

Written Answers to Questions

Official Report (Hansard)

Friday 11 March 2011

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Contents

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister1

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development16

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure21

Department of Education26

Department for Employment and Learning.....39

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment46

Department of the Environment.....47

Department of Finance and Personnel54

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.....57

Department of Justice71

Department for Regional Development.....75

Department for Social Development84

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 11 March 2011

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Draft Savings Delivery Plans

Dr S Farry asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether their Department will publish their draft Savings Delivery Plans within one week of the publication of the draft Budget 2011 -2015; and whether it will include details of departmental savings measures and their anticipated impact.

(AQW 3203/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister (Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness): OFMDFM published its draft Savings Delivery Plans, which included details of departmental savings measures and their anticipated impact, on 1 February 2011.

European Microfinance Scheme, PROGRESS

Mr D O'Loan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the promotion and uptake of the European microfinance scheme, PROGRESS, which was launched in October 2010.

(AQW 4630/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The first call for expressions of interest under the new EU PROGRESS Microfinance Facility was launched in October 2010. The aim of this initiative is to increase the volume of finance available to the disadvantaged, unemployed and micro-companies, particularly those in the Social Economy, who would otherwise find it difficult to access finance from the usual sources to start-up or to expand a small business.

Junior Minister Kelly and Junior Minister Newton first became aware of the proposed new initiative in 2009 in the context of the Barroso Task Force for Northern Ireland and were kept informed of its adoption by the European Council and the European Parliament during 2010. Junior Ministers issued a Press Release on 11 October highlighting the new call for expressions of interest with the aim of encouraging microfinance providers to consider making applications. Information is also provided on the Departmental websites of OFMDFM, DETI (including Invest NI) and DEL. Applicant organisations must apply directly to the European Investment Fund (EIF), and not through national agencies.

Junior Ministers held an information meeting for a cross-section of potential applicant organisations including the banks, the Credit Unions, Enterprise NI and The Prince's Trust in Stormont on 11 November 2010 to promote awareness and encourage uptake. Subsequently, the Prince's Trust, the Credit Unions and Enterprise NI have declared an interest in the current call. The Prince's Trust expects to have a draft application ready by end-February/early-March and the other organisations will take advice in light of the Prince's Trust experience.

An official from our Department is in contact with the EIF on the proposed application and the EIF has agreed to provide guidance and advice on the application procedure. We have been informed that, to date, two contracts have been signed under the present call, one in the Netherlands and one in Belgium.

The current call is in the form of microfinance guarantees and new calls for different types of financial instruments, e.g. equity instruments, are expected during 2011/2012. These may prove to be of more

interest to certain organisations than the current guarantee call. The EIF, which manages the facility on behalf of the EU, will not provide loans directly to individuals or companies but rather, it will offer the different forms of financial support to micro-finance providers to encourage them to increase lending to these target groups.

PROGRESS is estimated to lever approx 500 million Euro over three years to credit providers throughout all 27 EU Member States. No pre-set amounts have been earmarked for different regions so it is entirely up to micro-finance organisations to apply to the EIF for the support on offer.

If organisations within Northern Ireland do apply and are successful, then this information will be passed on to potential beneficiaries to alert them to the fact of increased lending capacity in those bodies.

Junior Ministers and officials will continue their engagement with the lending bodies to explore every opportunity under PROGRESS to assist the unemployed and to promote enterprise in these difficult times.

Appointments and Nominations

Mr G Campbell asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the number and names of individuals that have been (i) appointed; and (ii) nominated to (a) public bodies; and (b) arms-length bodies since May 2007.

(AQW 4633/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: We have made 64 appointments (including 12 re-appointments and 8 nominations) to public bodies and arms length bodies since 8 May 2007. The details are as follows:

Public Body	Appointees	Date Appointed	Date Left
Commissioner for Children & Young People	Ms P Lewsley	08/01/2011 (R)*	
Commission for Victims & Survivors	Ms P MacBride	02/06/2008	
	Mr B McAllister	02/06/2008	
	Mrs B McDougall	02/06/2008	
	Mr M Nesbitt	02/06/2008	17/02/2010
Economic Research Institute of NI Ltd	Dr I McMorris	19/08/2008 (R)*	24/02/2010
Illex Urban Regeneration Company Ltd	Mr T J Fanning	01/04/2008	08/12/2009
	Mr M Heaney	28/07/2009 (R)*	
	Mr F A Hewitt	01/07/2010	
	Dame G M M Keegan	01/07/2010	
	Mrs M Lee	01/07/2010	
	Mr J McDaid	28/07/2009 (R)*	
	Mr C C McKenna	01/07/2010	
	Mr M McNulty	01/04/2008	
	Sir R W McNulty	01/10/2007	
	Sir R W McNulty	01/10/2010(R)*	

