ensure the school is fully compliant.

(AQW 2585/11)

Minister of Education: The major capital works project proposed for Springhill Primary School, rather than the school, has been categorised as 'non compliant' and the rationale for the categorisation is related to wider area issues.

Tá Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlann Bhéal Feirste freagrach as eastát na scoileanna rialaithe i mBéal Feirste a phleanáil sa chéad dul síos. Tá mo Roinn ag obair go dlúth leis an Bhord d'fhonn tabhairt faoi na ceisteanna a ardaíodh san athbhreithniú. Tá an obair sin idir lámha againn go fóill.

The Belfast Education and Library Board is responsible for the planning of the controlled schools' estate in Belfast, in the first instance. My Department has been working closely with the Board, with the view to addressing the issues raised by review. This remains work in progress.

Glenwood Primary School, Belfast

Mr W Humphrey asked the Minister of Education, given that her Department has categorised Glenwood Primary School as 'partially compliant' with the Sustainable Schools policy, what action needs to be taken to ensure the school is fully compliant.

(AQW 2586/11)

Minister of Education: The major capital works project proposed for Glenwood Primary School, rather than the school itself, has been categorised as 'partially compliant' and the rationale for the categorisation was related to wider area issues.

Tá Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlann Bhéal Feirste freagrach as eastát na scoileanna rialaithe i mBéal Feirste a phleanáil sa chéad dul síos. Tá mo Roinn ag obair go dlúth leis an Bhord d'fhonn tabhairt faoi na ceistanna a ardaíodh san athbhreithniú. Tá an obair sin idir lámha againn go fóill.

The Belfast Education and Library Board is responsible for the planning of the controlled schools' estate in Belfast, in the first instance. My Department has been working closely with the Board, with the view to addressing the issues raised by review. This remains work in progress.

Guidance for Transfer

Mr J O'Dowd asked the Minister of Education, in relation to the Guidance for Transfer issued in July by her Department which stated that the guidance applied to all Dickson Plan Schools, if she can confirm that under the guidelines schools (i) may not set unregulated, unmoderated tests; (ii) may not alter the curriculum due to testing; and (iii) should follow the guidelines in relation to sharing of information.

(AQW 2592/11)

Minister of Education: Éilítear ar gach scoil aird a thabhairt ar threoir na Roinne ar an pholasaí um aistriú iarbhunscoile.

All schools are required to have regard to the Department's guidance on post-primary transfer policy.

This guidance advises schools not to engage in the use of breakaway tests including the preparation of pupils for the sitting of such tests. It is essential that all children receive their entitlement to the revised curriculum and there must be no distorting of the curriculum as a result of preparing children for breakaway tests.

My Department continues to provide schools with advice to follow with regard to the sharing of information about pupils in connection with the transfer procedure. This advice is most commonly provided in relation to requests associated with the special circumstances procedures adopted by schools using breakaway tests. All schools, including those operating within the Dickson Plan system, should adhere to the relevant legislation and have regard to any guidance issued by the Department that relates to the sharing of information about the educational performance of pupils for the application of a school's admissions criteria.

Department for Employment and Learning

Belfast Metropolitan College

Mr C McDevitt asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what consultation the management of the Belfast Metropolitan College carried out with all grades of staff in relation to the College Improvement Plan.

(AQW 2285/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning (Mr D Kennedy): Further Education Colleges are incorporated bodies, established under the Further Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997. Under the Order, each college governing body is recognised as the employing authority in its own right and all issues relating to staffing are solely matters for the governing body.

However, whilst my Department has no formal role in Belfast Metropolitan College's internal consultation process in respect of the College Improvement Plan (CIP), officials have been liaising closely with College senior management and the governing body during its development and will be establishing a monitoring group to ensure that the Plan is implemented effectively.

Through the liaison with the College, my Department is aware that the College has carried out a significant of consultation with staff at all levels. The consultation process with staff commenced in early 2010 through two separate workshops held with senior and middle management to develop a framework for a new vision and strategy. The draft strategy which resulted was then shared with staff

during focus group sessions at the College Development Day in mid February and was then put on the College internet for further inputs and comment by staff prior to finalisation.

The College has also established a Change Management Team which has taken forward the development of 6 key areas of College operations including management information systems, finance, human resources and estates. The Team organised workshops and focus groups during the development of the CIP to provide wider consultation and input with several hundred staff and students involved in these exercises. A communications strategy was also developed including a staff website which provided up to date information on the CIP and a news sheet has been published giving further details on the CIP process

A 90 day consultation process has now commenced with the College's recognised trade unions in relation to the staffing proposals set out in the College Improvement Plan and a copy was made available to union representatives and it was placed on the College website.

Subsequently, the Director met with the College's Programme Area Managers and a meeting is scheduled with the Curriculum Centre Managers to discuss the implications of the CIP. Meetings with other grades of staff will be scheduled in due course and feedback on the proposed organisational structure is being sought from the relevant managers at an individual level.

Belfast Metropolitan College

Mr C McDevitt asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of whether the Belfast Metropolitan College is adhering to the agreed regional procedures for handling redundancies in institutions of further education.

(AQW 2286/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Belfast Metropolitan College has assured me that it continues to operate within the parameters of The Procedures for Handling Redundancies in Institutions of Further Education, as agreed at the Lecturers Negotiating Committee.

Teaching Irish Language in the Further Education Sector

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline whether his Department has a strategy for teaching Irish language in the further education sector.

(AQW 2314/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Whilst my Department provides strategic advice and guidance to the Further Education Sector in Northern Ireland, and channels its funding accordingly, each Further Education (FE) College is responsible for determining its own staffing and curriculum needs.

The delivery of further education in the Medium of Irish is informed by demand locally, the quality of teaching and the viability of delivering individual courses.

During the current academic year four out of the six further education Colleges have advised that they offer Irish Medium courses; approximately 18 qualifications are currently available.

Irish-medium Further Education Programmes

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to list all Irish-medium further education programmes currently funded by his Department.

(AQW 2316/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: A list of all full-time and part-time Irish Medium courses delivered by the Further Education Sector during 2009/10, the last academic year for which full information is available, is attached at Annex A.

ANNEX A

- CACDP Level 1 - Certificate in Irish Sign Language

- CCEA Entry Level - Certificate in Irish
- CCEA Entry Level - Award in Modern Language (Entry 2) (Irish)
- CCEA Entry Level - Award in Modern Languages (Entry 3) (Irish)
- CCEA Level 1 - Award in Modern Languages (QCF) (Irish)
- CCEA Level 2 - Award in Modern Languages (QCF) (Irish)
- CCEA Level 1/Level 2 - GCSE in Irish
- CCEA Advanced - GCE in Irish
- CCEA Level 3 Advanced - GCE in Irish
- CCEA Level 3 Advanced - Subsidiary GCE in Irish
- NOCN Level 1 - Award in Language Skills
- NOCN Level 2- Award in Language Skills
- NOCN Level 3 - Award in Language Skills
- Signature Level 2 - Certificate in Irish Sign Language
- Conversational Irish
- Holiday Irish
- Irish for beginners
- Irish for Improvers

Graduate Internship Programmes

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many interns his Department has facilitated in 2010/11 and how many it intends to facilitate in 2011/12.
(AQW 2323/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Through the NICS Work Experience Policy, the Department facilitated one internship from the University of Ulster from 18 August 2010 to 10 September 2010 and plans to accommodate an internship from Queen's University Belfast from 31 January 2011 to May 2011.

The Department also funds internships through its range of programmes. 145 graduates have commenced the Department's INTRO graduate management programme in the year 2010/11 to date, with a further 55 scheduled to commence before the end of March 2011. No decisions regarding future funding for the programme will be taken until the findings and recommendations of the evaluation report are known. A current evaluation of the Department's leadership and management programmes, together with ongoing budgetary considerations will contribute to decisions around the future size and direction of INTRO.

A total number of 61 graduates (59 full time and 2 part time) were supported by the Department on the recent Graduate Internship Programme (GIP). GIP ended in November 2010 and is currently being evaluated. No decisions regarding future funding for the programme will be taken until the findings and recommendations of the evaluation report are known.

Whilst the Department does not directly fund the Higher Education Institutions in relation to supporting interns, both Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster have established partnerships with a number of companies who provide scholarships to students. These scholarship packages generally include financial support, ongoing mentoring and practical experience through placements in the various workplaces. The Department does not hold information on the number of internships facilitated or planned by the Higher Education Institutions.

Capital Projects in the Strangford Constituency

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how much his Department has spent on capital projects in the Strangford constituency in each of the last three financial years.
(AQW 2430/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The Department for Employment and Learning has had two capital projects in the Strangford Constituency in the past three years. Both are in the Further Education sector in Newtownards and Ballynahinch.

The Newtownards Campus development capital spend (including VAT & Fees) is: £0.722m in 2008/09, £5.000m in 2009/10 and £0.744m in 2010/11.

The Ballynahinch project, which began construction in 2008, is being funded through a Public Private Partnership and has an estimated capital value of £2.5m (excluding VAT & Fees) which will be paid over the 25 year lifetime of the PPP contract.

Rapid Response NI

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the progress that has been made under Rapid Response NI.

(AQW 2449/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Rapid Response Northern Ireland (RRNI), which is being funded by my Department's Innovation Fund, was introduced during 2009 to support the employability needs of companies and individuals affected by the current economic downturn.

This 'demand led' programme, which is being led by South Eastern Regional College on behalf of the six further education colleges, has so far assisted 41 companies and 651 individuals, indicative of good progress to date.

Belfast Metropolitan College

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what role his Department will have in approving the college improvements plan for Belfast Metropolitan College.

(AQW 2450/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The Department commissioned an Efficiency Review of Belfast Metropolitan College in 2008 which identified weaknesses within a number of key operational areas. In order to address the findings and recommendations of that review, my Department requested that the College develop a College Improvement Plan to address the weaknesses and identify those actions required to restore the College to sound financial health and stability.

Whilst the development of the Plan is the responsibility of the College, my Department has a key oversight role within the further education sector to ensure that colleges remain in good financial health. As a result, my Department has developed procedures for working with colleges that face financial difficulties and officials have met with Belfast Metropolitan College staff and governors on numerous occasions to discuss the Plan.

Following completion, the College submitted the final version of the Plan to the Department. Departmental officials scrutinised the Plan in order to ensure it was realistic, comprehensive and robust and would return the College to financial stability.

Following this detailed examination and consideration, my Department wrote formally to the College setting out its view that the Plan had considered all key elements of the College operations and, if implemented as planned, that the proposals were projected to return the College to financial stability. Overall the Plan provides the Department with confidence that the College will achieve financial stability.

The Department, however, has acknowledged the significant challenges which face the College in fully implementing its proposals and that vigilant and rigorous management action is required to ensure that the Plan is implemented effectively. To that end, therefore, the Department will be monitoring the Plan's implementation through a monitoring group made up of College representatives and Departmental officials.

Bowman Aluminium Systems Ltd, Banbridge

Mr J O'Dowd asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what assistance was offered by his Department, or requested by Bowman Aluminium Systems Ltd, Banbridge, for the 37 workers who lost their jobs as a result of the company's closure.

(AQW 2536/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The Department contacted the company on 25 November 2010 to offer advice and information on employment, training and further education opportunities to employees being made redundant. The company advised that all the employees ceased employment on 24 November 2010 and did not wish to avail of the redundancy service.

Joanne Stuart's Report 'Review of Variable Fees and Student Finance Arrangements'

Mrs D Kelly asked Minister for Employment and Learning whether Joanne Stuart will be solely responsible for updating her report 'Review of Variable Fees and Student Finance Arrangements'.

(AQW 2553/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Joanne Stuart will be solely responsible for updating her earlier report on the "Review of Variable Fees and Student Finance Arrangements in Northern Ireland". I expect to receive the update by the end of this month. Joanne will, of course, be seeking the views of key stakeholders as part of the process. I welcome the independence of this important piece of work.

Joanne Stuart's Report 'Review of Variable Fees and Student Finance Arrangements'

Mrs D Kelly asked Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the role and responsibilities, if any, of his departmental officials in relation to Joanne Stuart's report 'Review of Variable Fees and Student Finance Arrangements'.

(AQW 2554/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Officials in the Department provided limited administrative and secretariat support to Joanne Stuart as she chaired the 'Review of Variable fees and Student Finance in Northern Ireland'. This involved, for example, the provision of statistical information and financial cost comparisons, and clarification of factual content, for inclusion in the evidence based report.

Officer Training Corps

Mr A McQuillan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, pursuant to AQW 1770/11, if he will invite officials from the Ministry of Defence to next year's open days at universities, for the purpose of recruitment to the Officer Training Corps.

(AQW 2571/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Open Days are for prospective, rather than enrolled, students (generally sixth formers) and are scheduled to facilitate the University and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) process.

However, I am advised that the Officer Training Corps (OTC), along with all other Clubs and Societies, attends the annual Freshers' Fairs at Queen's University and the University of Ulster where recruitment is facilitated. Officials from the Ministry of Defence do not normally attend these events, as it is believed that recruitment is more effective when carried out by students who are themselves serving Officer Cadets.

As I stated in my response to AQW 1770/11, I am strongly supportive of the role of the Queen's University Officer Training Corps and the opportunities it provides to students from across Northern Ireland's higher education institutions.

Artworks

Mr A McQuillan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the value of the artworks that his Department currently has (i) on display; and (ii) in storage.

(AQW 2623/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: My Department has one item, commissioned as an original piece of Artwork in 2007, on display in its headquarters building in Adelaide House, Belfast.

The estimated value of the piece is £2000.

All other Artwork forms part of the NICS Art Collection which is owned and managed by the Department of Finance and Personnel and will form part of their response.

Irish Language Classes for Staff

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether his Department currently offers, or plans to offer, Irish language classes to staff.

(AQW 2651/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Irish language classes are not currently offered, or planned to be offered, to staff in the Department for Employment and Learning.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Ms M Anderson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether he will commit to the retention of the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme, given the decision to end the scheme in England.

(AQW 2750/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: As you may be aware, a joint review of the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme in Northern Ireland, commissioned by the Department for Employment and Learning and the Department of Education, is currently underway to ascertain whether the scheme is continuing to meet its objectives.

On receipt of the final report, I will consider policy options relating to EMA and will ensure that any proposals for the way forward are based on sound analysis and evidence of how the scheme has met its goals.

Given the financial context, all government programmes will need to be reviewed in order to demonstrate their continuing efficiency and effectiveness. This review will provide such an evidence base for the EMA scheme.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Business Start-ups in the Strangford Constituency

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how much has been invested in business start-ups in the Strangford constituency, in each of the last three financial years; and how many businesses have been started.

(AQW 2329/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Mrs A Foster): During the period 2007-08 to 2009-10, 272 new locally-owned businesses were supported, both directly and indirectly, by Invest NI in the Strangford Parliamentary Constituency Area (PCA). These projects committed to invest almost £3m in the area.

Of these projects, 9 were supported directly by Invest NI. Table 1 shows the amount of investment committed by these projects in each of the 3 years.

TABLE 1: INVEST NI LOCAL START-UP PROJECTS IN STRANGFORD PCA (2007-08 TO 2009-10)

Fin Year	No of Start-ups	Total Planned Investment £
2007-08	3	146,710

Fin Year	No of Start-ups	Total Planned Investment £
2008-09	3	864,684
2009-10	3	337,400
Total	9	1,348,794

These 9 projects were offered support under a range of Invest NI schemes aimed at establishing not only businesses with the potential to export goods and services but also social enterprise businesses that serve the local community. According to our records, all of these businesses are still trading.

The remaining 263 projects were supported indirectly by Invest NI through the Enterprise Development Programme (EDP) (formerly the Start a Business programme), delivered in conjunction with Enterprise Northern Ireland – see Table 2.

TABLE 2: INVEST NI EDP START-UP PROJECTS IN STRANGFORD PCA (2007-08 TO 2009-10)

Fin Year	No of Start-ups	Total Planned Investment £
2007-08	117	936,000
2008-09	77	616,000
2009-10	69	-
Total	263	1,552,000

Notes:

- 1 2007-08 to 2008-09 figures are for the Start A Business Programme.
- 2 The new EDP (2009-10) does not offer financial support to establish a business but provides training, advice and guidance, therefore investment levels are not available.

There has been no analysis of the number of businesses actually started in 2007-08 and 2008-09; however, monitoring of a sample of programme participants has indicated that 79% of businesses in 2007-08 and 76% of businesses in 2008-09 were still trading.

Initial analysis of all Northern Ireland businesses assisted at the start up stage of the new EDP, which started in April 2009, found that 68% of participants had proceeded to actually start a business, and 80% of these starts were still trading.

In addition, Invest NI also offered support to 2 new inward investment projects in the Strangford area over the past 3 years. These 2 businesses, which are still trading, plan to invest £926,000 over the lifetime of their projects.

Attracting Jobs

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what steps her Department and its arms-length bodies have taken to attract jobs to each constituency in the each of the last six months; and at what cost to her Department.

(AQW 2388/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Invest NI is the agency through which the Department of Enterprise Trade & Investment provides funding to grow the private sector in Northern Ireland.

Invest NI's focus is to increase business productivity, the means by which wealth can be created for the benefit of the whole community. It does this by supporting projects that aim to create jobs, an aspect of the agency's work that is becoming increasingly important given the need to increase employment levels following the impact of the downturn, and those that promote innovation and capability development. Although not directly related to job creation, innovation and capability development activities are designed

to increase business competitiveness which generates growth, leading eventually to improved productivity and increased employment opportunities.

The table below shows how funding for these projects has been distributed across constituency areas in Northern Ireland during the first six months of the 2010-11 financial year. However, it should be noted that Invest NI does not allocate budgets by geographic areas such as Parliamentary Constituency Areas. Assistance patterns are demand-led by those businesses which have come forward with projects suitable for Invest NI assistance.

Also included in the table is the number of offers made indirectly by Invest NI through the Enterprise Development Programme (formerly the Start A Business programme). This scheme is delivered in partnership with Enterprise Northern Ireland, and provides advice and guidance to individuals wishing to start a new business. Initial analysis of the programme found that an average of 1.13 jobs were created by those businesses that continued to trade. Further analysis found that 68% of participants had proceeded to actually start a business, and 80% of those were still trading. Therefore, around 875 jobs would have been created during the period under this programme.

INVEST NI OFFER ACTIVITY BY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY AREA (APR – SEP 2010) – PROVISIONAL

Parliamentary Constituency Area	No. of Offers	New Jobs	Safe Jobs	Assistance Offered (£m)	Planned Investment (£m)	Enterprise Development Programme Offers
Belfast East	88	88	41	11.06	48	86
Belfast North	34	56	13	1.36	5.33	87
Belfast South	110	108	0	7.92	27.62	97
Belfast West	20	2	0	0.08	0.24	62
East Antrim	37	6	0	0.41	2.51	50
East Londonderry	49	16	2	1.63	4.41	95
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	72	134	0	1.96	14.16	108
Foyle	54	423	0	2.21	12.84	56
Lagan Valley	69	92	3	1.07	9.93	75
Mid Ulster	126	93	5	2.89	13.75	139
Newry And Armagh	88	133	4	1.67	9.27	77
North Antrim	55	22	1,212	5.58	36.1	53
North Down	31	16	5	0.3	1.62	58
South Antrim	83	640	7	8.66	60.19	64
South Down	76	53	0	0.65	3.78	89
Strangford	57	73	11	0.82	5.51	52
Upper Bann	76	52	0	5.46	16.87	72
West Tyrone	55	40	0	0.47	2.24	92
Not Yet Allocated	4	40	0	0.6	2.87	9

Parliamentary Constituency Area	No. of Offers	New Jobs	Safe Jobs	Assistance Offered (£m)	Planned Investment (£m)	Enterprise Development Programme Offers
Total	1,184	2,085	1,303	54.79	277.24	1,421

Notes:

- 1 Figures are provisional and may be subject to change.
- 2 These figures include both projects that are specifically aimed at job creation and projects that are not; therefore, job numbers do not directly correlate with the assistance and investment figures included in this table.
- 3 Some of the assistance offered may not be paid if projects are not fully delivered by the client.
- 4 Planned Investment includes Assistance Offered.
- 5 New Jobs represent the number of jobs expected to be created by the project.
- 6 Safe Jobs represent the number jobs that would have been lost if the project was not supported.
- 7 Not Yet Allocated includes projects that have yet to find a location.