Public Body	Appointees	Date Appointed	Date Left
Ilex Urban Regeneration Company Ltd	Professor R J Sterling	01/10/2007	24/07/2009
Strategic Investment Board Ltd	Mr D Dobbin	01/10/2008 (R)* Board Member	31/03/2009 Board Member
	Mr D Dobbin	01/04/2009 Acting Chairperson	17/11/2009 Acting Chairperson
	Mr D Dobbin	18/11/2009 Chairperson	
	Mr F A Hewitt	01/12/2010	
	Ms G McAteer	01/11/2009	
	Mr A J McFerran	01/11/2009	
	Mr D Rooney	01/11/2009	
	Mr C Thompson	01/12/2010	
	Mr D J Waugh	01/11/2009	
Planning Appeals Commission	Mr A Allen	02/01/2008	
	Mr A Allen	02/01/2011 (R)*	
	Mr D K Beggan	01/09/2008	
	Mr A R Beggs	15/09/2008	
	Mr G S Carlisle	01/09/2008	
	Mr M J Culshaw	01/09/2008	
	Mr A J Dale	01/09/2008	
	Ms R Daly	15/09/2008	
	Ms J de-Courcey	02/01/2008	
	Mr M W Evans	01/09/2008	
	Mr I B Fernie	05/04/2010 (R)*	
	Mrs S J Glover	01/09/2008	
	Mr D A Hainsworth	01/09/2008	
	Mrs S E Hesketh	01/09/2008	
	Mrs S M Holden	01/09/2008	
	Mr N P Howard	21/03/2008 (R)*	
	Mr M C Hurley	01/09/2008	
Mrs A R Jones	15/09/2008		
Mr J B Martin	28/04/2008		

Public Body	Appointees	Date Appointed	Date Left
Planning Appeals Commission	Mr J H Martin	01/09/2008	
	Ms D M MacGabhann	01/09/2008	
	Mr A L McCooley	28/04/2008	
	Mr D F McCoy	01/09/2008	
	Mrs B McGlinchey	07/01/2008	
	Mr S G O'Hare	28/04/2008	
	Miss P O'Donnell	07/01/2008	
	Mr D Storrie	01/09/2008	
	Mr M Watson	07/01/2008	

Public Body	Appointees as a Result of a Nomination	Date Appointed	Date Left
Economic Research Institute of NI Ltd	Mr J McKenna	26/02/2010	
	Mr D Prince	26/02/2010	09/11/2010
Ilex Urban Regeneration Company Ltd	Mr K Alexander	09/03/2009	31/07/2009
	Professor D Heenan	01/08/2009	
	Dr Mrs A McGinley	08/09/2009	
	Mrs V Watt	01/10/2008	28/02/2011
Strategic Investment Board Ltd	Mr D Gavaghan	21/07/2007 (R)*	30/04/2010
	Mr R Hannam	04/01/2009 (R)*	

Arms Length Body	Appointees	Date Appointed	Date Left
Attorney General for Northern Ireland	Mr J Larkin QC	24/05/2010	
Commissioner for Public Appointments	Mrs F Huston	01/08/2008 (R)*	

* (R) denotes re-appointment

Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People

Mr P Butler asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their assessment of the recent review of the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People.

(AQW 4648/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The report outlined some areas for improvement. Officials will be working closely with the Commissioner's Office to address these issues of concern.

Strategic Investment Board

Mrs D Kelly asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to list all the suppliers who were paid £100,000 or less by the Strategic Investment Board in (i) 2007/08; (ii) 2008/09; and (iii) 2009/10. **(AQW 4727/11)**

First Minister and deputy First Minister: Suppliers paid £100,000 or less by the Strategic Investment Board for the period requested is set out in the table below.

07/08 Financial Year Supplier	£K Total
Office of Government Commerce	70.5
Belfast Health & Social Care Trust	69.6
Primary Care Foundation	67.2
TMD Supply Chain	61.0
Partnerships UK PLC	54.0
Capita Resourcing Ltd	53.6
Frank Mulgrew	46.1
British Telecommunications	46.0
BTW Shields Ltd	45.4
London Economics Limited	44.6
Kilsharan Ltd	42.8
Central Procurement Directorate	42.4
Belfast Education & Library Board	37.9
Armagh City & District Council	37.8
C Cunningham	35.6
Penna PLC	34.0
Julie D Browne	31.4
Ballykeel Environmental	29.7
ESRI Ireland Ltd	27.7
VFM Consultancy	25.0
South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust	24.1
I.E.H.	21.7
Ernst & Young LLP	17.6
BMF Business Services	17.2
EMcG Solutions	15.0
International Centre for Regional & Local Development	15.0
Enviros Consulting	11.8
Travel Services (IOM)	9.9

07/08 Financial Year Supplier	£K Total
ERINI Ltd	9.0
Social Research Centre	6.2
Ulster Bank Limited GPC	5.9
Institute of Waste Mgmt	5.9
L'Estrange & Brett	5.9
City Hotel	3.3
Arthur Cox	2.6
Global Professional Media	2.4
Chandler KBS	2.2
Smi Group Ltd	2.2
Carlson Wagonlit UK Ltd	2.0
Coyne Associates	1.7
Bevan Brittan	1.5
MarCam Business Solutions	1.5
Emap Communications	1.4
Landsdowne Hotel	1.3
Excite Exhibition & Display	1.1
Achilles Information Ltd	0.8
Verbal Arts Centre	0.7
Denise Wheatley	0.6
Prestige Catering	0.5
Banner Business Services	0.5
Value Cabs	0.4
AV Browne Advertising Ltd	0.3
Vodafone Ltd	0.2
Hays Office Support	0.2
Comber Commercial Centre	0.2
The Clinton Centre	0.2
Picture House	0.2
Leslie Stannage Design	0.1
Café Avoca	0.1
Rocwell	0.1
W&N Services Ltd	0.1

07/08 Financial Year Supplier	£K Total
Belfast City Council	0.0
Total Under £100k	1095.5
Non Suppliers (internal salary costs/ grant aid)1	70.4
Grand Total	1165.9

08/09 Financial Year Supplier	£K Total
Ballykeel Environmental	105.0
GVA Grimley	90.4
TMD Supply chain	86.3
Belfast Education & Library Board	67.6
Land & Property Services	66.6
Penna	50.7
FGS McClure Watters	46.0
C Cunningham	40.0
University of Ulster	40.0
Geronimo	36.5
Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company	36.2
Office of Government Commerce	34.6
Eversheds	31.7
L'Estrange & Brett	31.1
Driver Jonas	29.0
DHSSPS	25.5
Atkins	25.0
Kilsharan	23.1
South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust	21.4
Deloitte	19.2
Comedia	18.2
WYG Management Services	17.1
PUK	15.5
Addleshaw Goddard	13.5
Institute of Civil Engineers	12.8
CPD	11.1
ASM Horwarth	9.4

08/09 Financial Year Supplier	£K Total
International Capital Partnerships	7.8
BMF Business Services	4.9
BDO Stoy Hayward	3.3
Experian Ltd	2.9
Eyeparks	2.9
North Down Borough Council	1.3
British Telecom	1.1
Achilles	0.7
Primary Care Foundation	0.2
Belfast Health & Social Care Trust	-1.3
ERINI Ltd	-9.0
Total Under £100k	1,018.4
Non Suppliers (internal salary costs/ grant aid)1	181.0
Grand Total	1199.4

09/10 Financial Year Supplier	£K Total
Cora Systems	68.0
Sport NI	60.2
Northern Ireland Transport Holding company	55.8
The Paul Horgarth Company	50.0
Stratagem	48.5
DSD	48.4
Northern Ireland Housing Executive	48.4
Kilsharan Ltd	44.5
ESRI	43.2
FGS McClure Watters	38.3
Venturi	30.0
Office of Government Commerce	24.6
Ordinance Survey	18.8
Driver Jonas	15.9
Oxford economics	15.1
Royal Society Ulster Architects	12.5
Kindred Agency	12.3