Promoting Exports

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action her Department has taken to promote exports in each of the last 12 months.

(AQW 2389/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Under its Passport to Export suite of services, Invest NI helps Northern Ireland companies access world markets to win the export business which is so crucial to both their and the Northern Ireland economy's long-term growth.

The Invest NI support includes capability development, market visits, in-market support and special market and sectoral initiatives. Some of the support is available daily, for example, market research through the Business Information Centre, while others are focused on specific dates, for example, trade missions and exhibitions. In the last 12 months, Invest NI organised and provided financial assistance for companies to participate in 52 multi-sector missions, sectorally focused missions and international trade exhibitions. In the same period, Invest NI organised 30 export skills workshops.

Propel Ideas into Business Programme is a business support programme targeted at entrepreneurs with innovative, knowledge based ideas with export/global potential. The Programme aims to support and fast track early stage potential export/global start businesses and their entry into export markets. The Programme has proved to be very beneficial to participants in that it has taken many of them from business idea to commercialising their product/service and bring it to the export/global markets. It is anticipated 18 will complete the programme in 2010.

In addition to Trade Division activities, Invest NI's Business Improvement Services Division also supports development of export markets through its Northstar Mentoring and Interim manager programmes.

Northstar focuses on small/micro/start-up business and start-ups. Over 170 Marketing & Trade assignments have been supported over the last 12 months, many with a focus on exports to ROI.

Project Kelvin

Mr Pól Callaghan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether the MATRIX panel has presented its report on the market opportunities of Project Kelvin; and if so, to detail its main recommendations.

(AQW 2408/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The MATRIX Telecoms report is now complete and I am pleased to advise that it will be formally launched within the next two weeks.

The report contains a detailed assessment of Northern Ireland's entire telecommunications infrastructure and has found that the advanced telecoms services will support unique world class business activity.

In brief, the report concludes that the combination of high bandwidth, low latency direct international connectivity, coupled with ubiquitous internal broadband access strongly positions Northern Ireland to exploit six key multi-billion dollar markets. These are:

- Advanced Engineering;
- Life & Health Sciences;
- Social and Digital Media;
- ICT;
- SmartGrids; and,
- Financial Services.

It is clear from the report that the investment by DETI in our Telecommunications infrastructure will now pay dividends for Northern Ireland as we work to exploit the six opportunities identified. However, it is essential that we act quickly and, once the report is published, officials from DETI and Invest NI will work together with industry and other stakeholders to take the MATRIX recommendations forward.

Project Kelvin

Mr Pól Callaghan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what action (i) her Department; and (ii) Invest NI is taking to maximise the potential of Project Kelvin for the Derry City Council area.

(AQW 2410/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: With Project Kelvin, businesses throughout Northern Ireland now have access to the same international telecoms services found in major cities such as Amsterdam and New York. Invest NI uses the benefits of our world class telecoms infrastructure to promote Northern Ireland as an attractive and viable location for new inward investment opportunities.

In order to ensure that we exploit this infrastructure fully, I have asked the MATRIX Panel to conduct a study into market opportunities arising as a result of that infrastructure. The report will be available shortly.

I am aware that the benefits of the direct international link have heightened the interest of companies for the potential of locating a data centre in the North West. I myself met with the proposers of a cross border data centre, along with local representatives, to hear of their plans. Although at an early stage, I continue to monitor its progress with interest.

Invest NI, through its Collaborative Network Programme, supported a feasibility study into the potential commercial opportunities arising from Project Kelvin. This report was completed in November 2010 and is due for publication in the near future.

Led by the Londonderry Chamber of Commerce, Invest NI is an active participant in the Digital Activity Team recently set up in Londonderry to help grow the Digital sector in the city and maximise the competitive advantage of high speed connectivity brought about by Project Kelvin.

Officials from my Department and Invest NI have also offered advice to the North West Region Cross Border Group, led by Derry City Council, on a European funding application for a project targeted at utilising the potential of Project Kelvin to energise the growth of the "Smart Economy" in the North West Cross-border region. The project is designed to significantly enhance the region's capacity to create "Smart Economy" jobs.

Presbyterian Mutual Society

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to list the names of directors of the Presbyterian Mutual Society in and around November 2008.

(AQW 2412/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The Statement of Administrator's Proposals dated 12 January 2009, which contains details of Presbyterian Mutual Society directors at the date of administration, is available for public scrutiny from the Registrar of Industrial and Provident Societies at Waterfront Plaza, Belfast and online: http://www.detini.gov.uk/deti-registry-index/credit_union-society_search.htm

Presbyterian Mutual Society

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the dates of appointment of all former directors of the Presbyterian Mutual Society who were in office in and around November 2008.

(AQW 2415/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: There is no statutory requirement for an industrial and provident society to provide the date of appointment of directors on their Annual Return. Accordingly, DETI does not hold information on the date of appointment of directors of the Presbyterian Mutual Society or any other industrial and provident society registered in Northern Ireland.

Presbyterian Mutual Society

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to name the former directors of the Presbyterian Mutual Society who (i) have; or (ii) have not had disqualification proceedings initiated against them since 2007.

(AQW 2416/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: It is not the policy of the Department to disclose the names of persons against whom disqualification proceedings have been issued, or have not been issued.

Presbyterian Mutual Society

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the criteria used by her Department to determine whether or not to initiate disqualification proceedings against former directors of the Presbyterian Mutual Society since 2007.

(AQW 2417/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The Department considers whether it is expedient in the public interest to initiate disqualification proceedings. This involves consideration of a number of factors including the protection of the public, the nature of the allegations at issue, the directors responsibility in respect of such allegations together with any aggravating or mitigating factors and the prospect of success of proceedings should they issue.

The Department considers the nature of any matters of unfitness and their impact, not only to the date of insolvency but also the effect a disqualification order might have as a deterrent or in protection of the public.

The Department also takes into account any other relevant factors such as personal losses incurred, the period of trading, and the age and state of health of directors.

Capital Projects in the Strangford Constituency

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how much her Department has spent on capital projects in the Strangford constituency in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 2431/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: There has been no expenditure on capital projects by DETI in the last three financial years.

Capital grant expenditure has not been considered in terms of this response.

Agenda NI

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how much her Department and its agencies have spent on (i) articles and adverts in Agenda NI; (ii) subscriptions to Agenda NI; and (iii) payments for staff attending conferences organised by BMF Conferences since May 2007.

(AQW 2433/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Information is provided for the period from May 2007 until 8 October 2010 as follows:

Articles and adverts in Agenda NI	Subscriptions to Agenda NI	Payments for staff attending conferences organised by BMF Conferences
£79,012.32	£209.40	£65,670.79

Moratorium on Lignite

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether the extension of the moratorium on lignite only applies to lignite mining proposals for the North Antrim constituency.

(AQW 2591/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The current moratorium on the granting of Mineral Prospecting Licences for lignite prospecting throughout Northern Ireland expired on 24th October 2010. I propose to extend that moratorium for a further three years until 24th October 2013.

Moratorium on Lignite

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether the extension of the moratorium on lignite applies to lignite mining proposals for the South Antrim constituency.

(AQW 2643/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: I would refer the Member to my Answer to his earlier Question AQW 2591/11 which indicated that the moratorium extends throughout Northern Ireland.

Rose Energy's Proposed Incinerator at Glenavy

Mr M McLaughlin asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in relation to Rose Energy's proposed incinerator at Glenavy, what consideration she has given to (i) the estimated £30 million required for construction; and (ii) the underwrite of loan guarantees of an additional £70 million capital required.

(AQW 2647/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Invest NI continues to evaluate this project and the due diligence process is at an advanced stage. The outcome of this will determine if and to what extent an offer of financial support will be made and also what conditions will be attached.

Irish Language Classes for Staff

Mr P Doherty asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether her Department currently offers, or plans to offer, Irish language classes to staff.

(AQW 2688/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The Department does not currently offer, nor has it any plans to offer, Irish language classes to staff.

Department of the Environment

Newtowncrommelin

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of the Environment why Planning Service has not designated Newtowncrommelin as a village, given that it is designated as a village by Ballymena Borough Council. **(AQW 2361/11)**

Minister of the Environment (Mr E Poots): The Development Plan process is the main vehicle for assessing future land requirements and identifying the settlement hierarchy in a plan area under which new settlements such as Newtowncrommelin would be identified.

My Department, as part of the work for the draft Antrim, Ballymena and Larne Area Plan (ABLAP) 2016, was reviewing the settlement hierarchy of the Ballymena Borough. As you will be aware work on the ABLAP, together with the Armagh Area Plan and West Tyrone Area Plan, ceased during 2008 prior to any of these plans being published in draft form.

Any future consideration of the status of Newtowncrommelin may be reviewed and further consideration of the designation of new settlements can be taken forward through the preparation of Development Plans by Council when they assume planning powers.

Planning Applications

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the number of jobs, identified in planning applications, that have not been created because applications for business ventures have been delayed by the planning process for more than one year. **(AQW 2422/11)**

Minister of the Environment: The reliability of estimates of the number of new jobs associated with specific planning applications varies with each application and in some cases is not available at all. Timescales to complete the processing of individual applications can also vary due to a variety of circumstances, sometimes out of the control of the planning system. Consequently the information requested could only be estimated on the basis of a manual check of case files. This would be disproportionate in terms of time and cost and would not produce reliable statistical data.

Capital Projects in the Strangford Constituency

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of the Environment how much his Department has spent on capital projects in the Strangford constituency in each of the last three financial years. **(AQW 2429/11)**

Minister of the Environment: The table below provides total expenditure on capital projects by my Department in the Strangford constituency between 2007/08 and 2009/10.

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Expenditure on capital projects (Strangford constituency)	£349,131	£1,411	£76,305

New Developments

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of the Environment whether any new developments have been built on flood plains in each of the last five years, and what steps are being taken to protect these homes. **(AQW 2435/11)**

Minister of the Environment: With regard to the number of developments built on flood plains in the last five years, my Department does not have the means by which to extract this information without undertaking a manual check of all planning application files. This is not only disproportionate in terms of time and cost, but would result in un-validated statistics being released.

My Department takes a precautionary approach to new development in flood plains, in line with PPS15, Planning and Flood Risk and where permission is granted developers are required to put suitable mitigation measures in place following a flood risk assessment.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to consider flood risk issues at a site. It is in their interests to do this as early as possible in the process. Depending on the risk, mitigation measures may be needed. The applicant will need to show how the development has been made safe through design and flood resilient construction and that it does not increase flood risk elsewhere.

Agenda NI

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of the Environment how much his Department and its agencies have spent on (i) articles and adverts in Agenda NI; (ii) subscriptions to Agenda NI; and (iii) payments for staff attending conferences organised by BMF Conferences since May 2007.

(AQW 2505/11)

Minister of the Environment: The table below provides the total spend for the period May 2007 to 30 November 2010 for each of the various costs requested.

	Articles & Adverts in Agenda NI (i)	Subscriptions to Agenda NI (ii)	Conference Costs (iii)
Total Spend	£8,885	£318	£53,510

Local Government

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment (i) what measures he intends to put in place to ensure that fairness and equality are central to the operation of Local Government; and (ii) how his Department intends to monitor delivery on this issue.

(AQW 2565/11)

Minister of the Environment: In my statement to the Assembly on 30 November I said that I want, through the proposed new governance arrangements, to ensure that councils pursue equality and fairness.

The key elements of these proposed new arrangements are first, a tightly defined list of methods for ensuring the sharing of power and responsibility between the political parties represented on a council. Second, the operation of checks and balances, in the form of a call-in procedure and the availability of qualified majority voting, to protect the interests of minorities.

These measures would be in addition to a council's statutory obligations in relation to section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

To ensure the delivery of inclusive local democracy, to protect the rights of minorities, to prevent any direct or indirect discrimination, and to promote the need for equality of opportunity I propose that the new governance arrangements would be provided for in legislation.

Local Government Reform and Planning Reform Programmes

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department has the capacity to meet the legislative timetable set out in his Ministerial Statement of 30 November 2010, on Local Government Reform and Planning Reform Programmes.

(AQW 2567/11)

Minister of the Environment: Yes, my Department has the capacity to meet the legislative timetable set out in my Ministerial Statement of 30 November 2010.

Irish Language Classes for Staff

Mr W Clarke asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department currently offers, or plans to offer, Irish language classes to staff.

(AQW 2600/11)

Minister of the Environment: The Department does not currently offer, or have any plans to offer, Irish language classes to staff.

Artworks

Mr A McQuillan asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the value of the artworks that his Department currently has (i) on display; and (ii) in storage.

(AQW 2621/11)

Minister of the Environment: My Department currently has a number of artworks on display which as part of the NICS Art Collection are owned and managed by the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) Properties Division. DFP has advised that information on these artworks should be excluded from departmental responses as it will be provided in their response.

Lignite Mining

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of the Environment to detail any discussions he, or his officials, have had with representatives of Antrim Coal, Peabody Coal or British Coal in relation to their proposed lignite mining activities in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 2644/11)

Minister of the Environment: The Department received a planning application on 13 May 2010 from Antrim Coal Company for the extraction of lignite in the Ballyvollen townland of Antrim (Crumlin). The application is being processed by the Minerals Unit of Strategic Projects Directorate at Planning Service Headquarters.

A meeting between officials and the applicant's agent was held on 30 March 2010 to discuss the information required for the application.

Strategic Projects Unit

Mr T Lunn asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) the number of applications that the Strategic Projects Unit has determined since its inception; (ii) the number of these applications that were approved within the 6-month target timeframe; and (iii) the number of these applications that went through the pre-application discussion process, to the satisfaction of Strategic Projects Unit, prior to the submission of an application.

(AQW 2700/11)

Minister of the Environment: Since April 2008 the Strategic Projects teams have determined 78 Article 31 applications. In addition, since April 2009 the teams have also processed 36 other economically significant applications which, while not qualifying as Article 31, are nevertheless viewed as important to the NI Economy.

Within the Programme for Government there is a commitment to process large scale strategic investment planning proposals within 6 months provided there have been pre-application discussions with an agreed outcome. To date, 8 applications have met the criteria to apply the PfG 6 month target all have been processed within 6 months.

Lignite Mining in South Antrim

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of the Environment why his Department has not required an Environmental Impact Assessment to be carried out by Antrim Coal in respect of a proposed open cast lignite mine in South Antrim.

(AQW 2711/11)

Minister of the Environment: As the development falls within category 2(a) of Schedule 2 of the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (NI) 1999 the Department is obliged under regulation 9 to make a determination as to whether the proposal would be EIA development and thereby require an Environmental Statement.

Taking into account advice from consultees, the scale of the development and the potential environmental impacts, the Department determined that the application did not require to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement.

Downpatrick Divisional Planning Office

Ms M Ritchie asked the Minister of the Environment if he can confirm the status of the Downpatrick Divisional Planning Office from 1 April 2011.

(AQW 2729/11)

Minister of the Environment: From 1 April 2011, Downpatrick Divisional Planning Office will be part of the Southern Area Planning Office which will serve Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon, Newry & Mourne and Down Council areas. The main office will be in Craigavon with Downpatrick as a sub-office.

Downpatrick Divisional Planning Office

Ms M Ritchie asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) the number of administrative and planning staff employed at the Downpatrick Divisional Planning Office; and (ii) the number of staff from this office who will be relocated to the Belfast and Craigavon Divisional Planning Offices from 1 April 2011.

(AQW 2761/11)

Minister of the Environment: The Downpatrick Divisional Planning Office currently has 21 administrative staff, this includes 3 staff due to move to other posts in early 2011. There are also a total of 43 specialist planning staff although this number is scheduled to reduce. I previously explained in my letter to you in September 2010, the background to the need to reduce staffing levels in the Planning Service.

In the light of my statement to the Assembly on 30 November 2010, about the need to restructure the Planning Service to better reflect the future make up of local councils, my officials have now commenced work on clarifying the detailed make up of the 5 new Area Planning Offices, post 1 April 2011. It is therefore not possible at this very early stage, to give precise details of how many staff will be required to move office location.

Where my proposals necessitate the relocation of management responsibility and processing of work this does not necessarily mean that all the staff currently carrying out that work will automatically move location also. The Department will work closely with the staff affected and the TUS to implement this change whilst continuing to deliver a high quality customer service and at the same time minimising the disruption for individual staff.

Disposal of Poultry Litter

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of the Environment what consideration his Department has given to inviting waste management companies from Europe to submit proposals to safely dispose of poultry litter, to safeguard value for money.

(AQW 2785/11)

Minister of the Environment: It is my Department's role to implement environmental legislation and is entirely a matter for the agricultural and private sectors to determine the means by which they choose to achieve compliance with that legislation.

However, as part of the development of the Nitrates Action Programme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010, my Department, along with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment established a working group with representatives of the poultry industry to investigate any viable interim options for the storage and use of poultry litter pending the establishment of a sustainable long-term technical solution.

The working group has actively pursued a range of options including alternative treatment systems available in Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland and further afield. The Departments and the industry are currently conducting a number of on-farm trials in relation to temporary storage measures prior to land spreading. However, land spreading of this material at current levels continues to be unsustainable in the long term due to its high phosphorus content, the enriched phosphorus status of local soils and the resultant impact of excess phosphorus on water quality.

I share your concern that the poultry industry should arrive at a value for money solution in determining the means by which it should achieve compliance with its legislative obligations, and am happy to reassure you that the business case for any solution which involves the commitment of public monies by my Department or any other Department will be subject to rigorous technical, economic and environmental assessment.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Civil Service Overtime

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much has been spent on overtime payments for Civil Service staff in each of the last 5 years.

(AQW 2157/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel (Mr S Wilson): The total amount paid by the eleven Northern Ireland Civil Service departments (and their agencies) to non-industrial and industrial staff in respect of overtime for the last five financial years is set out in the table below.

Financial Year	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Total Overtime Payments	£21,365,841	£21,075,985	£17,245,675	£15,656,381	£13,804,292

HR Connect

Mr W Clarke asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much his Department has paid to HR Connect in each month of the last ten years.

(AQW 2262/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The amount paid to HR Connect in the last ten years is set out in the table attached.

Month / Year	Service Charge Payment
Oct-07	£48,142.00
Nov-07	£48,142.00
Dec-07	£672,035.00
Jan-08	£1,068,111.00

Month / Year	Service Charge Payment
Feb-08	£1,020,439.35
Mar-08	£1,130,109.00
Total	£3,986,978.35
Apr-08	£339,968.61
May-08	£395,847.00
Jun-08	£365,048.00
Jul-08	£355,133.58
Aug-08	£408,666.10
Sep-08	£420,374.41
Oct-08	£389,548.37
Nov-08	£456,136.26
Dec-08	£625,024.15
Jan-09	£434,241.63
Feb-09	£542,819.53
Mar-09	£490,010.00
Total	£5,222,817.64
Apr-09	£558,938.82
May-09	£582,501.57
Jun-09	£541,992.75
Jul-09	£686,491.06
Aug-09	£725,938.80
Sep-09	£875,853.40
Oct-09	£949,053.16
Nov-09	£943,923.49
Dec-09	£930,613.54
Jan-10	£944,483.08
Feb-10	£944,695.69
Mar-10	£884,371.49
Total	£9,568,856.85
Apr-10	£925,254.35
May-10	£913,785.58

Month / Year	Service Charge Payment
Jun-10	£916,905.64
Jul-10	£918,472.43
Aug-10	£892,426.36
Total	£4,566,844.36

Interns

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many interns his Department has facilitated in 2010/11; and how many it intends to facilitate in 2011/12.

(AQW 2289/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: To date DFP has facilitated 3 interns during 2010/11.

With regard to 2011/12, the Department is unable to confirm the number of interns that will be facilitated as each application will be considered on a case by case basis depending on the student's requirements and the Department's ability to accommodate these requirements.

Dublin Government's Current Financial Situation

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the impact on the local economy of the Dublin Government's current financial situation.

(AQW 2306/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Northern Ireland has strong economic links with the Republic of Ireland. They are our largest trading partner accounting for approximately 30% of our exports. Therefore a strong and growing Irish economy is very much in our interests. In that context I welcome the support package agreed with the EU and IMF on the 28th November 2010.

However, I am concerned about the potential impact on local Irish owned banks. We don't yet know the fine detail of how the EU – IMF Programme will be implemented, it is clear that a substantial downsizing and reorganisation of the Irish banking sector is required which is to be achieved by the run down of non core assets. This could lead to job losses in the Irish owned banks here – Bank of Ireland (UK) and First Trust - and impact on lending in Northern Ireland.

Finally, the austerity measures announced by the Irish Government will undoubtedly lead to falling demand in the Irish market. This could adversely affect our sales to the Republic and their ability to travel to Northern Ireland to shop.

Account NI and HR Connect

Dr S Farry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the savings generated to date; and (ii) the future anticipated savings from the introduction of (a) Account NI; and (ii) HR Connect.

(AQW 2311/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The principal monetary benefit anticipated from the introduction of Account NI is savings accruing from the reduced requirement for finance staff in Departments and the shared service centre.

Departmental information is currently being collated but is not yet available. Shared service centre efficiencies have been offset as a consequence of early project slippage, unanticipated costs, the introduction of the 10 day prompt payment target and the extension of services to other organizations.

Account NI is currently carrying out a review of the business case to reflect changing circumstances and is unable to determine the extent of future shared service centre savings at this time.

The HRConnect business case stated that HRConnect would operate within a budget of £26,479,160 set at 05/06 prices. As the business case continues to operate within this available budget, as allocated to Departments, this represents efficiencies of £1,971,445 (7.44%).

We continue to seek to contain the cash running costs and operate within a budget of £26.4m, thereby generating an annual efficiency saving.

For both Account NI and HRConnect, Departments are responsible for ongoing savings in their own Department.

Economic Situation in the Republic of Ireland

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the economic impact on Northern Ireland of the current economic situation in the Republic of Ireland.

(AQW 2354/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Northern Ireland has strong economic links with the Republic of Ireland. They are our largest trading partner accounting for approximately 30% of our exports. Therefore a strong and growing Irish economy is very much in our interests. In that context I welcome the support package agreed with the EU and IMF on the 28th November 2010 in the hope that it will bring greater certainty and stability in the longer term.

However, I am concerned about the potential impact on local Irish owned banks. We don't yet know the fine detail of how the EU – IMF Programme will be implemented but it is clear a substantial downsizing and reorganisation of the Irish banking sector is required which is to be achieved by the run down of non core assets. This could lead to job losses in the Irish owned banks here – Bank of Ireland (UK) and First Trust - and impact on lending in Northern Ireland.

Finally, the austerity measures announced by the Irish Government will undoubtedly lead to falling demand in the Irish market. This could adversely affect our sales to the Republic and their ability to travel to Northern Ireland to shop.

National Asset Management Agency

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the impact of the National Asset Management Agency on Northern Ireland's finances.

(AQW 2355/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) is expected to acquire a total of €4 billion (£3.35 billion) of loans based in the Northern Ireland. This is a reduction on the first estimate of €5bn of loans but remains a significant sum that will have a major impact. At this stage, a confirmed €360m worth of loans based in Northern Ireland have already been transferred.

NAMA was designed to bring stability and confidence to the Republic of Ireland's Banking sector by removing their "toxic" debt and providing them with Government backed securities at an appropriately discounted rate. This provides them with much needed liquidity and assets acquired by NAMA are to be managed over the medium term.

The conditions attached to the International Financial Package for the Republic of Ireland includes that the work of NAMA will continue up until the end of March 2011 in terms of loan acquisition. I continue to expect therefore that the amount of loans acquired will be in the region of the €4 billion estimate. I had previously been assured that there would be no fire sale of the Northern Ireland Assets.

I don't yet know the fine detail of how the International Package will be implemented but is to include a fundamental downsizing and reorganisation of the Irish banking sector. This could lead to job losses in the Irish owned banks here and impact on lending in Northern Ireland. This is something we will need to monitor very closely.

Capital Projects in the Strangford Constituency

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much his Department has spent on capital projects in the Strangford constituency in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 2394/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The spend on capital projects in the Strangford constituency in each of the last three financial years was as follows:

Year	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11 (to date)
Spend	£15,902	£280,592	£26,825	£0

Projects Part-funded by the Government of the Irish Republic

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to list all the projects in each Department which are currently part-funded by the Government of the Irish Republic; and what the position is in respect of these projects in the light of the current financial situation in the Irish Republic.

(AQW 2397/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The Department of Finance and Personnel is the accountable department for a number of elements of both the Interreg IVA and Peace III programmes.

Funding for these programmes comprises resources from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and match funding from national public expenditure provided by Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and, in the case of Interreg IVA, contributions from the Scottish government in respect of the participation of regions of western Scotland. All ERDF monies for the programmes are provided by the EU and represent the larger funding element in both Peace III and Interreg IVA.

Tables showing the approved projects in respect of these programmes as at 26 November 2010 are attached.

The Republic of Ireland government remains committed to the aims and objectives of both programmes and to providing the relevant national match funding element.

Data in relation to projects undertaken by other departments would need to be obtained directly from those departments.

TABLE 1: INTERREG IVA PRIORITY 2, THEME 1 – PUBLIC SECTOR COLLABORATION

Applicant Name	Project Name
Centre for Cross Border Studies	Ireland/Northern Ireland Cross Border Co-operation Observatory
CMAL Scotland	Small Ferries Strategic Plan
COMET	Administration Costs
East Border Region	Administration Costs
ICBAN	Administration Costs
North East Partnership	Administration Costs
North West Region Cross Border Group	Administration Costs
North East Partnership	Business Improvement Project
COMET	Bio Recorders Network
Donegal County Council	Women Into Public Life

Applicant Name	Project Name
DHSSPS	Driving Change
RNIB	Sensory Engagement Project
East Border Region	Energy Efficiency and Micro Generation
ICBAN	Central Border Regional Spatial Planning Initiative
Cedar Foundation	ConneXions
East Border Region	Promoting Balanced and Sustainable Cross Border Development
North West Region Cross Border Group	Urban and Village Renewal
North West Region Cross Border Group	SPACEial
EGSA	Deaf Communications Infrastructure Development Project
East Border Region	Environmental Action for Diversity

TABLE 2 - INTERREG IVA – PRIORITY 3 – TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Applicant Name	Project Name
SEUPB	Technical Assistance
East Border Region	AEBR Conference

TABLE 3 - PEACE III – PRIORITY 3 – TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Applicant Name	Project Name
SEUPB	Technical Assistance
BA/CRC	Technical Assistance Priority1 Themes 1 and 2

Unpaid Domestic Rates

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the amount of unpaid domestic rates in each district council area in each of the last three years.

(AQW 2398/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The domestic rates unpaid for Northern Ireland by district council area at 28 November 2010, split by year of assessment for the last three years, are detailed in the attached table.

These figures are not the domestic rates that were outstanding at the end of each financial year. It is therefore not correct to use the figures to state that domestic ratepayer debt doubled between 2008-09 and 2009-10. The figures rather show the age of unpaid rates at 28 November 2010.

Land & Property Services continues to pursue all unpaid rates, whilst recognising the genuine financial difficulties of many ratepayers. The Agency seeks to agree payment arrangements with ratepayers where possible.

LPS had reduced the £157 million total prior year ratepayer debt to £93 million at 28 November 2010.

District Council	Year of Assessment		
	2007	2008	2009
Antrim	£96,225	£272,792	£454,072
Ards	£247,237	£415,017	£709,004
Armagh	£213,138	£398,162	£763,688
Ballymena	£55,877	£124,974	£389,006
Ballymoney	£65,745	£91,788	£230,590
Banbridge	£146,903	£260,214	£437,176
Belfast	£1,562,082	£2,495,677	£4,417,636
Carrickfergus	£132,485	£230,435	£418,434
Castlereagh	£136,580	£247,617	£412,211
Coleraine	£123,381	£257,156	£582,272
Cookstown	£60,165	£106,795	£232,433
Craigavon	£292,421	£459,781	£1,139,536
Derry	£323,444	£566,004	£1,145,820
Down	£218,110	£385,004	£767,683
Dungannon & S.Tyrone	£99,892	£204,916	£490,959
Fermanagh	£107,432	£176,391	£355,190
Larne	£50,163	£104,484	£181,874
Limavady	£61,496	£136,086	£299,176
Lisburn	£353,809	£632,088	£1,078,231
Magherafelt	£61,283	£107,114	£258,501
Moyle	£40,539	£71,572	£136,105
Newry & Mourne	£339,586	£548,861	£1,180,921
Newtownabbey	£209,808	£386,611	£671,993
North Down	£229,774	£427,221	£711,486
Omagh	£74,523	£155,058	£338,378
Strabane	£90,497	£163,588	£318,998
Grand Total	£5,392,595	£9,425,406	£18,121,374

The figures may not total exactly due to rounding.

Agenda NI

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much his Department and its agencies have spent on (i) articles and adverts in Agenda NI; (ii) subscriptions to Agenda NI; and (iii) payments for staff attending conferences organised by BMF Conferences since May 2007.

(AQW 2473/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The amount paid to BMF Business Services by my Department since May 2007, in respect of the services detailed, is £28,273.

	Articles and adverts in Agenda NI	Subscriptions to Agenda NI	Payments for staff attending conferences organised by BMF Conferences	Total
£	11,400	653	16,220	28,273

Lone Pensioner Allowance

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many pensioners in the (i) Ards Borough Council area; and (ii) Strangford constituency have benefitted from the Lone Pensioner Allowance since its introduction; and how much they have saved on their rates bills.

(AQW 2496/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The table below shows the total Lone Pensioner Allowance awards made by Land & Property Services for owner occupiers in the Ards Borough Council area, along with their total value (as at 5 December 2010):

Council	Total awards 01 April 08 to date	Total value £
Ards Borough	1,237	£538,052

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive administers Lone Pensioner Allowance for the social and private rented sectors. The Executive has supplied the following information on total current awards of Lone Pensioner Allowance by its relevant office (as at 30 November 2010):

NIHE Office	Total current awards
Newtownards	209

Land & Property Services records show the total amount awarded by NIHE during the period for the Ards Borough Council area (as at 5 December 2010):

Council	Total value of awards 01 April 08 to date
Ards Borough	£63,512

Information is not available for Strangford constituency as Land & Property Services records Lone Pensioner Allowance information by local government district and not parliamentary constituency.

Presbyterian Mutual Access Fund

Mr C Lyttle asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether the UK Government and the Northern Ireland Executive contributions of £25m each to the Presbyterian Mutual Access Fund are to be treated as assistance rather than loans to be repaid or recouped from assets of the PMS.

(AQW 2611/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The exact details of the proposed Presbyterian Mutual Society (PMS) solution have not yet been finalised and any final solution will be subject to the agreement of the Executive, the Assembly, the EU, and PMS creditors and members.

However the proposed solution includes making a loan of £175m to the Administrator over a period of approximately ten years and provision for a Mutual Access Fund to which the Government will

contribute £25 million, the Northern Ireland Executive will contribute £25 million and where the Church will also make a contribution.

Over time our hope is that the PMS assets will recover sufficiently for the Access Fund to be repaid and to allow everyone to recover their money in full. However this cannot be guaranteed. After repaying the £175m loan any surplus at the end of the ten year loan workout period would firstly be used to repay the cost of the Access Fund. After this any remaining surplus would be available for distribution to PMS creditors and members.

Artworks

Mr A McQuillan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the value of the artworks that his Department currently has (i) on display; and (ii) in storage.

(AQW 2658/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Approximately £1.8 million worth of art is currently on display with a further £0.1 million available for display.

My Department currently has no artworks in storage.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Child Cystic Fibrosis Patients

Mr Pól Callaghan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether child Cystic Fibrosis patients, treated at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children during refurbishment works at Allen Ward and Cherrytree House, will be accommodated in single rooms and have access to their own washing facilities to minimise the risk of cross-infection.

(AQW 2272/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Mr M McGimpsey): The planned refurbishment of Allen Ward and Cherry Tree House will greatly improve inpatient accommodation, both for patients and their families.

While the details of the refurbishment work are currently being determined, the Belfast Trust has confirmed that when the refurbishment work is commenced, all cystic fibrosis patients will be nursed individually in their own rooms, as is the case now.

During the period of refurbishment, patients may be required to share bathroom facilities, as is currently the position. Appropriate measures will continue be taken to ensure that the risk of cross-infection is kept to a minimum and that patients' care is not compromised in any way.

Staff Salaries

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what was the total cost of salaries incurred by his Department in the 2009/10 financial year for all staff within (i) his Department; (ii) the Regional Health and Social Care Board; (iii) each Health and Social Care Trust; and (iv) any other arms-length bodies.

(AQW 2279/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The total salary costs for DHSSPS bodies (i.e. Department, HSC Board, HSC Trusts and special agencies) are contained within each bodies 2009-10 published annual accounts.

Arms-length Bodies: Funding

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list all the arms-length bodies that currently receive funding from his Department.

(AQW 2280/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The following organisations receive funding from DHSSPS either directly or indirectly via the Health and Social Care Board and/or the Public Health Agency:

Organisation	Type of Organisation
Belfast HSC Trust	HSC Body
Northern HSC Trust	HSC Body
South Eastern HSC Trust	HSC Body
Southern HSC Trust	HSC Body
Western HSC Trust	HSC Body
Northern Ireland Ambulance Service	HSC Body
Patient & Client Council	HSC Body
Business Service Organisation	HSC Body
Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service	HSC Special Agency
Public Health Agency	HSC Body
HSC Board	HSC Body
NI Guardian Ad Litem Agency	HSC Special Agency
NI Social Care Council	NDPB*
NI Fire and Rescue Service	NDPB*
NI Medical and Dental Training Agency	HSC Special Agency
NI Practice & Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery	NDPB*
Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority	NDPB*

*NDPB – Non Departmental Public Body

Staff Salaries

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 1850/11, to detail where those staff earning (i) between £50,000 and £100,000 per annum; and (ii) in excess of £100,000 per annum are based within his Department and its associated arm's length bodies, including each Health and Social Care Trust and the Health and Social Care Board.

(AQW 2281/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: In my Department all those staff earning £50,000 or over are based in Castle Buildings, Stormont Estate, Belfast. The information in relation to arm's length bodies is not held centrally and could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

Interns

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many interns his Department has facilitated in 2010/11; and how many it intends to facilitate in 2011/12.

(AQW 2288/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: To date, my Department has facilitated 3 interns during 2010/2011.

Regarding 2011/12, my Department will consider applications on a case-by-case basis depending on the area of work requested by any applicants and the Department's ability to accommodate these.

Redevelopment of Whiteabbey Hospital and the Mid-Ulster Hospital

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the redevelopment of Whiteabbey Hospital and the Mid-Ulster Hospital, including the expenditure to date and the projected timescales for progress.

(AQW 2298/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: As you will be aware, deliberations on the budget for the next four years are ongoing. Until the budget for my Department becomes clear, it is not possible to determine the timing for any projects, including any proposals to redevelop Whiteabbey and Mid-Ulster Hospitals.

In the meantime, both these hospitals will continue to play a key role in providing services to the local community.

Capital Projects and Large-scale Maintenance Projects

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail his plans for (i) capital projects: and (ii) large-scale maintenance projects over the next three years.

(AQW 2299/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Final decisions on the capital projects and the planned maintenance programme which will proceed during the next budget period can only be made once I have full clarity on the level of funding, both revenue and capital, being made available to my Department in order to build and operate schemes.

Residential Centre for Substance Abuse

Mr A Maginness asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he intends to establish a residential substance misuse treatment centre for young people under the age of 18 who are suffering from addiction.

(AQW 2303/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Preventing and addressing the harm related to alcohol and drug misuse is a key issue for my Department, and I am becoming increasingly aware of the issues in relation to addressing with the more complex treatment and support needs of under 18s.

Where possible, a young person's substance misuse problems are managed through locally available community-based services – to this end there are a range of counselling and mentoring services for children and young people available right across Northern Ireland. There is currently no dedicated drug and alcohol Tier 4 in-patients service for under 18s, but there are generic CAMHS beds available, and residential facilities are made available for individuals when there is a clinical need for such treatment.

Young people with significant substance misuse problems tend to have multiple issues of concern and are often in contact with a range of services including criminal justice, social services and mental health services. For those young people an interagency approach is essential and in line with good

practice, specialist substance misuse services work with these services to ensure that there is a proper care pathway in place for these young people.

I have tasked the HSC Board and the Public Health Agency to develop a commissioning framework for addiction services across NI, and the services for those aged under 18 should be a key part of this discussion.

Staff Travel Claims

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the cost of travel claims for (i) the Regional Health and Social Care Board; (ii) each Health and Social Care Trust; and (iii) the Northern Ireland Ambulance Trust, in the last available financial year.

(AQW 2312/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The cost of travel claims for the HSC Board and the six Trusts is set out in the table below. The purpose of these costs is to reimburse staff for expenses incurred as a result of duties relating to their job and will include mileage allowances, public transport costs, subsistence and car parking. This includes the travel costs for those staff delivering health and social care to people in their own homes and local communities.

HSC Trust	2009/10 £m
HSC Board	0.6
Belfast HSC Trust	6.4
Northern HSC Trust	10.3
South Eastern HSC Trust	6.1
Western HSC Trust	7.9
Southern HSC Trust	9.0
NI Ambulance Service	0.4

The HSC Board and the Trusts are endeavouring to keep travel and subsistence costs to an absolute minimum through, for example, the use of tele/video conferencing and internal facilities for meetings, workshops and conferences.

Antrim Area Hospital Accident and Emergency Unit

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline his Department's position on the proposed extension of the Accident and Emergency Unit at Antrim Area Hospital.

(AQW 2315/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Northern Trust has submitted a business case outlining proposals to develop a new A&E Department at Antrim Area Hospital. These proposals are currently being assessed and a decision on the outcome of the business case is expected by the end of December 2010.

As you will be aware, deliberations on the budget for the next four years are ongoing. Until the budget for my Department becomes clear, it is not possible to determine the timing for the progression of any projects, including the extension of the A&E Unit at Antrim Hospital. However, I can assure you that this project remains one of my top priorities.

Staff Salaries

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much was spent in total within his Department and its arms-length bodies on staff salaries in the 2009/10 financial year.
(AQW 2322/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The total spent on staff salaries for my Department and its arms length bodies in the 2009/10 financial year was £2.15bn. This includes salaries and wages, social security and other pension costs.

Waiting Time for Occupational Therapists

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 1655/11, to provide the number of patients in the Western and Southern Health and Social Care Trusts awaiting assessment by an Occupational Therapist in whichever format is available.
(AQW 2335/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: At 12 November 2010, there were

- 686 patients waiting from referral for treatment by an Occupational Therapist in the Western Health and Social Care Trust.
- 743 patients waiting from referral for treatment by an Occupational Therapist in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust.