09/10 Financial Year Supplier	£K Total
DHSSPS	12.2
BTW Shiels	8.2
Addleshaw Goddard	8.0
Nigel Pantling	6.0
Land & Property Services	2.3
Grafton Recruitment	2.1
Phil Smyth Photography	2.1
PUK	1.8
Ecole Polytechnique Federale	1.6
CPD	1.2
Comedia	-0.3
Belfast Metropolitan college	-1.7
Total Under £100k	677.8
Non Suppliers (internal salary costs/ grant aid) 1	263.8
Grand Total	941.6

- 1 Includes staff on payroll whose costs were allocated to project and support from other non-supplier organizations such as the Belfast Area Partnership. These costs are included by SIB in their annual accounts within the total payments to suppliers under £100,000.

Please note rounding applies to all tables

Strategic Support Fund

Mr T Elliott asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) all the organisations that applied to the Strategic Support Fund; (ii) the organisations that were successful; and (iii) the amounts awarded to the successful applicants.

(AQW 4787/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: There were two separate application windows for victims and survivors groups to apply to the Strategic Support Fund. The first application window was for those groups wishing to apply for an 18-month programme of funding from October 2010 to March 2012. The second window was for those groups wishing to apply for a 12-month programme of funding from April 2011 to March 2012. Groups could choose to apply to either funding programme, but not to both.

Those groups that applied for 18-months' funding are listed in the table below. The Table identifies those groups that were successful and the amounts awarded. All awards are subject to the availability of funding. Applications to the second window are still under consideration and it would not be appropriate to publish details of those groups until decisions have been taken.

GROUPS APPLYING FOR 18-MONTH STRATEGIC SUPPORT FUNDING (1 OCTOBER 2010 TO 31 MARCH 2012)

Group	Outcome	Amount Awarded
Ashton Community Centre – Bridge of Hope	Successful	£772,073.20

Group	Outcome	Amount Awarded
Cunámh	Successful	£265,745.00
WAVE Trauma Centres	Successful	£1,924,804.00
Relatives for Justice	Successful	£982,282.51
Lenadoon Counselling	Successful	£137,816.61
Colin Community Counselling	Successful	£113,415.67
Pat Finucane Centre	Successful	£19,198.00
Corpus Christi Counselling Centre	Successful	£229,612.81
Centre for Creative Energy	Successful	£120,114.00
New Life Counselling	Successful	£375,015.81
Tara Centre	Successful	£254,847.80
Victims and Survivors Trust (VAST)	Successful	£230,756.08
Koram Centre	Successful	£314,217.84
Holy Trinity Centre	Successful	£57,506.03
Firinne	Successful	£226,203.33
NI Centre for Trauma & Transformation	Successful	£537,600.46
Cookstown Voluntary Welfare Group	Unsuccessful	–
USCA	Unsuccessful	–
Conflict Trauma Resource Centre	Unsuccessful	–
Justice for the Forgotten	Unsuccessful	–
Nexus Institute	Unsuccessful	–
Saver/Naver	Unsuccessful	–
FAIR	Unsuccessful	–
Ballymurphy – Centre for Health & Well Being	Unsuccessful	–

Maze/Long Kesh Development Unit

Mr T Elliott asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) for an update on the work of the Maze/Long Kesh Development Unit, including details of the Peace III funding proposal submitted on behalf of their Department; and (ii) why resources are required to build a Conflict Transformation Facility at the site.

(AQW 4791/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Programme Delivery Unit (PDU) is currently procuring expertise to produce a development framework and implementation strategy for the site. The PDU is also taking two key projects forward, the Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre along with, potentially, the relocation of the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society to the site.

In parallel and to ensure there is no loss of momentum pending the creation of the Corporation, the PDU continues to prepare the site for future development including progressing the essential remediation programme required to clear the site of contaminants and assessing utility requirements for the site.

PEACE III funding offers the prospect of financial support for capital projects under measure 2.2 entitled 'Key Institutional Capacities to be Developed for a Shared Society'. The Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre fits the criteria and the PDU submitted an £18.2m EU funding application on 14 January 2011.

Maze/Long Kesh Site

Mr T Elliott asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for a breakdown of the anticipated spend by their Department on the development of the Maze/Long Kesh site, as detailed in their budget.

(AQW 4793/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The anticipated spend on the development of the Maze/Long Kesh site as detailed in the OFMDFM budget is outlined in the table below.

	Year 2011-12 £m	Year 2012-13 £m	Year 2013-14 £m	Year 2014-15 £m	Totals £m
Resource	1.782	1.781	1.780	1.778	7.121
Capital	1.880	2.000	6.000	11.500	21.380
Total	3.662	3.781	7.780	13.278	28.501

S.A.V.E.R. N.A.V.E.R. Organisation

Mr D Bradley asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in light of the revelations in the Spotlight Programme on 22 February in relation to alleged fraud by the S.A.V.E.R. N.A.V.E.R. organisation, what action their Department is taking to investigate the allegations and allay public concerns.

(AQW 4827/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: In July 2010 the Community Relations Council (CRC) was notified of suspected fraud in the victims group SAVER NAVER.

Payments were suspended at that point and a forensic audit into the group's financial affairs was commissioned.

The case was referred to the PSNI in August 2010 for criminal investigation. We cannot comment on any matters pertaining to the allegations against this group during the course of an active PSNI investigation.

We asked for a wider review of funding to the victims sector last September. This was commissioned through CRC with a final report due by the end of March.

Report into the Commissioner for Children and Young People

Mr P Butler asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when the PricewaterhouseCoopers report into the Commissioner for Children and Young People will be published.

(AQW 4840/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The final review report is available on request, and will shortly be published on our website.

Ulster Defence Regiment Memorial

Mr P Butler asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister why the Equality Commission did not initiate an investigation under Paragraph 11 of schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 in relation to (i) Lisburn City Council's decision to allow an Ulster Defence Regiment memorial on Council owned land; (ii) the equality impact assessment of the UDR memorial undertaken by the Council; and (iii)

Lisburn City Council's equality scheme and its commitment to promote good relations and equality of opportunity.

(AQW 4844/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: Any decision to initiate an investigation under Paragraph 11 of schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 is a matter for the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

Suicide Prevention

Ms S Ramsey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline where suicide prevention sits within their Department's Programme for Government targets.

(AQW 4878/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: PSA8 "Promoting Health and Health Inequalities", Indicator 12 "By 2011 achieve a reduction of at least 15% in the suicide rate" is the responsibility of the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety and is also a Key Goal within the current Programme for Government. Whilst not our direct responsibility, we are very concerned that the suicide rate remains high and the recent increase has been particularly prevalent in areas of economic deprivation where suicide rates are twice that in non-deprived areas.

We, together with Junior Ministers, have met a number of community groups who have been severely affected by the impact of suicide. Junior Ministers also sit on the DHSSPS-led Ministerial Co-ordination Group on Suicide Prevention.

We will ensure that the Executive does everything it can to identify and address the reasons why someone would want to take their own life.

Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Mr P Weir asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the outcome of their meeting with the representatives of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency at Bregenz House in Bangor.

(AQW 4898/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: Lady Hermon invited us to visit our only remaining Coastguard Centre at Bregenz House, Bangor on 17 February 2011.

The visit was very useful in understanding the vital role played by MRCC Belfast which represents the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and is an integral part of multi-agency resilience structures here. The Coastguard keeps watch for maritime and inland waterways emergencies and co-ordinates the response to them. It also organises and manages volunteer Coastguard Rescue Teams.

As a result of our visit to Bregenz House, we are much better informed about the issues specific to here and this has helped to inform our response to the Coastguard Modernisation consultation. Our response will provide information about local factors which we are hopeful will influence the decisions made by Whitehall Ministers and we will continue to make the case to Whitehall for retaining a 24/7 coastguard presence here.

St Patrick's Barracks in Ballymena

Mr D McKay asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the future plans for the St Patrick's Barracks in Ballymena; and how these plans are progressing.

(AQW 4911/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The former St Patrick's barracks site in Ballymena is one of four former military bases earmarked for transfer to the Executive under the Hillsborough Castle Agreement. The Agreement states that the sites (with the exception of lands in Omagh for an education campus) would be sold to meet resource pressures.

We are aware that the Department for Social Development has plans to turn 47 former military dwellings at the St. Patrick's site into social housing, working in partnership with a housing association.

We are making every effort to ensure that the Hillsborough Castle Agreement is implemented properly in accordance with its aims, which would allow this and other projects to proceed.