Capital Projects

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much his Department has spent on capital projects in the Strangford constituency in each of the last three financial years.
(AQW 2351/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The following capital investment in a range of health schemes has been made within the Strangford constituency over the last 3 years:

2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
£100,000	£467,000	£1,213,000

Crisis Homes for People Suffering from Mental Health Problems

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of crisis homes for people suffering from mental health problems; and their locations.
(AQW 2359/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: There are currently six crisis homes for people suffering from mental health problems. These are located in the following areas:

- Belfast
- Bangor
- Londonderry
- Enniskillen
- Omagh

It would not be appropriate to give specific details about locations for reasons of patient confidentiality.

Health Service Electronic and Manual Processes

Mr R Beggs asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) whether he will integrate Health Service electronic and manual processes into a single system that would allow GPs, when making a referral, to indicate a patient's mobility and communication needs; and if so, when this system will be in place; (ii) when he will introduce a system for all correspondence to be supplied to patients in their preferred format; and (iii) when all the information available to patients, such as medical records, will be available in their preferred format.

(AQW 2363/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Most GP practices use a standard referral template when referring a patient to secondary care. This template includes provision for the referrer to indicate any special needs including communication or mobility needs. The NI Clinical Communications Gateway project has been initiated to facilitate the electronic transmission of GP referrals to secondary care using this template.

In addition, through collaborative working on the preparation of a new Section 75 Action Plan, HSC Trusts will ensure that patients receive information in their preferred format. Furthermore, HSC Trusts can already provide documents on request in a range of accessible formats.

Staff Expenses

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 1288/11, to detail the current (i) mileage rate; and (ii) allowance for meals payable by the Health and Social Care Trusts to staff as expenses.

(AQW 2368/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The purpose of travel and subsistence allowances is to reimburse staff for expenses incurred as a result of duties relation to their job. There are a number of mileage rates and allowances available to HSC staff depending on personal circumstances; details are available in Section 17 of the NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook. This is available at <http://www.nhsemployers.org/Pages/home.aspx>

Private Healthcare Companies

Ms A Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether private healthcare companies who take referrals from the Health Service are subject to health service procedures on communication with patients and waiting time targets.

(AQW 2369/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Health and Social Board has advised me that independent sector companies which take referrals from the Health Service are subject to the standard health service elective access protocols which cover communication with patients and waiting time targets.

This obligation is included in the terms and conditions of standard contracts.

Funding Provided to Derg Valley Care Ltd, Castlederg

Mr P Doherty asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) to detail the funding provided by his Department to Derg Valley Care Ltd, Castlederg in each of the last five years; and (ii) whether any conditions were attached to the funding; and if so, to outline these conditions.

(AQW 2371/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The level of grant funding provided by my Department to Derg Valley Care Ltd, Castlederg in the last 5 years is as follows:

2010/11	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07
£14,390 *	£15,725	£10,790	£ 8,430	£0

* As the 2010/11 financial year is not yet complete, further payments may be made to Derg Valley Care Ltd before 31 March 2011.

A number of conditions have been attached to the grant funding. These are:

- a) An interim report, which details progress across all activity outlined in Derg Valley Care Ltd training plan is to be submitted to DHSSPS no later than 8 Oct 2010. This must include the names of candidates against each NVQ, the level and title of each NVQ and the dates of registration with an approved Assessment Centre.
- b) All expenditure on all activities must be accounted for in case of a possible inspection.
- c) Evidence of spend and activity should be provided eg proof of candidate registrations, receipts and portfolios available for inspection.
- d) In order to comply with audit requirements, DHSSPS Office of Social Services staff may visit Derg Valley Care Ltd
- e) DHSSPS may review funding at the Interim Report stage if candidates names and registration details are not submitted.
- f) Derg Valley Care Ltd is financially viable
- g) Derg Valley Care Ltd has adequate procedures for support of equal opportunities
- h) Derg Valley Care Ltd has in place all relevant policies to ensure good practice in child protection, protection of vulnerable adults, health & safety.
- i) Derg Valley Care Ltd has in place adequate systems to manage support training activity funded by DHSSPS's Office of Social Services; and
- j) The grant provided will not be used for any political activity.

South Tyrone Hospital, Dungannon

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail his future plans for the South Tyrone Hospital, Dungannon; and whether he proposes to make any changes to the existing arrangements and current staffing levels.

(AQW 2373/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The delivery of services and operational aspects of Trust delivery plans at the South Tyrone Hospital, Dungannon is a matter for the Southern Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust as the service provider.

Tyrone County Hospital will continue to provide a range of services that, in conjunction with primary care, will help provide the local population with the majority of health services they require.

The Trust has advised that there are plans to provide additional urology and ophthalmology services at South Tyrone.

Recent capital investment in South Tyrone Hospital has included a £1million refurbishment of wards and a new day hospital.

Funding for Quangos

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list all the Quangos currently funded, or part-funded, by his Department; and how much funding each has received in each of the last three years.

(AQW 2375/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: A list of the Quangos (Non Departmental Public Bodies and Agencies sponsored by or associated with my Department) currently funded, or part-funded, by my Department in each of the last three years is shown below:

Directly Funded by the DHSSPS	2007/08 £m	2008/09 £m	2009/10 £m
HSC Board	N/A	N/A	3,745
Business Service Organisation	N/A	N/A	40
Public Health Agency	N/A	N/A	68
Patient Client Council	N/A	N/A	2
NI Guardian Ad Litem Agency	3	3	4
NI Social Care Council	3	3	3
NI Fire and Rescue Service	73	82	83
NI Medical and Dental Training Agency	45	46	52
NI Practice & Education Council for Nursing & Midwifery	1	1	1
Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority	5	6	6

Indirectly Funded via the Health & Social Care Board, Public Health Agency or Trusts	2007/08 £m	2008/09 £m	2009/10 £m
Business Service Organisation	N/A	N/A	72
Belfast HSC Trust	927	1,084	1,222
Northern HSC Trust	450	525	577
South Eastern HSC Trust	395	454	502
Southern HSC Trust	380	458	510
Western HSC Trust	385	458	513
Northern Ireland Ambulance Service	45	56	58
Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service	21	26	26

Four new organisations that are currently funded, came into existence from 1 April 2009. These are the Patient Client Council, the Health and Social Care Board, the Public Health Agency and the Business Services Organisation. The Central Services Agency, the Health Promotion Agency, the Medical Physics

Agency, and the former Health & Social Services Boards all ceased to exist on 31 March 2009 and therefore their funding is not reported above.

The Public Health Agency was created through a merger of various parts of the former HSSBs, the former Health Promotion Agency (NI) and parts of the former Central Services Agency.

The Health Estates Agency ceased to exist as an entity in its own right on 31 March 2009 and was brought under the umbrella of the DHSSPS.

As a result of the Review of Public Administration my Department has reduced the number of Health and Social Care Trusts from nineteen to six, the number of Health and Social Service Councils from four to one and the Number of Boards from four to one. Put simply, prior to RPA there would have been nineteen more bodies in the list than are listed above. So I have halved the "Quangos".

C Difficile

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 1795/11, (i) how many Departmental staff are involved in the public inquiry into the C difficile outbreak in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust; (ii) the grades of these staff; (iii) the hourly rates charged by the members of the inquiry panel; (iv) whether panel members or their employers receive payment for their involvement; and (v) what is the estimated total cost of the inquiry.

(AQW 2399/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: One member of staff from DHSSPS has been seconded to the Inquiry Office. The DHSSPS staff member is an Administrative Officer. The Inquiry panel members are paid an hourly rate between £175 and £200. The hourly rates have been determined by the Department in line with other similar inquiries. Panel members receive payment directly for hours worked on receipt of an itemised invoice. No payment is made to any other employer that any of them may have. The estimated cost of the Inquiry has been detailed in AQW 1194/11 and AQW 1795/11.

C Difficile

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 1797/11, (i) to detail the contents of the Serious Adverse Incident (SAI) report sent by the Northern Health and Social Care Trust to his Department on 15 October 2007; (ii) when the SAI report regarding the emergence of C difficile Ribotype O27 was received by his Department; (iii) what recommendation it made; (iv) what action was taken in response to the emergence of this new and virulent strain of C difficile; and (v) when this action was taken.

(AQW 2400/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The contents of the SAI report which was received by DHSSPS on 15 October 2007 are set out in the RQIA report of the independent review of the outbreak of Clostridium difficile in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust, at paragraph 6.2.16.

The RQIA report also sets out, at paragraph 6.2.16, the key elements of the control plan which the Trust drew up to contain the problem and prevent further cases.

The timeframe for the actions in the control plan ranged from immediate effect to February 2008.

The RQIA report is available at: www.rqia.org.uk/publications/rqia_review_reports.cfm

Attempted Suicide

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people have attempted suicide in each Health and Social Care Trust area in each of the last five years.

(AQW 2405/11)

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

Child Cystic Fibrosis Patients

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many dedicated hospital beds he intends to provide for children with cystic fibrosis.

(AQW 2409/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: It is for the Health and Social Care Board, as the commissioner of services, to prioritise and allocate services to meet the needs of the population of Northern Ireland.

Specialist services for children suffering from cystic fibrosis are currently provided on a regional basis from the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children (RBHSC), where they can access a full range of services appropriate to their needs, including physiotherapy, dietetics, social work and clinical psychology. Community care is also managed by the regional team, and is provided across Northern Ireland by a social worker and a community nurse specialist.

Although there are no dedicated beds for children suffering from cystic fibrosis, patients who require inpatient treatment are normally admitted to Cherry Tree House or Allen Ward in RBHSC, although children with a specific requirement for isolation or surgical intervention may be admitted to the infectious diseases unit or surgical ward within the hospital.

Cherry Tree House and Allen Ward are currently undergoing refurbishment work to reconfigure current accommodation to offer more side wards, better parent accommodation and improved staff areas. Consultation on the refurbishment is currently ongoing.

Child Cystic Fibrosis Patients

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the current level of specialist provision for children with cystic fibrosis.

(AQW 2411/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: It is for the Health and Social Care Board, as the commissioner of services, to prioritise and allocate services to meet the needs of the population of Northern Ireland.

Specialist services for children suffering from cystic fibrosis are currently provided on a regional basis from the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children (RBHSC), where they can access a full range of services appropriate to their needs, including physiotherapy, dietetics, social work and clinical psychology. Community care is also managed by the regional team, and is provided across Northern Ireland by a social worker and a community nurse specialist.

Although there are no dedicated beds for children suffering from cystic fibrosis, patients who require inpatient treatment are normally admitted to Cherry Tree House or Allen Ward in RBHSC, although children with a specific requirement for isolation or surgical intervention may be admitted to the infectious diseases unit or surgical ward within the hospital.

Cherry Tree House and Allen Ward are currently undergoing refurbishment work to reconfigure current accommodation to offer more side wards, better parent accommodation and improved staff areas. Consultation on the refurbishment is currently ongoing.

Cherrytree House of the Royal Victoria Hospital for Sick Children

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline his future plans for Cherrytree House in the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children.

(AQW 2413/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: It is for the Health and Social Care Board, as the commissioner of services, to prioritise and allocate services to meet the needs of the population of Northern Ireland.

Specialist services for children suffering from cystic fibrosis are currently provided on a regional basis from the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children (RBHSC), where they can access a full range of services appropriate to their needs, including physiotherapy, dietetics, social work and clinical psychology. Community care is also managed by the regional team, and is provided across Northern Ireland by a social worker and a community nurse specialist.

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Cherry Tree House and Allen Ward are currently undergoing refurbishment work to reconfigure current accommodation to offer more side wards, better parent accommodation and improved staff areas. Consultation on the refurbishment is currently ongoing.

Nursery and Day Care Provision

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) why the Southern Health and Social Care Trust is implementing retrospectively revised criteria which increases the space per child ratio in the provision of nursery or day care places; and whether this is a departmental directive or are Trusts allowed flexibility in implementation.

(AQW 2437/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Southern Health and Social Care Trust is not currently implementing retrospective revised criteria which increases the space per child ratio in the provision of nursery or day care places and my Department has not given a directive to do so.

Cancer Patients

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether all newly diagnosed cancer patients have access to a clinical nurse specialist; and which patients in each Health and Social Care Trust have access to a clinical nurse specialist.

(AQW 2442/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The numbers of newly diagnosed cancer patients having access to a clinical nurse specialist are not available.

The number and distribution of clinical nurse specialists will vary in line with the number of people suffering from different forms of cancer and whether or not their cancer is treated in the local cancer units or at the Cancer Centre.

Since 2007 there has been a net increase of 9.5 clinical nurse specialists in post to give a total of 52.87. The HSC Board and Trusts are currently evaluating existing service provision with the aim of ensuring that all newly diagnosed cancer patients can have access to a cancer clinical nurse specialists.

Card Before You Leave Appointment System

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) which Health and Social Care Trusts are currently operating the Card Before You Leave programme; (ii) to explain the purpose of this programme; (iii) how much money has been allocated to each Trust to fund the programme; and (d) how patients are identified as suitable for the programme.

(AQW 2443/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Card Before You Leave protocol is in operation in each Trust area.

The programme was launched in January 2010 in order to ensure that patients at risk of self-harm or suicide receive ongoing care in the community following their discharge from A&E or an acute inpatient setting.

The programme is funded from existing budgets, no additional funding has been provided.

Those patients presenting at A&E, who are assessed to be at low-risk of self-harm or suicide, are given a card detailing useful contact numbers. Within adult Mental Health Services, this card will also have a fixed-time appointment for a follow-up assessment in four Trust areas; the Southern Trust intend to introduce such appointments within the next few weeks. The same system operates within Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services in all Trust areas with the exception of the Northern Trust. The HSC Board confirm that discussions are currently ongoing with NHSCT to implement this system.

Patients are identified using existing psycho-social assessment tools.

Card Before You Leave Appointment System

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patients have been given an appointment card before leaving a healthcare facility in each Health and Social Care Trust since the Card Before You Leave scheme was launched.

(AQW 2444/11)

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

Card Before You Leave Appointment System

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, since the launch of the Card Before You Leave scheme, how many patients (i) have not been given an appointment card before leaving a healthcare facility; (ii) were given an appointment in a follow up telephone call; and (iii) attended an appointment made in a follow up telephone call, in each Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 2445/11)

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

PSNI Intervention

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many times, in each of the last five years, each Health and Social Care Trust has asked the PSNI to intervene with, or speak to, a patient who has discharged themselves from hospital without completing medical treatment or against medical advice.

(AQW 2446/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information is not available on the number of times, in each of the last five years, each Health and Social Care Trust has asked the PSNI to intervene with, or speak to, a patient who has discharged themselves from hospital without completing medical treatment or against medical advice and could only be provided at a disproportionate cost.

Home Start Funding

Ms M Ritchie asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how he intends to continue funding for HomeStart Schemes in the 2011/12 financial year and beyond; and if he will make a statement on this issue.

(AQW 2662/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: You will understand that, with Budget discussions ongoing, I am unable to guarantee any new funding beyond March 2011.

My Department has a particular focus on Families Matter, the family and parenting strategy. Through that strategy, I am investing £2.5 million a year, on a recurrent basis, to support families through a range of family support initiatives.

My officials are currently engaged with the Health and Social Care Board to ensure that this funding is used to support early intervention services for hard-to-reach families and provide, not only practical assistance, but also help in building their parenting resilience and skill. As existing providers, I would think that Home Start schemes would be well positioned to enter into dialogue with their local Health and Social Care Trusts about how they might further contribute to delivering on this agenda, and I would urge them to do so.

Limavady Fire Station

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the new fire station in Limavady, for which funding was ring-fenced.

(AQW 2692/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: This project was identified as one of a number of capital priorities by NIFRS in its Strategic Development Plan. However, no funding has been ring-fenced as we move into the new Budget period 2011/12- 2014/15. Once I am allocated a budget for these years, I will be in a position to prioritise within that budget.

I continue to remain committed to providing first class fire fighting facilities

NHS: Training

Mrs C McGill asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what measures are in place to ensure that there is value for money when Health Service personnel attend training courses.

(AQO 676/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Departmental spend on education and training for 2010/11 is around £160m. Value for money is achieved through a range of governance, accountability and commissioning mechanisms the department has in place with education providers and other partners. These include Service Level Agreements, senior management accountability meetings, inspections and audits, participant feedback and benchmarking costs with other parts of the UK. These mechanisms evaluate courses for effectiveness and relevance to strategic and service objectives with patient's need and safety at the heart of decision making.

If we wish to deliver a service that is safe, innovative and modern then staff must be equipped with the necessary skills.

Causeway Hospital: Appointments

Mr A McQuillan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patients have failed to turn up for appointments at the Causeway Hospital over the last six months.

(AQO 683/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information on missed hospital appointments is collected by my Department on a quarterly basis. The number of missed hospital appointments over the six month period 1st April 2010 – 30th September 2010, the most recent quarters for which official information is available showed there were 2,783 occasions when patients failed to turn up for appointments at the Causeway Hospital.

Hospital-acquired Infections: Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Mr B McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on hospital acquired infections in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQO 685/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Validated surveillance figures for the Northern Trust show that in the quarter ending 30 September 2010 there were 28 cases of C. difficile in inpatients aged 65 years and over, compared to 29 cases during the same period last year. There were 6 cases of MRSA, compared to 4 cases during the same period last year. During the first half of the reporting year there was a small rise in case numbers compared with the first two quarters of 2009/10 but there have been significant improvements on the 2007 and 2008 figures.

The Public Health Agency is working with the Trust to further reduce infections, and I am very pleased to note the excellent scores that the Trust has achieved in the RQIA unannounced hygiene inspections. It is clear that these inspections have prompted significant improvements in hospital hygiene across Northern Ireland.

Western Health and Social Care Trust: Care Packages

Mr R McCartney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps he is taking to ensure that efficient care packages are available to meet the needs of people in the Western Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQO 686/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I am continuing to develop and expand the range of domiciliary care services available and increase the number of people who manage their own care through Direct Payments. I have also introduced Regional Access Criteria for Domiciliary Care in 2008 to provide for greater transparency and harmonisation in the process of identifying and prioritising need. In the present budget period I have committed an extra £58m from April 2008 to March 2011 in order to help support an additional 1500 people in the community.

In spite of this investment, staff in the Western Trust are finding it extremely difficult to meet the rising demand for domiciliary care, not least because they remain unable to plan on the basis of their next year's budget.

I have sought to highlight these circumstances in order to make the best possible case for increased resources, and to advise the Executive, the DFP and this Assembly of the increasing urgency of the need for resources to provide this lifeline for some of the most frail and vulnerable people in our community.

Mental Health

Mr B Wilson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what consideration he has given to the recent Position Statement from the Royal College of Psychiatrists 'No Health without Public Mental Health: The Case for Action'.

(AQO 687/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I support the policy proposals put forward in the Royal College statement, most of which are already being addressed by the Health and Social Care sector through implementation of a range of public health and mental health services strategies and programmes. This broad programme of work includes actions to: reduce health inequalities; reduce alcohol-related harm, improve population mental health and wellbeing; reduce suicide and self harm; reduce smoking prevalence; and improve access to psychological therapies.

NHS: Training

Mr M Brady asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether all staff within the Health Service have the option of taking accredited courses.

(AQO 688/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Each year the department invests over £160m in developing and maintaining the skills of the workforce. Over 50% of HSC staff hold a professional qualification – nurses, doctors, dentists, AHP's and social workers, accordingly, not only is accreditation an option it is an essential requirement, laid down by regulatory bodies such as the Nursing and Midwifery Council and General Medical Council.

The department works closely with lead bodies in establishing and upholding standards for professional competence, education and development at all stages of individuals careers. Other HSC staff are provided with opportunities for training and education through their employers using both accredited and non accredited means, linked to the performance appraisal system.

The very broad range of posts in the health service requires a comprehensive menu of personal development solutions to meet the changing and diverse demands that in turn lead to better services for patients and clients.

Budget: DHSSPS

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on his Department's budgetary position.