Draft Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration

Mr C Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when their Department's analysis of the consultation responses to the draft Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration will be published.
(AQW 4983/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The draft Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Programme was consulted on during the period July to October 2010.

The consultation attracted 290 written responses and included the wealth of views and material gathered from 11 public meetings and 15 targeted sectoral meetings.

The level and detail of the public responses reflects the importance and regard in which this subject is held. It is therefore appropriate that all the complex and extensive views of consultees are given proper consideration. We continue to give this matter careful and detailed attention and will make a decision on publication in due course.

Regional Childcare Strategy

Mr C Lyttle asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the status of the Regional Childcare Strategy; and what arrangements have been made to maintain Playboard administered funding for school-aged childcare projects beyond March 2011.
(AQW 5001/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The economic and policy appraisal report on Childcare was issued as an Executive paper on 11 February 2011 and, as a cross-cutting issue, is scheduled to be discussed by the Executive Committee on 10 March 2011.

The paper outlines the report's key findings and once a way forward is agreed, the next phase of the work on the development of a Childcare Strategy will begin.

It is our intention that a lead department for this policy area will be identified and that the Childcare Strategy would then be developed with lead from that department in collaboration with the Child Poverty sub-group and the Executive Sub-Committee on Poverty and Social Inclusion, where it has been agreed that this sub-group will now sit.

You will be aware that our Department has been co-ordinating a package of funding, through the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People, to enable those after school projects originally supported by the Children and Young People's Funding Package via PlayBoard to continue whilst work on the future delivery of childcare was progressed.

With the current funding package due to end on 31 March 2011, we are currently considering a number of options in regard to the future funding of the projects beyond that date, but no decisions have yet been taken. However, we expect to make an announcement on this issue shortly.

Non-Departmental Public Bodies and Arm's-Length Bodies

Mr P Weir asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to list all the Non-Departmental Public Bodies and Arm's-Length Bodies and their estimated annual cost.
(AQW 5023/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: As at March 2011, OFMDFM has responsibility for a total of 7 Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) and 8 Arms Length Bodies (ALBs).

The annual resource cost for 2010/11 of these NDPBs and ALBs is estimated at a total of £34 million as outlined in the table below.

OFMDFM - NDPBs & ALBs and their Estimated Annual cost for 2010/11	£'000
NDPBs:	
The Economic Research Institute of Northern Ireland	925
Equality Commission for Northern Ireland	6,985
Strategic Investment Board	6,363
Ilex Urban Regeneration Company	2,473
The Commissioner for Children and Young People for Northern Ireland	1,784
The Commission for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland	1,126
Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission	1,471
NDPB Total	21,127
ALBs	
North/South Ministerial Council Joint Secretariat	789
Planning Appeals Commission and Water Appeals Commission	2,375
Community Relations Council for Northern Ireland	3,654
Attorney General Northern Ireland	1,018
Office for the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland	135
Older People's Advocate	297
Northern Ireland Memorial Fund	4,441
Sustainable Development Commission	161
ALB Total	12,870
Grand Total	33,997

Costs exclude Capital

St Andrews Agreement

Mr A Maginness asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the actions that are outstanding from the St Andrews Agreement.

(AQO 1200/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: As part of the implementation of the Hillsborough Castle Agreement, the Executive agreed on 11 February 2010 to establish a Working Group to identify all matters contained in the St Andrews Agreement which had not been faithfully implemented or actioned, and to make recommendations on how progress could be made on those matters which had not been actioned.

Following preliminary consultations with other parties in the Executive, we circulated to Party Leaders on 3 June 2010 a schedule of specific issues from the St Andrews Agreement which parties believe have not been faithfully fulfilled and remain outstanding.

That schedule formed the basis of the work to be taken forward by the St Andrews Agreement Working Group which met on a number of occasions and commissioned a draft report for its consideration and agreement which would include draft recommendations on how progress could be made on those matters listed within that Schedule. Work is ongoing to prepare this draft report.

In line with the Hillsborough Castle Agreement, the Working Group will forward its report, when agreed, to us for consideration.

City of Culture 2013

Mr P Ramsey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the meetings his officials have held with the Derry-Londonderry UK City of Culture 2013 organisation committee.

(AQO 1201/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: Officials from Ilex, our urban regeneration company dedicated to the regeneration and transformation of the City, has worked in close co-operation with Derry City Council representatives over the last year to prepare the winning bid for the City of Culture. Ilex continues to work closely with the new organisation committee. A regular series of liaison meetings are held every Tuesday of the core management group, every fortnight with the management team and monthly with the Interim Board or as required. Furthermore, extensive briefings have been given to a wide range of departments and organisations.

Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration

Dr S Farry asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the outcome of the consultation on the draft Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration.

(AQO 1202/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The draft Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Programme is under development, following the consultation process which closed on 29 October.

The public consultation afforded everyone the opportunity to comment on the range of issues covered within the draft CSI Programme. Although the consultation formally closed on 29 October, officials granted one more week to allow for late returns to be included in the analysis of the findings.

The consultation attracted 290 written responses and included the wealth of views and material gathered from 11 public meetings and 15 targeted sectoral meetings which were held at a range of locations during September and October 2010.

The draft report on the analysis of the consultation responses was completed in early January 2011. Officials are considering the findings and proposals for the ongoing development of the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration which will be passed to us shortly for our deliberation. We were heartened by the interest, effort and engagement of all those who took part in the consultation and we want to give the views of all those people due consideration as we look at how we will build on and strengthen the document. We intend to have all the responses published on the website in due course along with the results of the analysis.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Rural Development Programme

Mr P Frew asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in regards to the Rural Development Programme, for her definition of a (i) mobile infrastructure; (ii) basic service; and (iii) recreational activity. [R]

(AQW 3778/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (Ms M Gildernew): As you will be aware as a member of North East Region (NER) Joint Council Committee, guidance from my Department on defining (i) mobile infrastructure; (ii) basic service; and (iii) recreational activity are already in the public domain. This is set within the Axis 3 Operating Rules which as you know LAGs and JCC use in the implementation of their local rural development strategies and assessment of applications.

For ease of access a fully up to date version of the Axis 3 Operational Rules is maintained on the Department's web site at

<http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/rural-development/rdp-campaign/rdp-downloads.htm>

I understand that NER has already offered funding to promoters for items of mobile infrastructure (including boats and has also offered funding to 8 promoters for assistance under Measure 3.4 (Basic Services). If an individual case arises where there is doubt about admissibility your Administrative Council can give advice and failing that Departmental officials are available to assist.

Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster

Mr A Bresland asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in light of her decision to stop funding the Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster, how she plans to support young people in rural areas.

(AQW 4453/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: I was very aware of the considerable concern that was raised and the many submissions received in response to my proposal to stop funding the Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster.

I met the YFCU recently to hear their views and discuss the potential value that a programme of work targeted at specific areas could deliver. After carefully considering the budget pressures on my Department, I was content to continue funding the YFCU for a further three years, subject to them providing a suitable business proposal covering the specific areas we agreed.

I am confident that this new programme of work will complement the existing support available to young people in rural areas through the education and training programmes available at CAFRE, and the 'listening ear' and signposting service provided by Rural Support.

In addition to the above, within the NI Rural Development Programme a key criterion for submission of the local development strategy by each of the seven clusters as an application for Axis 3 Rural Development Programme funding was that the strategy must address the needs of children and young people, and must be informed by the Ten year strategy and action plan for children and young people. It is expected that at least 5% of any funding awarded will be devoted to projects focussed in this area including rural youth groups. Examples of groups with letters of offer for Axis 3 NIRD funding which involve clear social benefits for youth are Greenhill YMCA and The Boys Brigade.

The rural challenge programme, as part of the anti-poverty and social exclusion programme provided grant assistance to 21 'Children and Young People' projects to a range of community organisations, sectoral organisation, youth groups and GAA clubs to tackle local issues impacting young people. I have made proposals to raise overall rural poverty and exclusion expenditure to around £16 million over the next four years. My department will play a leading role in identifying how this funding can be put to best use, including looking at how we might best support children and young people facing social exclusion in rural areas.

Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster

Mr A Bresland asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, apart from the Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster, what other means do young people in rural areas have to learn valuable skills and meet new people.

(AQW 4454/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Young people in rural areas can avail of a wide range of opportunities provided by a range of statutory and voluntary bodies to learn skills and meet people. These include school and further education provision, sports clubs, interest or hobby groups, church based activities plus other uniformed and non uniformed youth organisations.