(AQO 689/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The outcome of the UK Spending Review and its impact at Block level means that difficult decisions will have to be made. However, the Block has benefited from the protection afforded to Health in England and that provides an opportunity for the Executive to do similar here. I will not, however, be in a position to outline the funding for my Department until the Executive agrees the Budget allocations for my Department. But what I can say is that by the end of this Budget 2010 period it would take £5.4bn per annum to provide a safe and fit for purpose health service. That is £1.1bn more than the current budget before any cuts are made. The extent to which my budget falls short of this means that radical changes to the delivery of services will be necessary.

Department of Justice

Loughinisland Report

Ms M Ritchie asked the Minister of Justice what progress has been made by the Police Ombudsman on the Loughinisland Report; and when he expects the Public Prosecution Service to make a decision on this issue.

(AQW 2313/11)

Minister of Justice (Mr D Ford): I am aware that investigations are still ongoing in both the Police Ombudsman's Office and the PSNI. The Public Prosecution Service does not fall within my responsibilities, and prosecutorial decisions are for the Director of Public Prosecutions alone. I would suggest that you should therefore write to the Acting Director.

Medical Staff Employed by the Prison Service

Mr P Givan asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of medical staff employed by the Prison Service, broken down by grade and prison.

(AQW 2327/11)

Minister of Justice: The Northern Ireland Prison Service does not employ any Doctors.

Unwell Prisoners

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister of Justice whether he will review the practice of (i) transporting unwell prisoners to hospital in blacked-out high security vehicles; and (ii) keeping unwell prisoners in handcuffs when they are receiving treatment, particularly when the prisoner has no history of violence or attempts to escape.

(AQW 2341/11)

Minister of Justice: The standard vehicles used by the Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service are fitted with tinted windows in line with the specification used in England and Wales and the Republic of Ireland. This arrangement affords privacy to the prisoners being transported as required under Prison Rule 25(3) and is consistent with the practice of the N.I. Ambulance Service with regard to emergency ambulances. Where it is necessary, unwell prisoners may be transported to hospital by ambulance. The PECCS vehicles were recently inspected by Criminal Justice Inspection N.I. and no concerns were raised about the tinted windows. I therefore have no plans to review this practice.

The practice of handcuffing prisoners when they are being escorted outside of a prison establishment needs to strike a balance between the care of a prisoner and the need to protect prison staff and members of the public. The current Northern Ireland Prison Service instructions do permit handcuffs to be removed during hospital appointments when it is considered safe to do so, taking account of any known risk factors for a particular prisoner and of the ability of the escorting staff to make the consultation area secure. Previous experience in Northern Ireland would indicate a heightened risk of escape during such escorts and I am therefore content that the current safeguards are appropriate.

Community Restorative Justice Ireland and Northern Ireland Alternatives

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of referrals to the Public Prosecution Service in each of the last five years from (i) Community Restorative Justice Ireland; and (ii) Northern Ireland Alternatives, either directly or via the PSNI.

(AQW 2364/11)

Minister of Justice: Formal case referrals from the Public Prosecution Service to Community-based Restorative Justice (CBRJ) schemes are governed by a CBRJ Protocol published in February 2007. All case referrals are directed through PSNI.

The first schemes affiliated to Northern Ireland Alternatives were accredited in August 2007 and the first schemes affiliated to Community Restorative Justice Ireland were accredited in July 2008. No referrals were processed prior to 2008.

In 2008, 2 referrals were received by the Public Prosecution Service from Northern Ireland Alternatives. The 2 cases involved 3 offenders and both were approved.

In 2009, 4 referrals were received by the Public Prosecution Service from Northern Ireland Alternatives. The 4 cases involved 6 offenders and all were approved. 2 referrals were received from CRJI involving 2 offenders. One of these referrals was approved by the Public Prosecution Service, the other was not.

In 2010 to date, 2 cases were received by the Public Prosecution Service from Northern Ireland Alternatives involving 5 offenders. One case has been approved by the Public Prosecution Service; the second is currently receiving consideration.

Accreditation of CBRJ schemes has led to greatly improved relationships with police and other statutory sector agencies in communities where this has been historically difficult. Schemes are additionally facilitating community interaction with police and providing support on a range of matters that extend beyond the confines of the low level criminal offences dealt with under the Protocol.

Community Restorative Justice Ireland and Northern Ireland Alternatives

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Justice to detail the level of funding his Department allocated to (i) Community Restorative Justice Ireland; and (ii) Northern Ireland Alternatives, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 2365/11)

Minister of Justice: I would refer the member to the response provided to the question AQW 762/11 answered on 8th October 2010. (Official written answer booklet 8th October 2010).

Community Restorative Justice Ireland and Northern Ireland Alternatives

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Justice to detail the number of internal and external appeals against the decisions of Community Restorative Justice Ireland; and (ii) Northern Ireland Alternatives.

(AQW 2366/11)

Minister of Justice: The Protocol for Community-based Restorative Justice Schemes, published in February 2007, sets out the minimum standards for complaints mechanisms required of accredited CBRJ schemes in dealing with matters for which the Department has responsibility. Each scheme is required to have an internal, and an independent, external complaints mechanism available to every victim and offender who engages with the schemes. The handling of such complaints and associated records are subject to inspection by the Criminal Justice Inspectorate.

There have been no internal or external appeals against the decisions of Community Restorative Justice Ireland or Northern Ireland Alternatives on matters on which the schemes account to the Department.

Cost of Transporting Prisoners to and from Court

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice to detail the costs to the Prison Service of transporting prisoners to and from court in each of the last three years; and how these costs have altered since the increased use of video-link facilities.

(AQW 2387/11)

Minister of Justice: The Prisoner Escorting and Court Custody Service (PECCS) carries out a range of escorting functions including scheduled hospital appointments, police interviews and court productions. Separate figures are not maintained to breakdown the costs for each type of escort and therefore it is not possible to identify the costs of transporting prisoners to court in each of the last three years. The overall running costs for PECCS for the last three years are set out below. These costs do not include capital costs such as the purchase of new vehicles.

2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010
£5,886k	£5,604k	£5,059k

Running costs reduced during this period largely because Prison Officers were redeployed to prison establishments and were replaced by Prisoner Custody Officers on different terms and conditions of service.

Although provisions in the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 enable the use of live links in a greater range of circumstances, including some preliminary hearings and sentencing, the uptake during this period has not significantly increased. The figures are set out below.

	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010
Hearings by Live Link	9872	10319	8511

This issue is currently being examined to understand the reasons and to consider how best to promote the use of live links. The recent Criminal Justice Inspection report on Prisoner Escort and Court

Custody Arrangements in Northern Ireland commended the use of video links and recommended that the maximum benefit of video-linking should be realised by assigning a court full-time to video-linked hearings. This recommendation is being considered by NICTS in conjunction with NIPS.

Legal Aid Bill

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice, to detail, as a percentage, how much of the annual legal aid bill was spent on (i) civil cases; and (ii) criminal cases in each of the last two years.

(AQW 2401/11)

Minister of Justice:

Financial Year	Civil Legal Aid Expenditure %	Criminal Legal Aid Expenditure %	Total Legal Aid Expenditure £'m
2008/09	39% (£32.5m)	61% (£50.6m)	83.1
2009/10	38% (£36.9m)	62% (£60.0m)	96.9

Capital Projects in the Strangford Constituency

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of Justice how much his Department has spent on capital projects in the Strangford constituency in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 2432/11)

Minister of Justice: The Department of Justice came into existence on 12th April 2010. Details of expenditure on capital projects in the Strangford constituency before that date are a matter for the previous department.

Equal Pay Claim

Mr D O'Loan asked the Minister of Justice for an update on the equal pay claim for civilian employees of the PSNI; and when he expects this issue to be resolved.

(AQW 2480/11)

Minister of Justice: The question of liability in respect of equal pay continues to be the subject of discussions between PSNI, NI Policing Board, DFP and DOJ. I remain limited in what I can say; however I continue in my determination to resolve the matter as soon as possible.

Agenda NI

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of Justice how much his Department and its agencies have spent on (i) articles and adverts in Agenda NI; (ii) subscriptions to Agenda NI; and (iii) payments for staff attending conferences organised by BMF Conferences since May 2007.

(AQW 2506/11)

Minister of Justice: The Department of Justice came into existence on 12th April 2010. Details of expenditure relating to Agenda NI or conferences organised by BMF Conferences before that date are a matter for the previous department.

Expenditure for the Department of Justice and its agencies is shown in the table below:

	Agenda NI Articles & Adverts	Agenda NI Subscriptions	BMF Conferences
Department Of Justice Core	£0	£0	£0
Northern Ireland Prison Service	£0	£35	£0
Compensation Agency	£0	£0	£0

	Agenda NI Articles & Adverts	Agenda NI Subscriptions	BMF Conferences
Forensic Science Northern Ireland	£0	£0	£0
Youth Justice Agency	£0	£109	£545
Northern Ireland Courts & Tribunals Service	£0		£1,116
Total	£0	£144	£1,661

The expenditure shown above is from 1st April 2010 to 31st October 2010 as, under Machinery of Government rules, the DOJ will account for expenditure from 1st April 2010.

Pay Award for PSNI Civilian Staff

Mr D O'Loan asked the Minister of Justice (i) for an update on the 2009 pay scales for civilian employees of the PSNI; (ii) when these pay scales will be implemented; and (iii) the reasons for the delay.

(AQW 2512/11)

Minister of Justice: On 9 April 2010 the NIO gave approval to the new assimilated pay scales to be applied to the relevant grades in PSNI, reflecting established practice that the police staff enjoyed NICS terms. The approval role under corporate governance arrangements for the PSNI, transferred to the Department of Justice following devolution of Police and Justice in April 2010.

Following devolution, the PSNI and other ALBs of the Department of Justice have been required to complete submissions for the approval of their pay remit. There continues to be discussion between the DFP, DOJ and PSNI on a number of details. This approval process is necessary to ensure that DFP have proper oversight of the use of public money.

I am determined that the matter is resolved as soon as possible.

Under 18 and Over 65: Convicted of Criminal Offences

Ms M Ritchie asked the Minister of Justice how many people (i) under the age of 18; and (ii) over the age of 65 have been convicted of a criminal offence in each of the last four years.

(AQW 2525/11)

Minister of Justice: The numbers under the age of 18 and over 65 convicted of an offence at court are given in Table 1 below.

Data cover the calendar years 2003-2006 (the latest year for which figures are currently available) and are collated on the principal offence rule; only the most serious offence for which an offender is convicted is included.

TABLE 1: NUMBER CONVICTED – AGED UNDER 18 AND OVER 65, 2003-2006

Age	2003	2004	2005	2006
Under 18	1,588	1,588	1,455	1,273
Over 65 ¹	180	197	180	151

1 Excludes 65 year olds.

Fire Alarms in Prisons

Ms M Ritchie asked the Minister of Justice to detail, for each of the last three years, the number of fire alarms in each prison that required the attendance of the Fire and Rescue Service, and of these (i) how many were false alarms; and (ii) the cost incurred for these call-outs.

(AQW 2529/11)

Minister of Justice: The tables below show the number of responses by the Fire and Rescue Service to incidents at Maghaberry and Magilligan prisons over the last three years. There have been no incidents at Hydebank Wood during the period.

MAGHABERRY

Year	Actual fires	False alarms
2008	4	0
2009	3	0
2010	1	0

MAGILLIGAN

Year	Actual fires	False alarms
2008	4	4
2009	3	3
2010	1	5

The Northern Ireland Prison Service did not incur costs for any of the call outs.

Police Ombudsman

Ms M Ritchie asked the Minister of Justice (i) to outline any recent discussions he has had with the Police Ombudsman, including what subjects were discussed; (ii) when he intends to hold further meetings with the Police Ombudsman; and (iii) whether he intends to discuss (a) the inquiry into the killing of six men in O'Toole's Bar, Loughinisland; and (b) publishing a report in relation to this inquiry.

(AQW 2530/11)

Minister of Justice: I have met the Police Ombudsman on a number of occasions since my election as Minister and discussed a range of issues. I intend to discuss the development of long-term policing objectives in the coming weeks. As the Police Ombudsman's investigation into the Loughinisland murders remains a live investigation it would be inappropriate for me as Minister to discuss it with the Ombudsman.

Pay Award for PSNI Civilian Staff

Mr P Frew asked the Minister of Justice (i) for an update on the 2009 pay award for civilian employees of the PSNI; and (ii) when he expects this issue to be resolved.

(AQW 2533/11)

Minister of Justice: On 9 April 2010 the NIO gave approval to the new assimilated pay scales to be applied to the relevant grades in PSNI, reflecting established practice that the police staff enjoyed NICS terms. The approval role under corporate governance arrangements for the PSNI, transferred to the Department of Justice following devolution of Police and Justice in April 2010.

Following devolution, the PSNI and other ALBs of the Department of Justice have been required to complete submissions for the approval of their pay remit. There continues to be discussion between

the DFP, DOJ and PSNI on a number of details. This approval process is necessary to ensure that DFP have proper oversight of the use of public money.

I am determined that the matter is resolved as soon as possible.

Improving Crime Detection Rates

Mr Pól Callaghan asked the Minister of Justice to outline the responsibilities of his Department in relation to improving crime detection rates, as distinct from the operational role of the PSNI.
(AQW 2555/11)

Minister of Justice: It is one of my Department's key objectives to work in partnership with the PSNI, the Policing Board and the wider community to address crime. The detection of crime is a critical element of that task.

As Justice Minister it is my responsibility to ensure the police are adequately resourced to deliver the best possible policing service and to encourage public confidence in policing. Public confidence fosters increased engagement between the public and the police which is essential for the detection of crime. One of the key objectives in the current Programme for Government is to lead a debate on what a new Community Safety Strategy should include, with an agreed Strategy to be published by March 2011. The delivery of the Community Safety Strategy would encourage public confidence in policing, and subsequently support the police in the improvement of detection rates.

The Chief Constable is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board for all aspects of PSNI performance including detection rates. I, in turn, will continue to support the role of the Policing Board in setting the policing priorities for Northern Ireland and securing the effectiveness and efficiency of the PSNI.

The detection rate in Northern Ireland for all crimes for the period April to October 2010 stood at 33.9% compared to 24.9% for the same period in 2009, an increase of 9% points.

Civil Service Pay Award

Mr J Spratt asked the Minister of Justice to outline the reasons for the delay in implementing the NICS 2009 pay award for civilian employees of the PSNI.
(AQW 2597/11)

Minister of Justice: On 9 April 2010 the NIO gave approval to the new assimilated pay scales to be applied to the relevant grades in PSNI, reflecting established practice that the police staff enjoyed NICS terms. The approval role under corporate governance arrangements for the PSNI, transferred to the Department of Justice following devolution of Police and Justice in April 2010.

Following devolution, the PSNI and other ALBs of the Department of Justice have been required to complete submissions for the approval of their pay remit. There continues to be discussion between the DFP, DOJ and PSNI on a number of details. This approval process is necessary to ensure that DFP have proper oversight of the use of public money.

I am determined that the matter is resolved as soon as possible.

Equal Pay Claim for PSNI Staff

Mr J Spratt asked the Minister of Justice why the equal pay claim for PSNI staff has not yet been implemented.
(AQW 2599/11)

Minister of Justice: The question of a potential Equal Pay settlement for police support staff continues to be the subject of discussions between DOJ, PSNI, NIPB and DFP. I remain limited in what I can say; however I continue in my determination to resolve the matter as soon as possible.

Sean Gerard Cahill Wrongly Released from Prison

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice why Sean Gerard Cahill was wrongly released from prison on 24 November 2010, but this was not realised or made public until 30 November 2010.

(AQW 2605/11)

Minister of Justice: Sean Gerard Cahill attended Lagside Court on 24 November on a charge of aggravated vehicle taking. He was sentenced to one month's imprisonment, however subsequent sentence calculation confirmed that his sentence for this offence had already been served whilst on remand.

He was erroneously released from custody because subsequent checks carried out whilst Mr Cahill was still being detained in the court custody area failed to show that he should have been returned to custody to appear before Lisburn Magistrates Court by video link on 30 November 2010 on separate charges of robbery, possession of an offensive weapon and taking a vehicle without the owner's consent.

The error was discovered on 30 November 2010 when the NI Courts and Tribunal Service contacted Maghaberry Prison to query why Mr Cahill had not been produced as directed.

I was informed of the error by the Prison Service on the afternoon of the 30 November and made a public statement later that day, as soon as details were confirmed.

I immediately demanded that a disciplinary investigation should be launched. That investigation is underway and is focussing on establishing whether the incident was as a result of human error, systems failure or a combination of both and expect a report within two weeks. Early indications are that the circumstances of this case differ significantly from the cases of prisoners Paliutis and Cummins who were also erroneously released recently and that they almost certainly involve a degree of systems error. Additional measures have been put in place to further protect against a recurrence of this type of incident.

PSNI continue in their efforts to return prisoner Cahill to custody and the victims of his alleged offences have been informed.

Victims of Violent Crime

Ms M Ritchie asked the Minister of Justice how much has been paid in compensation to victims of violent crime in each of the last five years.

(AQW 2738/11)

Minister of Justice:

Financial Year	Criminal Injuries 1988 Order	Tariff Scheme (Introduced 2002)	Total
2005/06	£23,773,880.57	£15,207,312.92	£38,981,193.49
2006/07	£16,623,281.17	£14,624,042.37	£31,247,323.54
2007/08	£11,489,350.19	£14,655,259.06	£26,144,609.25
2008/09	£7,732,899.78	£13,037,265.64	£20,770,165.42
2009/10	£8,817,607.00	£12,540,731.00	£21,358,338.00

Pension/Gratuity Payments to Royal Ulster Constabulary Reservists

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Justice to outline the timescale for the payment of the gratuity for former police reservists.

(AQW 2770/11)

Minister of Justice: The Department intends that all of the £20m provided by HM Treasury will be utilised by the PTR Gratuity scheme. The level of payment for each eligible applicant will be administered on a points system depending on length of service. The amount of money attached to each point will depend on the number of successful claimants after applications have closed. The closing date for applications is 4 February 2011. It is the aim of the Department to have all payments processed before the end of the 2010/11 financial year.

Department for Regional Development

Interns

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development how many interns his Department has facilitated in 2010/11 and how many it intends to facilitate in 2011/12.

(AQW 2283/11)

Minister for Regional Development (Mr C Murphy): One intern was facilitated within DRD in 2010/11. Any potential opportunities for such placements in 2011/12 have not yet been assessed.

Water Meters

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the criteria used to determine whether Bed and Breakfast properties and other small businesses are eligible for a water meter; and whether this criteria is used for rented accommodation.

(AQW 2291/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that metering is the preferred method of billing non-domestic properties and it has undertaken an extensive programme to install meters, where practicable, irrespective of the business type. In cases where it is not possible to install a meter, non-domestic customers are charged on an unmeasured basis using the Nett Annual Value of the property.

Classification of non-domestic properties is taken from the non-domestic valuation list developed by Land and Property Services (LPS) for rating purposes. Bed and Breakfast establishments, where identified as such by LPS, are included on the non-domestic list and are billed for water and sewerage services.

Rented accommodation is normally designated by LPS as domestic property and therefore not billed for water and sewerage services.

Single Tender Actions and Contract Extensions

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 911/11 and AQW 416/11, to outline the reasons why the written answers were revised and why the figure given for the number of single tender actions and contract extensions issued by Roads Service changed.

(AQW 2300/11)

Minister for Regional Development: The two Assembly Questions that were revised, namely AQW 911/11 and AQW 416/11 related to single tender actions only.

The answers to the above Assembly Questions were revised and the figures in the associated tables were changed because my original answers erroneously provided details of a single tender action (Sustrans Research), which was issued in 2004/05 and not in 2005/06, as originally reported. Consequently, as both questions were seeking information on the period 2005/06 to 2009/10, details of the Sustrans Research STA should not have been included in my response to AQW 416/11, or my response to the pursuant question AQW 911/11.

Brown Tourist Road Directional Signs

Mr D McKay asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) to list the sports grounds or facilities which currently have brown tourist road directional signs; and (ii) how many brown tourist road directional signs are currently erected in each constituency.

(AQW 2307/11)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has developed a policy jointly with the NI Tourist Board regarding the provision of tourist signs in the North. Under this policy, all enquiries regarding tourist signing are initially dealt with by the relevant local council. Roads Service does not hold an historical inventory of tourist signing provided and is therefore unable to provide the information requested by the Member. However, local councils may have a record of existing tourist signing, as part of their development of an inventory of tourist destinations, and may be in a position to supply the information requested.

Capital Projects in the Strangford Constituency

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development how much has been spent on capital projects in the Strangford constituency, in each of the last three financial years.

(AQW 2331/11)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service does not maintain an analysis of its expenditure in the format requested. However, it does hold an analysis of total capital expenditure, on a financial year basis by Council area. The most relevant council areas in this case Ards, Castlereagh & Down and figures for those areas have been used to provide information for the Strangford constituency.

I should explain that Roads Service's total expenditure on capital includes major capital schemes, minor capital schemes, street lighting renewal, land, capital structural maintenance and other capital activities.

In addition, following the adoption by the NICS of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) in 2009/10, and to comply with International Accounting Standards, some structural maintenance activities were reclassified as capital. These were classified as resource prior to 2009/10.

I should also explain that Roads Service allocates its total budget for capital expenditure on roads across all the district council areas on the basis of need. Major road improvements are prioritised on a countrywide basis, taking account of a broad range of criteria, such as strategic planning policy, traffic flow, number of accidents, potential travel time savings, environmental impact, accessibility and value for money. While the actual spend on a major works scheme may be within one district council area, the benefits of such schemes are not confined to that district council, or to the constituency or county in which they are implemented.

The table below details the total capital expenditure for the past 3 years covering the period 2007/08 to 2009/10 for each of above council areas.

	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Ards	1,960	8,667	6,088	16,715
Castlereagh	1,316	444	3,822	5,582
Down	986	1,341	3,877	6,204
Total	4,262	10,452	13,787	28,501

I have been advised by NI Water (NIW) that expenditure on capital projects in each of the last three years in the Strangford constituency is, as detailed in the table below.

Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Amount (£M)	7.4	17.7	16.6

NIW estimates that £7 million will be invested in the Strangford constituency during 2010/11.

The following table details how much has been spent on Ulsterbus capital projects in the Strangford constituency over the last three years.

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Bus Stations			
Refurbish paint at depots and stations		8	
Workshops & Garages			
Building Condition Upgrade Programme		20	
Ballygowan Bus Park			6
Total		28	6

In addition, my Department has invested, over these financial years, in the purchase of new modern buses, some of which have been deployed in the Strangford constituency.

B8 Route at Main Street, Hilltown

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has any plans to introduce traffic control measures on the B8 route at Main Street, Hilltown.

(AQW 2338/11)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the B8 Main Street, Hilltown has been traffic calmed in accordance with the standards for this type of road within a town environment.

Northern Ireland Water: Redundancies

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development whether there are any plans to introduce compulsory redundancies in Northern Ireland Water; and if he will make a statement on this issue.

(AQW 2344/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that it has launched a number of Voluntary Early Retirement and Voluntary Early Severance schemes for 2010/11 to assist in the requirement to reduce employee numbers in line with the Price Control 2010 reduction target. It is the company's stated aim to achieve the required 2010/11 reduction in employee numbers purely through voluntary means.

NI Water: Bills

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of bills sent by NI Water in each of the last three years where customers were (i) over-charged; and (ii) under-charged.

(AQW 2345/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the number of bills issued in each of the last three years which resulted in overcharging and undercharging, is included in the table below:

Year	Number of bills issued resulting in overcharging	Number of bills issued resulting in undercharging
2007/08	11,827	5,622
2008/09	13,016	5,954
2009/10	12,517	5,687

It should be noted that there a number of reasons why a customer may have been overcharged or undercharged including errors in the information supplied by the customer, errors in the reading and billing processes and legacy errors in customer records which are being identified and addressed through data quality improvement projects.

Staff Suspensions

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the number of staff in his Department, its agencies and arms-length bodies who have been suspended in each of the last three years; and (ii) the amount of wages and salaries, to date, paid to these employees during their suspensions.

(AQW 2346/11)

Minister for Regional Development: Details in respect of staff in DRD and its arms length bodies are set out in the table below.

	2007/08		2008/09		2009/10	
	Number of staff suspended	Salary Paid (£)	Number of staff suspended	Salary Paid (£)	Number of staff suspended	Salary Paid (£)
DRD (including Roads Service)	4	5,466	2	496	2	11,079
Northern Ireland Water	3	20,015	3	7,331	0	0
NI Transport Holding Company/ Translink	5*	28,324*	5*	11,620*	5*	12,099*

* Figures for Translink are best estimates. Records are not held centrally and verification would incur disproportionate cost.

Upgrade of the Coleraine to Derry Railway Line

Mr Pól Callaghan asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department has sought a cost estimate for work on the planned upgrade of the Coleraine to Derry railway line to be carried out at night or weekends, to allow the line to remain open; and if so, to provide a breakdown of the estimate.

(AQW 2360/11)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink have informed me that in reviewing the various options for the relay, the project team concluded that night and weekend work would result in costs of between 185% and 200% more than the baseline option of completing the work by closing the line. It would also mean the duration of the works would increase from 12 months to potentially 24 months resulting in disruption to services over a period of two years instead of the closure of the line for one year.

Given these significant costs and time increases, the Economic Appraisal and all the subsequent planning has moved forward on the basis of a full blockade strategy i.e closure of the line. However, if the necessary funding is secured to allow the project to proceed, Translink will consider all possible options and alternatives, including shift patterns before work on site commences. Any final decisions will have to take account of resource availability.

Pay and Display Car Parks

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister for Regional Development if he has any plans to review (i) the payment structure; and (ii) the management of pay and display car parks.

(AQW 2376/11)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that, in accordance with Chapter 6 of Managing Public Money (NI), it reviews car parking charges annually. A review is currently being carried out which includes proposals to simplify the car parking charges structure.

Roads Service has also advised that, since November 2006, its Pay and Display car parks have been managed and operated by NSL Services Group (formerly NCP). The current contract with NSL expires in October 2012 and, in advance of that date, Roads Service will be undertaking a tendering and procurement process in relation to a new enforcement and car park management contract.

Pay and Display Car Parks

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the amount of money collected at pay and display car parks in each of the last three years.

(AQW 2377/11)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the amount of money collected at Pay and Display car parks, in each of the last three years, is detailed in the table below:-

Financial Year	2008/08	2008/09	2009/10
Amount	£4.6 million	£4.69 million	£4.64 million

VAT is payable on all monies collected and has not been deducted from the figures provided above.

Revenue generated by income from car parking, as well as from Penalty Charge Notices and other charges received, is used to supplement the overall financing of Roads Service.

I would point out that the cost of managing off-street car parks and enforcing the on-street parking restrictions exceed the total revenue received.

Parking and Traffic Issues in Whiteabbey and Jordanstown

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development whether his Department, in conjunction with Newtownabbey Borough Council, the University of Ulster at Jordanstown, the Planning Service and business owners and residents of the Whiteabbey and Jordanstown area, will work towards a co-ordinated approach to address the parking and traffic issues in those areas.

(AQW 2379/11)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has, and will continue to engage with Newtownabbey Borough Council, Planning Service and other parties as appropriate, to address issues of mutual concern.

As I advised the Member in my response to his Assembly Question, AQW 2378/11, my officials will report on these matters to both Newtownabbey Borough Council and to you later this month.

Jordanstown Train Station

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) whether plans for a park and ride facility at Jordanstown Train Station have been drawn up; (ii) the reasons why the plans have not been progressed; and (iii) when he expects the plans to be implemented, given the expected increase in passenger numbers due to the new 4000 series stock.

(AQW 2380/11)

Minister for Regional Development: Plans for Park and Ride facilities at railway stations and halts on the network, including the station at Jordanstown, have been drawn up. The project for a Park and Ride facility at Jordanstown has to be considered against constraints on available capital funding and likely benefits from other capital projects in the Translink capital plan.

My Department is presently carrying out a strategic review of Park and Ride facilities with the aim of developing proposals for future provision which would offer the best prospect of maximising modal shift. The review is currently ongoing and no decisions have yet been taken. The implementation of Park and Ride will be taken forward in a more constrained budgetary context but it is hoped that a strong case can be made for capital and resource investment in park and ride generally.

Jordanstown Train Station

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development why Jordanstown Train Station is not served by a park and ride facility, similar to the provision at Whitehead, Carrickfergus and Whiteabbey.

(AQW 2382/11)

Minister for Regional Development: While it has been possible to complete some Park and Ride projects on the Railways network, Translink have had to review and prioritise their capital expenditure in light of the constraints on available capital grant. The Jordanstown project is not being taken forward at this time as it offered lower benefits and cost more per space, when compared with other capital schemes. The project has been deferred but Translink will keep it under review.

My Department is presently carrying out a strategic review of Park and Ride facilities with the aim of developing proposals for future provision which would offer the best prospect of maximising modal shift. The review is currently ongoing and no decisions have yet been taken. The implementation of Park and Ride will be taken forward in a more constrained budgetary context and this may impact on the ability to deliver priority projects that may be identified in the review.

A8 Road

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the A8 road project and whether funding pledged by the Republic of Ireland will be honoured.

(AQW 2403/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I can advise the Member that, on 5 August 2009, I announced the preferred route for the 14 kilometre section of the A8 Belfast to Larne dual carriageway between Coleman's Corner roundabout and Ballyrickard Road.

In January 2010, my Department's Roads Service appointed a contractor to contribute to the development of the preferred route and give specific advice on construction issues. This will provide the project team with the opportunity to consider construction issues at an early stage in the project. This contractor will eventually construct the scheme.

A series of one to one meetings are currently taking place between the designers and the landowners directly affected to consider detailed access arrangements and accommodation works.

The publication of the draft Vesting Order, Direction Order and Environmental Statement is programmed for January 2011, followed by a Public Inquiry later in 2011.

The Southern Government confirmed its commitment in 2007 to make a £400 million contribution to the A5 and A8 projects and the Executive agreed, in principle, to take forward both projects. Furthermore, at the North South Ministerial Council plenary session, held in July 2009, terms were agreed on the funding to be provided.

During the intervening period, the Southern Government has reiterated its commitment to these projects on various occasions.

Roads Infrastructure in the Strangford Constituency

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development to provide a breakdown of the total investment in the roads infrastructure in the Strangford constituency since May 2007.

(AQW 2419/11)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service does not maintain an analysis of its expenditure in the format requested. However, it does hold an analysis of total annual capital expenditure by Council area. For the purposes of reply, details of the total capital expenditure in the Ards, Down and Castlereagh Council areas are set out in the table below.

Roads Service total expenditure on capital includes major capital schemes, minor capital schemes, street lighting renewal, land, capital structural maintenance and other capital activities.

Following the move of the NICS to International Financial Reporting Standards in the 2009/10 financial year, and to comply with International Accounting Standards, the structural maintenance activities of resurfacing, reconstruction, surface dressing and structural drainage were reclassified as capital expenditure. Prior to 2009/10, these activities were classified as resource expenditure. Therefore, in the table below, Capital Structural Maintenance is shown as nil in both 2007/08 and 2008/09.

I should also explain that Roads Service allocates its total budget for capital expenditure on roads across all District Council areas on the basis of need with major road improvements prioritised by taking a broad range of criteria into account. These include strategic planning policy, traffic flow, accidents numbers, potential travel time savings, environmental impact, accessibility and value for money. While the actual spend on a major works scheme may be within one district council area, the benefits of such schemes are not confined to that district council area.

Details of the total capital expenditure for the past three financial years, covering the period 2007/08 to 2009/10 for Ards, Down and Castlereagh Council areas, are set out in the table below:-

District Council	Capital Activity	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Down	Major Capital	294,000	341,000	272,000
	Minor Capital	523,000	512,000	672,000
	Road Lighting Capital	53,000	266,000	153,000
	Other Capital	107,000	157,000	171,000
	Land Under Acquisition	9,000	65,000	92,000
	Capital Structural Maintenance	Nil	Nil	2,517,000
	Total Capital	986,000	1,341,000	3,877,000
Ards	Major Capital	23,000	7,065,000	2,448,000
	Minor Capital	439,000	784,000	801,000
	Road Lighting Capital	178,000	195,000	230,000
	Other Capital	162,000	580,000	105,000
	Land Under Acquisition	1,158,000	43,000	46,000
	Capital Structural Maintenance	Nil	Nil	2,457,000
	Total Capital	1,960,000	8,667,000	6,088,000
Castlereagh	Major Capital	Nil	7,000	Nil
	Minor Capital	811,000	252,000	1,902,000
	Road Lighting Capital	159,000	56,000	39,000
	Other Capital	346,000	115,000	341,000
	Land Under Acquisition	Nil	14,000	16,000
	Capital Structural Maintenance	Nil	Nil	1,525,000
	Total Capital	1,316,000	444,000	3,822,000

Additional Train Services

Mr P Frew asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he will consider (i) additional train services between 14.10 and 16.00 or 16.10 and 18.00 from Belfast to Londonderry; or (ii) extending the 16.28 from Belfast to Ballymena so that it continues to Londonderry.

(AQW 2423/11)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink advise that currently they do not have the resources to provide increased frequency in services to the North West between 14:10 hours and 18:00 hours. They recognise that there are large numbers of passengers travelling to the North West on Friday afternoons

and whenever possible will add additional capacity to the 16:10 service to Derry by using carriages available from elsewhere on the network.

They also advise that if the 16:28 train from Belfast to Ballymena was extended through to Derry there would be no train in Belfast to operate the 18:10 service through to Portrush.

The problems that are occurring on the Belfast to Derry line are arising because of the increased numbers of passengers using the line which is an indicator of the recent improvement in the services. I am hopeful that some of the current problems can be tackled when the 20 new trains are introduced to service on the overall network and additional trains are deployed on the Derry line. This is scheduled to happen in 2013, following completion of the Coleraine to Derry track relay, which I am committed to. Along with revenue subsidy to NI Railways, this project is subject to Executive decisions on the budget.

Belfast to Londonderry Train Service

Mr P Frew asked the Minister for Regional Development what measures could be introduced to prevent overcrowding on the 16.00 train service from Belfast to Londonderry.

(AQW 2424/11)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink have advised that they continuously review demand patterns right across the network. They recognise that there are large numbers of passengers travelling to the North West on Friday afternoons and whenever possible will add additional capacity to the 16.10 service to Derry by using carriages available from elsewhere on the network.

The problems that are occurring on the Belfast to Derry line are arising because of the increased numbers of passengers using the line which is an indication of the recent improvement in the services. I am hopeful that these problems can be addressed when the 20 new trains are introduced to service on the overall network and additional trains are deployed on the Derry line. This is scheduled to happen in 2013.

Belfast to Londonderry Train Service

Mr P Frew asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he would consider authorising the use of ex Gatwick Express stock to augment the 16.00 Belfast to Londonderry train service.

(AQW 2425/11)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink advise that the ex Gatwick Express rolling stock is part of their strategic reserve fleet. The primary reason the Gatwick train has not been placed in service in recent times is that these are locomotive-hauled carriages which are not suitable for short haul commuter type operations. They have been kept primarily to back up the cross-border Enterprise fleet.

The problems that are occurring on the Belfast to Derry line are arising because of the increased numbers of passengers using the line which is an indication of the improvement in the services. I am hopeful that these problems can be tackled when the 20 new trains are introduced to service on the network and additional trains are deployed on the Derry line. This is scheduled to happen in 2013.

Derry to Dublin Bus Route

Mr Pól Callaghan asked the Minister for Regional Development how many passengers used the Derry to Dublin bus service in each of the past three years, broken down by (i) Ulsterbus issued tickets; and (ii) Bus Eireann issued tickets.

(AQW 2448/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I am informed by Translink that the information is not readily available in the format requested as it does not keep records of tickets issued by Bus Eireann. The table below details passenger journeys on the service from Derry to Dublin for passengers who have purchased tickets from Translink for the last three financial years.

Year	2008/09	2009/10	2010 (April – Oct)
Passenger Journeys	71982	68399	42227

Freight and Non-freight Customers

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development how many (i) freight; and (ii) non-freight customers travelled by boat between Northern Ireland and Scotland in each of the last five years, broken down by each route travelled.

(AQW 2459/11)

Minister for Regional Development:

(i) The information requested is not compiled by the Department for Regional Development.

The Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment's Northern Ireland Ports Traffic publication 2010 details the number of freight units passing through each port but not by each route travelled. The table below is an extract from the 2010 Report covering the period 2005-2009 in respect of freight units through the ports of Belfast and Larne.

NUMBER OF FREIGHT UNITS¹ PASSING THROUGH BELFAST AND LARNE PORTS, 2005-2009

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Belfast	397,124	403,564	412,613	390,583	363,695
Larne	359,427	360,140	371,547	353,402	324,404

1 Figures relate to the total number of freight units travelling through each port i.e. inbound and outbound combined.

Freight units are defined as containers, road goods vehicles, unaccompanied trailers, rail wagons, shipborne port-to-port trailers and shipborne barges.

Source: NI Ports Traffic publication, DETI

(ii) The Department for Regional Development's Annual Transport Statistics Report outlines the total number of passengers carried on all ferry services through the North's ports, including from Scotland, over a five-year retrospective period. The table below is an extract from the 2010 Report covering the period 2005-2009.

DOMESTIC SEA PASSENGERS AT NORTHERN IRELAND PORTS¹ 2005-2009

NI Port	GB Port	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Belfast	Heysham	6	5	4	3	3
Belfast	Liverpool	167	171	187	190	187
Belfast	Stranraer	1,235	1,212	1,217	1,104	1,101
Larne	Cairnryan	602	595	646	628	602
Larne	Fleetwood	62	59	61	58	54
Larne	Troon	214	208	231	206	213
Warrenpoint	Heysham	7	7	5	6	7
All NI Ports		2,293	2,257	2,351	2,195	2,167

NI Port	IOM Port	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Belfast	Douglas	18	18	22	21	19
Larne	Douglas ²	2	4	6	3	-
All NI Ports		20	22	28	24	19

Source: Maritime Statistics DfT

- 1 Belfast – Troon route has now been removed from the table as this route closed in December 2004.
- 2 Larne – Douglas route closed in June 2008.

Transport

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development how many people travelled by boat to Scotland from (i) Belfast; and (ii) Larne in each of the last 24 months.

(AQW 2460/11)

Minister for Regional Development: AQW 2460/11

The information requested is not compiled by the Department for Regional Development.

The Department's Annual Transport Statistics Report outlines the total number of passengers carried on all ferry services through the North's ports, including to Scotland, over a 5-year retrospective period. The table below is an extract from the 2010 Report covering the period 2005-2009.

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NI Port	GB Port	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
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NI Port	IOM Port	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Belfast	Douglas	18	18	22	21	19
Larne	Douglas ²	2	4	6	3	-
All NI Ports		20	22	28	24	19

Source: Maritime Statistics DfT

- 1 Belfast – Troon route has now been removed from the table as this route closed in December 2004.
- 2 Larne – Douglas route closed in June 2008.

Transport

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development how many people travelled by boat from Scotland to (i) Belfast; and (ii) Larne in each of the last 24 months.

(AQW 2461/11)

Minister for Regional Development: The information requested is not compiled by the Department for Regional Development.

The Department's Annual Transport Statistics Report outlines the total number of passengers carried on all ferry services through the North's ports, including from Scotland, over a five-year retrospective period. The table below is an extract from the 2010 Report covering the period 2005-2009.

DOMESTIC SEA PASSENGERS AT NORTHERN IRELAND PORTS¹ 2005-2009

NI Port	GB Port	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Belfast	Heysham	6	5	4	3	3
Belfast	Liverpool	167	171	187	190	187
Belfast	Stranraer	1,235	1,212	1,217	1,104	1,101
Larne	Cairnryan	602	595	646	628	602
Larne	Fleetwood	62	59	61	58	54
Larne	Troon	214	208	231	206	213
Warrenpoint	Heysham	7	7	5	6	7
All NI Ports		2,293	2,257	2,351	2,195	2,167

NI Port	IOM Port	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Belfast	Douglas	18	18	22	21	19
Larne	Douglas ²	2	4	6	3	-
All NI Ports		20	22	28	24	19

Source: Maritime Statistics DfT

- 1 Belfast – Troon route has now been removed from the table as this route closed in December 2004.
- 2 Larne – Douglas route closed in June 2008. This is the first time data on this route have been provided for the publication.

Larne and Belfast Ports

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development how much the Executive has invested in (i) Larne port; and (ii) Belfast port in each of the last five years.

(AQW 2462/11)

Minister for Regional Development:

- (i) Nil.
- (ii) Nil.

Infrastructure and Sea Travel Between Northern Ireland and Scotland

Mr A Ross asked the Minister for Regional Development what communication he has had with his counterpart in the Scottish Government regarding improving infrastructure and encouraging sea travel between Northern Ireland and Scotland.

(AQW 2463/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I met and discussed transport issues of mutual interest with Stewart Stevenson MSP, Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change on 30 April 2008. Matters addressed included transport links between the north of Ireland and Scotland and road and rail linkages to the Scottish ports at Loch Ryan.

Roles of Airports

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister for Regional Development what action he is taking to rationalise the roles of airports.

(AQW 2483/11)

Minister for Regional Development: There are no statutory powers available to me to regulate or intervene in the commercial roles of privately owned airports.

Devolution of Aviation Powers

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has had any discussions with the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister in relation to the devolution of aviation powers and the development of an aviation strategy.

(AQW 2484/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I have not yet had any such discussions with the First Minister and deputy First Minister. The British Government announced recently that it will start work in the New Year on development of a new aviation policy framework. I expect this to provide an opportunity for the Executive to consider what would be an appropriate aviation strategy for the region and how it should be delivered, including through devolution of aviation powers.

Installation of Water Meters

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister for Regional Development for an estimate of the cost of installing a water meter in every domestic property.

(AQW 2486/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that it estimates the cost of installing a water meter in all domestic properties would be in the region of £106 million. This estimate takes into account the number of meter ready chambers already installed at domestic properties since their use began in the 1990s and is based on current tendered rates for meter installation.

There are circumstances where it may not be possible to fit a meter such as shared supplies, engineering difficulties and obstructions.

Disabled Access at Portadown Railway Station

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he has had any discussions with Translink in relation to the inadequacy of disabled access in Portadown Railway Station, given that 400,000 journeys operate out of this station each year.

(AQW 2487/11)

Minister for Regional Development: The position regarding Portadown Railway Station has not changed since the answer I provided you on AQW 3152/10 on 11 December 2009. Translink had originally planned to complete the upgrade of Portadown station by 2013 but this has slipped to 2014 owing to

pressures on available capital budgets. It is envisaged that the project will be delivered in phases, with the first phase designed to improve access to the island platform by constructing a footbridge serviced by passenger lifts. In the current plan, which is subject to funding availability and approval, it is envisaged that work would start in 2013 and be completed in 2014. Whilst it is potentially feasible to bring the construction period forward, this will depend on prioritisation of projects depending on budget resources. It is considered that the facilities currently provided are functional but there are clearly plans to invest in the works required when this is feasible.

Road Projects

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister for Regional Development whether any road projects have been put on hold as a result of, or in anticipation of, budgetary cuts.

(AQW 2488/11)

Minister for Regional Development: This has been an exceptional year for my Department's Roads Service, in terms of the delivery of major road projects. In July 2010, I had the pleasure of opening the 12 km Newry Bypass, which is the final dual carriageway link between Belfast and Dublin. On 1 December 2010, I opened a further 21 km of high standard dual carriageway between Dungannon and Ballygawley. In addition, major schemes on the A26 at Ballymena and A29 at Carland Bridge have also been completed, and it is anticipated that the 7 km of dual carriageway from Maydown to the City of Derry airport will open to traffic before Christmas.

Development work is continuing on the programme of Strategic Road Improvements envisaged under the Investment Strategy, as set out in the Investment Delivery Plan for Roads. Implementation of these works will be dependent on the satisfactory progression through the statutory and procurement processes and the availability of funding.

I would also advise the Member that information on all completed and proposed schemes can be found in Roads Service's Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from the Roads Service internet site at the following web address: <http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-searchall.htm>

Road Openings

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the number of road openings in each of the last five years; (ii) the reason for each road opening; (iii) which body or individual requested the road opening; and (iv) what checks were carried out on the quality of the reinstatement of the roads.

(AQW 2490/11)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the number of road openings carried out in each of the last five years is outlined in the table below:-

Year	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Number of openings	51,480	52,455	41,230	35,530	36,260

These openings were for the purposes of placing apparatus, mainly belonging to utility companies, or for inspecting, maintaining, adjusting, repairing, altering or renewing that apparatus, and for changing its position or removing it. A breakdown of these road openings, by utility company and Rivers Agency, is provided in the table below:-

Utility Company	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Bord Gáis Eireann (NI)	0	75	1150	10	30
BT	4,393	3,860	3,717	3,260	3,260
Bytel	0	0	0	10	0

Utility Company	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Cable & Wireless	24	20	11	10	10
Eircom	3	20	30	60	60
Firmus Energy	0	0	0	1,760	1,020
NIE	3,335	3,090	3,013	3,220	3,670
NI Water	33,820	35,640	25,445	19,620	20,930
Phoenix Natural Gas	8,876	8,760	6,784	5,970	5,490
Rivers Agency	15	10	6	0	10
Virgin Media	1,014	980	1,074	1,610	1,780
Totals	51,480	52,455	41,230	35,530	36,260

Roads Service carries out random inspections of 10% of all openings during reinstatement, 10% upon completion of permanent reinstatement and a further 10% before the end of the reinstatement warranty period. Where defective reinstatements are found, further inspections are carried out to ensure the defects have been remedied. Core samples are taken from a random selection of 400 reinstatements each year, to ensure that the depths and types of materials used in the finished reinstatement are consistent with the required specification.

Roads Service inspectors also carry out additional routine inspections of reinstatements, to ensure that they are performing as required, and will carry out further inspections when they receive reports of defective reinstatements from members of the public.

Gritting of Roads

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development how many agency staff were employed by the Roads Service for road gritting in each of the last two years; and to detail the cost.

(AQW 2494/11)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service supplements its team of in-house drivers, with drivers sourced through an external contract, to deliver its Winter Salting service. The number of drivers sourced through the external contract and the associated costs, for each of the last two years, are contained in the table below:-

Roads Service – External Contract Gritting Drivers		
Financial Year	Number of Drivers used	Cost
2008-2009	62	£239,000
2009-2010	146	£565,000

Road Construction

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development how many kilometres of road have been constructed in the Strangford constituency since May 2007.

(AQW 2549/11)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that approximately 8.67 km of new road has been constructed in the Strangford constituency since May 2007.

This includes 2.67 km at the A20 Southern Distributor and A20 Frederick Street schemes in Newtownards. I can also advise that in the Ards Council area, Roads Service has overseen the construction, and adoption, of approximately 6.0 km of developer-led roads.

Cost of Laying Rail Track

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the cost of laying rail track on an alternative route to avoid recurrent rail disruption in the Upper Bann constituency caused by dissident republicans.

(AQW 2551/11)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink advise that the cost of a diversionary route such as that suggested cannot be estimated to any degree of accuracy without some form of feasibility study being undertaken. No such study has been commissioned to date.

Treatment of Pavements

Ms M Anderson asked the Minister for Regional Development, in light of recent weather conditions, what action his Department is taking to ensure the treatment of pavements near key locations, such as, schools and residential homes.

(AQW 2552/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I can advise the Member that during the most recent review of Roads Service's Winter Service policy, which was fully debated and accepted by the Assembly, it was recognised that the cost of salting footways was prohibitive and that the basic logistics of introducing such a service, which is largely a manual task, would make it impractical.

However, following the same review, it was proposed that, in periods of prolonged lying snow, the Department for Regional Development's Roads Service would seek to enlist the help of other agencies, such as District Councils, to assist in clearing busy town centre footways and pedestrian areas.

At that time, in consultation with NILGA, Roads Service drew up a draft legal agreement to try to facilitate this process and a small number of councils signed up to that agreement. Following last year's prolonged cold spell, I asked the Chief Executive of Roads Service to revisit this issue. Roads Service subsequently met with NILGA representatives and new proposals were drawn up. These were issued by NILGA to local Councils for consultation. Regrettably, NILGA has recently advised Roads Service that the new proposed arrangements were rejected by the local councils. However, Roads Service will still write to individual councils offering them the opportunity to sign up to partnering arrangements, as outlined in the new agreement.

With regard to schools, you will be aware that, following the severe wintry conditions experienced at the start of December 2008, I asked my Department's Roads Service to carry out an examination of its operational response to areas around rural schools. This examination resulted in Roads Service introducing enhanced communication arrangements and priority "secondary" salting to the 46 rural schools most affected by weather conditions throughout the winter of 2008/09.

It is appreciated that the list of sites benefiting from these actions is likely to change over time to include more schools, to take account of the extent to which adverse weather can affect different schools at different times.

At the time of the examination of Roads Service's operational response, the criteria for the provision of grit/salt piles and salt bins was also amended, so that these can be provided to affected schools, if requested.

Notwithstanding any of the above, I can confirm that Roads Service continues to provide approximately 3,500 salt boxes and 39,000 grit piles at strategic locations. These can be used by the general public, on a self help basis, to help prevent the formation of snow and ice on pavements and roads.

Residents Parking Schemes for the South Belfast Area

Mr C McDevitt asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to the residents parking schemes being considered for the South Belfast area, to detail (i) the number being considered; (ii) the location; (iii) the stage of development; (iv) the outcome of any community surveys; and (v) the expected date of introduction of each scheme.

(AQW 2569/11)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the four areas currently under consideration for Residents' Parking Schemes within the South Belfast are:

- Markets East of Cromac Street;
- Markets West of Cromac Street;
- Stranmillis village area; and
- Lower Malone.

Discussions with the residents in the Markets East and West areas are ongoing in a bid to identify acceptable scheme proposals. With regards the Stranmillis Lower Malone areas, discussions are well advanced with the respective residents' associations. The scheme proposals have been agreed and officials are now preparing to carry out the informal consultation exercise with the wider community.

Community surveys have not been carried out during the current round of consultation. However, the residents' associations, which represent the four areas, have indicated that there may be the required level of community support to allow residents' parking schemes to be implemented.

The timescale for implementing Residents' Parking Schemes within South Belfast will largely be dependent on the success of achieving support from each of the local communities in the areas under consideration, and on the availability of funding at the time.

Gritting Footpaths

Mr C McDevitt asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail his Department's policy on gritting footpaths.

(AQW 2607/11)

Minister for Regional Development: During the most recent review of my Department's Roads Service's Winter Service policy, which was fully debated and accepted by the Assembly, it was recognised that the cost of salting footways was prohibitive and that the basic logistics of introducing such a service, which is largely a manual task, make it impractical.

In the same review, it was proposed that, in periods of prolonged lying snow, Roads Service would seek to enlist the help of other agencies, such as District Councils, to assist in clearing busy town centre footways and pedestrian areas.

In consultation with the Local Government Association (NILGA), Roads Service drew up a draft legal agreement to try and facilitate this process. A small number of Councils signed up to this agreement, at that time.

Following last year's spell of wintry weather, I asked the Chief Executive of Roads Service to revisit this issue.

Since that time, Roads Service has been negotiating with NILGA and an amended model agreement has been developed. The main change is that the indemnity offered to Councils in the original agreement can now be extended to private sector organisations acting as the Council's sub-contractor or agent.

The partnering arrangements for the removal of snow and ice from town centre footways, outlined in the new model agreement, have not been endorsed by NILGA. However, Roads Service will still be offering Councils the opportunity to sign up to this agreement for the coming winter.

Notwithstanding the above, Roads Service continues to provide salt boxes and grit piles, at strategic locations. There are approximately 3,500 salt boxes and 39,000 grit piles at present, which can be used by the general public, on a self help basis, to help prevent the formation of snow and ice on pavements and roads.

Rolling Stock on the Bangor Railway Line

Mr C McDevitt asked the Minister for Regional Development what is the average age of rolling stock on the Bangor railway line.

(AQW 2608/11)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink have informed me that all vehicles operating on the Bangor line are Class 3000 and were built between 2004 and 2005; therefore the ages of these trains range from 5 to 6 years.

Draft Transportation Strategy

Mr C Lyttle asked the Minister for Regional Development when the draft Regional Transportation Strategy and Active Travel Strategy will be issued for public consultation.

(AQW 2659/11)

Minister for Regional Development: A revised overarching Regional Transportation Strategy is being prepared by my Department and a draft will be published for public consultation early in 2011. It will emphasise the importance of Active Travel.

My Department also established an Active Travel Forum earlier this year, to bring forward specific recommendations for an Active Travel Strategy to be published following publication of the draft Regional Transportation Strategy.

Director of Customer Services Delivery within NI Water

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) whether the Chief Executive of NI Water met any of the candidates for the post of Director of Customer Services prior to the interview process in December 2009; (ii) where these meetings took place; (iii) the purpose and format of these meetings; and (d) whether any member NI Water staff was involved in arranging the meetings.

(AQW 2683/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that (i) its Chief Executive met with a number of candidates for the role of Customer Operations Director (not Director of Customer Services) prior to the formal interview process in December 2009; (ii) the meetings with internal candidates took place in NIW premises and a meeting with an external candidate (that he had worked with in the past) took place in a local restaurant; (iii) the meetings were informal and no information was discussed that was not already in the public domain. No member of NIW staff was involved in arranging the meetings.

The Chief Executive has assured me that none of these meetings impacted on the outcome of the appointments process which was carried out in line with recognised procedures and resulted in a unanimous decision by a three person interview panel.

Grit or Sand for Roads

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development how much grit or sand for roads his Department has stored; and how long these reserves will last.

(AQW 2696/11)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that, as part of its pre-season preparations, salt barns, which are strategically placed in depots throughout the North, were filled to capacity.

This salt reserve, of around 65,000 tonnes, is more than enough to treat scheduled roads during a typical winter. However, approximately 29,000 tonnes of that reserve has been used so far this winter, leaving 36,000 tonnes still to be utilised.

Obviously, the length of time that these reserves will last is dependent on the severity of the weather during the remainder of the winter period. However, Roads Service has advised that arrangements are in place to replenish the depleted salt stocks, if necessary.

Road Infrastructure

Mr W Irwin asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he is setting aside additional resources to allow the immediate repair of damage to road infrastructure caused by adverse weather this winter.

(AQW 2777/11)

Minister for Regional Development: Following a series of internal adjustments, my Department's Roads Service has advised of its intention to allocate approximately £3.5 million to its Divisions across the North, to deal with the affects of the adverse weather, including winter service pressures.

However, it is anticipated that the amount of damage caused will be considerable. It is likely that it will take some time for all of the damage to be identified and repaired, subject to the availability of funds.

Department for Social Development

Trophies and Monetary Prizes for Staff Competitions

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development how much his Department and its arms-length bodies have spent on (i) trophies; and (ii) monetary prizes for staff competitions in each of the last three years.

(AQW 1767/11)

Minister for Social Development (Mr A Attwood): The Department for Social Development provides an in-house quarterly magazine, which includes competitions with voucher prizes. Due to budgetary constraints the magazine has not been produced since spring 2009. A breakdown of prizes in the last three years is provided below. This breakdown includes £50 for vouchers provided in a staff draw as an incentive to complete a survey on the staff magazine in 2007.

2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
£200	£200	NIL

The Housing Executive regularly rewards staff for outstanding performance and customer service. This includes the reward of both trophies and monetary awards to staff. The Housing Executive has advised that in relation to trophies it has spent the following monies in each of the last three years:-

2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
£5,027.14	£6,554.97	£10,741.89

The figures for (i) trophies relate to a piece of engraved Tyrone crystal for 11 awards, a perpetual shield or cup for four awards and a framed certificate. The figures also include costs for crystal given to staff who attained 25 years service.

In relation to monetary prizes the Housing Executive advised that it has spent the following monies in relation to staff competitions such as the Housing Executive's Annual Awards in each of the last three years:-

2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
£11,120	£18,650	£22,125

In relation to (ii) all winners, whether individual or members of a team, receive £250 each. All members of staff short-listed but who do not win an award receive a monetary award as follows:

- Where three members of staff are nominated as a team, each will receive £100.
- Where two members of staff are jointly nominated, each will receive £125.
- Individual members of staff short-listed will receive £250.
- Where a member of staff is nominated for more than one award, only one monetary award will be made.
- All staff nominated but who are not short-listed receive £25.

I have asked the Housing Executive to consider the appropriateness of this type of expenditure, particularly in the current economic climate. From 2011 onwards the Housing Executive has confirmed that awards will be scaled back by at least 50%.

Interns

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many interns his Department has facilitated in 2010/11; and how many it intends to facilitate in 2011/12.

(AQW 2287/11)

Minister for Social Development: The Department participates in the Queens University Belfast Internship Programme. The programme runs on an academic year basis and is administered by the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) on behalf of the Northern Ireland Civil Service. The role of DFP includes the allocation of placements to Departments.

The Department facilitated two placements in 2009/10, but was not allocated an intern under the scheme for the 2010/11 academic year, as there was no suitable intern placement(s) for the project work identified in the Department. In April 2011, Departments will be invited to participate in the scheme for the 2011/12 academic year. It is likely that the Department will again signal its willingness to facilitate a placement in that year.

Housing Maintenance

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development how much has been spent on housing maintenance in the Strangford constituency in each of the last three years.

(AQW 2347/11)

Minister for Social Development: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by parliamentary constituency. However, the table below details the Housing Executive's spend on housing maintenance in their Newtownards, Castlereagh and Downpatrick District Offices in each of the last three years.

Newtownards District	2007/08 (£k)	2008/09 (£k)	2009/10 (£k)
Planned Maintenance	631	1004	2176
Response Maintenance	1909	1889	2732
Total	2540	2893	4908

Castlereagh District	2007/08 (£k)	2008/09 (£k)	2009/10 (£k)
Planned Maintenance	1245	1814	1148

Castlereagh District	2007/08 (£k)	2008/09 (£k)	2009/10 (£k)
Response Maintenance	1875	2227	2810
Total	3120	4041	3958

Downpatrick District	2007/08 (£k)	2008/09 (£k)	2009/10 (£k)
Planned Maintenance	708	307	560
Response Maintenance	1539	1693	2032
Total	2247	2000	2592

Fuel Poverty

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development how many people are currently in fuel poverty in each constituency.

(AQW 2348/11)

Minister for Social Development: The 2009 House Condition Survey was predicated on the assumption that the Review of Public Administration would have resulted in the creation of new council areas. The attached table shows the levels of fuel poverty by proposed council area, the information is not available by constituency.

FUEL POVERTY - PROPOSED COUNCIL AREA

	Not in Fuel Poverty		In Fuel Poverty	
	No	%	No	%
East Belfast	17990	54.8	14840	45.2
	4.6		4.9	
South Belfast	19290	61.6	12010	38.4
	5.0		4.0	
West Belfast	10600	46.3	12300	53.7
	2.7		4.1	
North Belfast	19700	53.6	17050	46.4
	5.1		5.6	
Total Belfast	67580	54.6	56200	45.4
	17.4		18.6	
Derry City and Strabane	30520	56.9	23080	43.1
	7.8		7.6	
Armagh City and Bann	38730	53.7	33390	46.3
	10.0		11.0	
Lisburn and Castlereagh	44760	61.8	27680	38.2
	11.5		9.2	

	Not in Fuel Poverty		In Fuel Poverty	
	No	%	No	%
Newry and Down	29430	50.9	28380	49.1
	7.6		9.4	
Antrim and Newtownabbey	30610	57.6	22550	42.4
	7.9		7.5	
Ards and North Down	37090	56.4	28660	43.6
	9.5		9.5	
Causeway Coast	32470	56.2	25280	43.8
	8.3		8.4	
Fermanagh and Omagh	22000	57.2	16450	42.8
	5.7		5.4	
Mid Antrim	30460	56.8	23210	43.2
	7.8		7.7	
Mid Ulster	25500	59.4	17430	40.6
	6.6		5.8	
Total	389150	56.3	302310	43.7
	100.0		100.0	

Housing Benefit

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development how much has been overpaid in housing benefit in each of the last three years; and how many people have been detected committing housing benefit fraud in the same period.

(AQW 2349/11)

Minister for Social Development: The amount of Housing Benefit overpaid in each of the last three years as a result of fraud, customer and official error is as follows:-

- 2007/08 £13.7m
- 2008/09 £14.1m
- 2009/10 £17.19m

In relation to the number of people detected committing housing benefit fraud, the figures below are the number of people who had overpayments arising from fraud investigations which resulted in either a sanction or an adjustment to the Housing Benefit award.

- 2007/08 86
- 2008/09 54
- 2009/10 130

The number of people who had Housing Benefit adjusted as a result of data matching exercises (which identified claimants who failed to notify the Housing Executive of a change in circumstances) was:-

- 2007/08 1588*
- 2008/09 984*

■ 2009/10 1883*

* These did not meet the definition of fraud cases; however they formed an important part of the Housing Executive's counter fraud activity.

Finally, in 2009/10, 648 Housing Benefit overpayments were raised following fraud investigations launched by other benefit authorities, for example by the Social Security Agency.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the current number of Houses in Multiple Occupation in each constituency.

(AQW 2421/11)

Minister for Social Development: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not routinely collate information by parliamentary constituency. The Housing Executive maintains a database of known and potential Houses in Multiple Occupation, by Council area, as shown in the table below:-

Council Area	Number of HMOs
Derry	464
Limavady	15
Coleraine	745
Ballymoney	32
Moyle	45
Larne	46
Ballymena	83
Magherafelt	25
Cookstown	34
Strabane	31
Omagh	118
Fermanagh	62
Dungannon & South Tyrone	111
Craigavon	105
Armagh City & District	127
Newry & Mourne	93
Banbridge	27
Down	110
Lisburn	110
Antrim	44
Newtownabbey	178
Carrickfergus	37
North Down	289

Council Area	Number of HMOs
Ards	57
Castlereagh	72
Belfast	6202

Note:

It is likely that there are additional Houses in Multiple Occupation not on the Housing Executive database where landlords have not advised when they created Houses in Multiple Occupation. The Housing Executive has revised the Registration Scheme so that all Houses in Multiple Occupation are now specified for registration. More comprehensive figures will therefore be available as the registration process is completed over coming years.

Return on Investment from Town Centre Regeneration Projects

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister for Social Development to outline (i) the measures used to assess the return on investment from town centre regeneration projects; and (ii) for his assessment of the success of each project.

(AQW 2434/11)

Minister for Social Development: My Department carries out a number of exercises to measure the success of any of its schemes. Evaluation measures are in place to assess the 3 main elements of town centre regeneration work delivered by my Department; i.e. Comprehensive Development schemes, Environmental Improvement schemes and Urban Development Grant schemes, and these are outlined below. All projects are subject to the completion of an Economic Appraisal; each project is assessed and monitored against the achievement of the objectives through a Post Project Evaluation. The Post Project Evaluation compares the outturn against estimated costs and benefits and generally reviews success in achieving objectives and is usually carried out one year after practical completion of a scheme although larger capital projects will have a full evaluation between 3 and 5 years after project completion.

Comprehensive Development

Comprehensive Development contributes to the regeneration of towns and cities through a process of land acquisition, maintenance and disposal.

Indicators of success will vary from project to project but usually include:

- Removal of dereliction;
- Improvement of the physical environmental;
- Job creation;
- Stimulation of local enterprise; and
- Provision of retail, office, industrial/commercial, housing and other facilities.

Environmental Improvement

Public Realm schemes are designed to enhance the local streetscape, open spaces and urban landscape through the use of high quality street surfaces, ornamental street furniture, amenity lighting, decorative signage, public art and semi-mature trees with decorative guards for immediate impact.

Indicators of success will vary from project to project but would usually include:

- Metres of streetscape improved;
- Increase in footfall; and
- Number of man hours of work created in construction industry.

Urban Development Grant

These are discretionary grants used for promoting job creation, inward investment and environmental improvement, by developing vacant, derelict or underused land or buildings in priority areas. It aims to encourage economic, physical and social regeneration of disadvantaged urban areas in Belfast and Derry.

Leverage is the most effective performance indicator and is monitored on a monthly basis. Other indicators such as jobs, floor area, increase in rates and property values are monitored and assessed via the Post Project Evaluations.

Assessment of Individual Projects

In answer to part ii of your question, DSD have conducted numerous projects and providing an individual assessment of success, on each, would be disproportionate from both a time and cost perspective.

However, one recent example of an assessed project was DSD's Victoria Square Comprehensive Development Scheme. The Development has seen a £400m private sector investment into Belfast City Centre, encompassing 800,000 sq ft of new retail, leisure and living space. Approximately half of the retailers in Victoria Square were new to Belfast. 6389 workers were employed on the site during the construction phase from 2004 to March 2008. By December 2009 2436 people were employed in the retail, leisure and support services within Victoria Square. This is a highly acclaimed project and showcases my Departments commitment to achieving social, environmental and economic prosperity in Northern Ireland.

Redevelopment of the Village area of South Belfast

Mr A Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the redevelopment of the Village area of South Belfast.

(AQW 2526/11)

Minister for Social Development: An independently chaired Community Design Team has been formed comprising of 10 local residents. It is seen as a vehicle for Village residents to monitor and discuss progress relevant to the regeneration of the area.

The Community Design Team met with Housing Executive officials in October 2010 where the draft concept plan for the area was discussed and a phasing plan for clearance of the redevelopment area was agreed. Members of the Team have also attended a sustainability conference and visited other housing developments in the city.

The Team are due to meet again with Housing Executive and Housing Association officials in mid December.

Housing Associations

Mr C Boylan asked the Minister for Social Development (i) which voluntary Housing Associations have ceased to be independent and have merged with another voluntary Housing Association; (ii) how many housing units each of these merged Associations own; and (iii) how many voluntary Housing Associations have agreed to join procurement groups to date.

(AQW 2539/11)

Minister for Social Development:

- (i) No Housing Associations have ceased to be independent and merged with another in 2010.
- (ii) Nil in view of answer (i)
- (iii) 25 Housing Associations have agreed to join procurement groups to date.

Housing Associations

Mr C Boylan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of voluntary Housing Associations that (i) currently exist; (ii) existed three years ago; and (iii) traded at a net surplus in their most recent financial audit.

(AQW 2568/11)

Minister for Social Development:

- (i) There are currently 33 Registered Housing Associations; (ii) the number of Registered Housing Associations that existed three years ago was 35; and (iii) 28 out of 33 Registered Housing Associations traded at a net surplus in their most recent financial audit.

Please note there are 6 unregistered Housing Associations that are affiliated with Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations. The Department has no regulatory authority over these Associations.

Cold Weather Payments

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister for Social Development which weather station readings are used to determine whether Cold Weather Payments should be made in the (i) BT45; and (ii) BT80 postcode areas.

(AQW 2649/11)

Minister for Social Development: Cold Weather Payments are triggered when the average temperature is, or is forecast to be, zero degrees centigrade or below over 7 consecutive days, from November to March. Readings taken at the Aldergrove weather station determine if payments should be made for both the BT45 and BT 80 postcode areas.

For winter 2010/2011 payments will continue to be made at the increased level of £25 for each occurrence.

Cold Weather Payments

Ms M Anderson asked the Minister for Social Development which postcode areas have benefited from Cold Weather Payments in the last two years; and whether his Department will consider reforming the administration of these payments to ensure that they are paid to all those in need as soon as temperatures fall to zero as opposed to an average of zero over several days.

(AQW 2650/11)

Minister for Social Development: Cold Weather Payments are intended to provide help to vulnerable people during periods of exceptionally cold weather. Payments are triggered when the average temperature is, or is forecast to be, zero degrees centigrade or below over 7 consecutive days, from November to March.

In 2008/09 one Cold Weather Payment was made to qualifying customers living in post code areas BT 24-28, 30-35, 45-48, 60-68, 70-71 and 78-82 (Castledearg and Katesbridge). The total amount paid was £1.84 million.

In 2009/10, three Cold Weather Payments were made to qualifying customers living in all post code areas whilst those living in post code areas BT24-28, 30-35, 45-48, 60-71, 74-82 and 92-94 (Castledearg, Enniskillen and Katesbridge) received five payments. Total payments amounted to £16.87 million.

Starting this winter, the number of weather stations used in the Scheme has been increased from 5 to 7 which will allow areas previously represented by a single weather station to be sub-divided.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Winding-up Allowance

Mr T Elliott asked the Assembly Commission to (i) list all Members who have resigned from the Assembly since 2007; and (ii) to detail how much each Member received in a Winding-up Allowance. **(AQW 2516/11)**

The Representative of the Assembly Commission (Mr P Ramsey): Winding-up allowance is payable under the provisions of the Allowances to Members of the Assembly Act (Northern Ireland) 2000 to former Members of the Assembly. Although the Assembly Question relates to former Members who have resigned, Winding-up allowance is also payable to former Members who do not stand for re-election to the Assembly or are not returned as a Member.

The table below shows the details of those Members who have resigned from the Assembly since April 2007 and the amount of Winding-up allowance that has been claimed in the respective financial year in which claims were paid.

TABLE 1: FORMER MEMBERS - WINDING UP ALLOWANCE PAID

	2009/10	Paid to Date 2010/11	Total
Burnside, David	£15,789.09		£15,789.09
Robinson, Iris	£12,820.39		£12,820.39
Brolly, Francie	£15,286.97		£15,286.97
Hanna, Carmel	£8,960.55	£1,086.80	£10,047.35
Durkan, Mark		£4,545.81	£4,545.81
Dodds, Nigel		£11,544.76	£11,544.76
McCrea, Rev William		£15,484.09	£15,484.09
Paisley Jnr, Ian		£15,828.74	£15,828.74
Shannon, Jim		£15,932.26	£15,932.26
Simpson, David		£10,480.79	£10,480.79
Donaldson, Jeffrey		£15,949.20	£15,949.20
Long, Naomi		£8,990.59	£8,990.59
Total	£52,857.00	£99,843.04	£152,700.04

Written Answers Index

Department for Regional Development	271	Water Meters	271
A8 Road	276		
Additional Train Services	278	Department for Employment and Learning	225
B8 Route at Main Street, Hilltown	273	Artworks	229
Belfast to Londonderry Train Service	279	Belfast Metropolitan College	225
Belfast to Londonderry Train Service	279	Belfast Metropolitan College	226
Brown Tourist Road Directional Signs	272	Belfast Metropolitan College	228
Capital Projects in the Strangford Constituency	272	Bowman Aluminium Systems Ltd, Banbridge	228
Cost of Laying Rail Track	286	Capital Projects in the Strangford Constituency	227
Derry to Dublin Bus Route	279	Education Maintenance Allowance	230
Devolution of Aviation Powers	283	Graduate Internship Programmes	227
Director of Customer Services Delivery within NI Water	288	Irish Language Classes for Staff	230
Disabled Access at Portadown Railway Station	283	Irish-medium Further Education Programmes	226
Draft Transportation Strategy	288	Joanne Stuart's Report 'Review of Variable Fees and Student Finance Arrangements'	229
Freight and Non-freight Customers	280	Joanne Stuart's Report 'Review of Variable Fees and Student Finance Arrangements'	229
Grit or Sand for Roads	288	Officer Training Corps	229
Gritting Footpaths	287	Rapid Response NI	228
Gritting of Roads	285	Teaching Irish Language in the Further Education Sector	226
Infrastructure and Sea Travel Between Northern Ireland and Scotland	283	Department for Social Development	289
Installation of Water Meters	283	Cold Weather Payments	296
Interns	271	Cold Weather Payments	296
Jordanstown Train Station	276	Fuel Poverty	291
Jordanstown Train Station	276	Houses in Multiple Occupation	293
Larne and Belfast Ports	282	Housing Associations	295
NI Water: Bills	273	Housing Associations	296
Northern Ireland Water: Redundancies	273	Housing Benefit	292
Parking and Traffic Issues in Whiteabbey and Jordanstown	275	Housing Maintenance	290
Pay and Display Car Parks	275	Interns	290
Pay and Display Car Parks	275	Redevelopment of the Village area of South Belfast	295
Residents Parking Schemes for the South Belfast Area	287	Return on Investment from Town Centre Regeneration Projects	294
Road Construction	285	Trophies and Monetary Prizes for Staff Competitions	289
Road Infrastructure	289		
Road Openings	284	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	201
Road Projects	284	Agriculture: Bureaucracy	206
Roads Infrastructure in the Strangford Constituency	277	Artworks	204
Roles of Airports	283	Brucellosis Outbreak in Keady	202
Rolling Stock on the Bangor Railway Line	288	Brucellosis Outbreak in Keady	202
Single Tender Actions and Contract Extensions	271	Brucellosis Outbreak in Keady	202
Staff Suspensions	274	Budget: DARD	205
Transport	281	Dogs (Amendment) Bill	207
Transport	282		
Treatment of Pavements	286		
Upgrade of the Coleraine to Derry Railway Line	274		

EU Quotas: Farming and Fishing	207	Project Kelvin	233
Horses	201	Project Kelvin	234
Interns	202	Promoting Exports	233
Northern Ireland Executive's European Office in Brussels	204	Rose Energy's Proposed Incinerator at Glenavy	236
Northern Ireland Scrapie Plan	203		
Potatoes	208	Department of Finance and Personnel	241
Rural Development Programme	208	Account NI and HR Connect	243
Rural Development Programme Funding	205	Agenda NI	247
Scrapie	203	Artworks	249
Scrapie	203	Capital Projects in the Strangford Constituency	245
Townland Names	206	Civil Service Overtime	241
Woodland	208	Dublin Government's Current Financial Situation	243
Woodland Creation	204	Economic Situation in the Republic of Ireland	244
Woodland Creation	205	HR Connect	241
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure	209	Interns	243
Agenda NI	209	Lone Pensioner Allowance	248
Capital Projects in the Strangford Constituency	209	National Asset Management Agency	244
HMS Caroline	211	Presbyterian Mutual Access Fund	248
Libraries in North Antrim and East Antrim	209	Projects Part-funded by the Government of the Irish Republic	245
Northern Ireland Executive's European Office in Brussels	212	Unpaid Domestic Rates	246
Department of Education	212		
Agenda NI	213	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety	249
Connor House Preparatory School, Bangor	215	Antrim Area Hospital Accident and Emergency Unit	252
Glenwood Primary School, Belfast	224	Arms-length Bodies: Funding	250
Guidance for Transfer	225	Attempted Suicide	257
Irish Language Qualifying Examination	214	Budget: DHSSPS	263
Primary Languages Programme	216	Cancer Patients	259
Primary School Teachers	216	Capital Projects	253
Proposed Closures	215	Capital Projects and Large-scale Maintenance Projects	251
Realignment of GCE A Level Equivalents	213	Card Before You Leave Appointment System	259
Springhill Primary School, Belfast	224	Card Before You Leave Appointment System	260
Strandtown Primary School	215	Card Before You Leave Appointment System	260
Substitute Teachers	213	Causeway Hospital: Appointments	261
Sure Start Programme	212	C Difficile	257
		C Difficile	257
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment	230	Cherrytree House of the Royal Victoria Hospital for Sick Children	258
Agenda NI	236	Child Cystic Fibrosis Patients	249
Attracting Jobs	231	Child Cystic Fibrosis Patients	258
Business Start-ups in the Strangford Constituency	230	Child Cystic Fibrosis Patients	258
Capital Projects in the Strangford Constituency	235	Crisis Homes for People Suffering from Mental Health Problems	253
Irish Language Classes for Staff	236	Funding for Quangos	255
Moratorium on Lignite	236	Funding Provided to Derg Valley Care Ltd, Castledearg	254
Moratorium on Lignite	236		
Presbyterian Mutual Society	235		
Presbyterian Mutual Society	235		
Presbyterian Mutual Society	235		
Presbyterian Mutual Society	235		

Health Service Electronic and Manual Processes	254	Unwell Prisoners	264
Home Start Funding	260	Victims of Violent Crime	270
Hospital-acquired Infections: Northern Health and Social Care Trust	262	Department of the Environment	237
Interns	251	Agenda NI	238
Limavady Fire Station	261	Artworks	239
Mental Health	262	Capital Projects in the Strangford Constituency	237
NHS: Training	261	Disposal of Poultry Litter	240
NHS: Training	263	Downpatrick Divisional Planning Office	240
Nursery and Day Care Provision	259	Downpatrick Divisional Planning Office	240
Private Healthcare Companies	254	Irish Language Classes for Staff	239
PSNI Intervention	260	Lignite Mining	239
Redevelopment of Whiteabbey Hospital and the Mid-Ulster Hospital	251	Lignite Mining in South Antrim	240
Residential Centre for Substance Abuse	251	Local Government	238
South Tyrone Hospital, Dungannon	255	Local Government Reform and Planning Reform Programmes	238
Staff Expenses	254	New Developments	237
Staff Salaries	249	Newtowncrommelin	237
Staff Salaries	250	Planning Applications	237
Staff Salaries	253	Strategic Projects Unit	239
Staff Travel Claims	252	Northern Ireland Assembly Commission	297
Waiting Time for Occupational Therapists	253	Winding-up Allowance	297
Western Health and Social Care Trust: Care Packages	262	Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister	195
Department of Justice	263	Capital Projects in the Strangford Constituency	197
Agenda NI	266	Childcare Strategy	196
Capital Projects in the Strangford Constituency	266	Child Poverty Strategy	200
Civil Service Pay Award	269	Child Poverty Strategy	201
Community Restorative Justice Ireland and Northern Ireland Alternatives	264	Children's Issues	200
Community Restorative Justice Ireland and Northern Ireland Alternatives	265	Community Relations Council	196
Community Restorative Justice Ireland and Northern Ireland Alternatives	265	Government: Revenue	199
Cost of Transporting Prisoners to and from Court	265	Interns	196
Equal Pay Claim	266	Investment Strategy	201
Equal Pay Claim for PSNI Staff	269	Joint Ministerial Committee	199
Fire Alarms in Prisons	268	Legal Services	195
Improving Crime Detection Rates	269	Maze Development Corporation	197
Legal Aid Bill	266	Northern Ireland Electricity: Network	199
Loughinisland Report	263	North-South Postal Arrangements	198
Medical Staff Employed by the Prison Service	263	Phoenix Project Offices	197
Pay Award for PSNI Civilian Staff	267	Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration: Education	198
Pay Award for PSNI Civilian Staff	268	Representations to Sir Jon Shortridge by Senior Civil Servants	197
Pension/Gratuity Payments to Royal Ulster Constabulary Reservists	270		
Police Ombudsman	268		
Sean Gerard Cahill Wrongly Released from Prison	270		
Under 18 and Over 65: Convicted of Criminal Offences	267		



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