The College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) provides a range of programmes designed to meet the needs of young people who want to work in the land-based industry. These education and training opportunities are available at locations throughout the north with most of the provision for new entrants delivered on the College Campus sites at Greenmount, Loughry and Enniskillen.

During their time at College many students attend on a residential basis where they learn the vocational skills and knowledge required for their future, and also have a great opportunity to meet, socialise and develop friendships. On completion of their studies many students join the Greenmount Association through which they maintain lifelong friendships with their peers.

In addition to the above, within the NI Rural Development Programme a key criterion for submission of the local development strategy by each of the seven clusters as an application for Axis 3 Rural Development Programme funding was that the strategy must address the needs of children and young people, and must be informed by the Ten year strategy and action plan for children and young people. It is expected that at least 5% of any funding awarded will be devoted to projects focussed in this area including rural youth groups. Examples of groups with letters of offer for Axis 3 NIRD funding which involve clear social benefits for youth are Greenhill YMCA and The Boys Brigade.

The rural challenge programme, as part of the anti-poverty and social exclusion programme provided grant assistance to 21 'Children and Young People' projects to a range of community organisations, sectoral organisations, youth groups and GAA clubs to tackle local issues impacting young people. An example is a project with Crossmaglen Rangers GFC, which aims to deliver a youth training programme across the themes of Health and Well-being and Social and recreational opportunities through training young people to train and educate other young people on these issues. I have also made proposals to raise overall rural poverty and exclusion expenditure to around £16 million over the next four years. My department will play a leading role in identifying how this funding can be put to best use, including looking at how we might best support children and young people facing social exclusion in rural areas.

Sale of Puppies

Mr C Lyttle asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many people who breed pure bred, mongrel or designer puppies pay tax on the profits made from the sale of the puppies.

(AQW 4807/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Dog breeding establishments must be registered annually with local Councils who are responsible for inspecting these establishments.

Under Section 52 of the Dogs Order 1983, local Councils are required to provide my Department with statistics relating to the enforcement of the legislation, including the number of dog licences issued and the number of breeding establishments registered. In 2010, Councils reported that 228 breeding establishments were registered in the north of Ireland.

However, these statistics do not include any information on business operations, such as income or taxes paid, as the Councils are not required to collate these details. I am therefore unable to provide this information.

Draft PPS 16 - Tourism

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail her Department's, and any of its agencies, input into the formulation of Draft PPS 16 - Tourism.

(AQW 4872/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: My Department has been actively involved with DOE throughout the development of Draft PPS16 to ensure complementarity between this planning policy and my department's policies. In particular, the relevant measures within the Rural Development Programme and the potential contribution from the Forest Service Recreation and Social Use Strategy and its ongoing work with the Tourist Board.

I have also written to Minister Poots advising that a rural proofing statement should be included within the consultation documentation to demonstrate how rural areas were considered in the development of this policy.

New Headquarters

Mr G Campbell asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, pursuant to AQW 4320/11, whether she will ensure that areas such as Claudy will be considered as a potential location for her Department's new headquarters, given its rurality as well as the good access routes from the North West to the rest of Northern Ireland.

(AQW 4877/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: It is not possible for me to provide assurances at this time in relation to which rural areas will or will not be considered as a potential location for the proposed new DARD headquarters. This aspect will be examined in due course as part of a relocation project. As I outlined to you in my earlier answer to AQW 4320/11 part of the remit for this project will include formulating criteria to determine the location of the proposed new headquarters.

Legislation

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail all legislation, since May 2007, that has gone through, or is going through, the Assembly which devolves powers or responsibilities from her Department to local government authorities.

(AQW 4881/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: A list of all legislation made by my Department which devolves powers or responsibilities to local government authorities since May 2007 is set out below

Title of Legislation	Powers / responsibilities devolved to local Government	Date legislation came /to come into operation	Additional Information
The Olive Oil (Marketing Standards) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008 (S.R. 2008 No.189)	District Councils to enforce this food related legislation in respect of production, labelling and marketing.	20 June 2008	

Title of Legislation	Powers / responsibilities devolved to local Government	Date legislation came /to come into operation	Additional Information
The Local Government (Constituting a Joint Committee) Order (Northern Ireland) 2008	This order provides for the establishment of seven rural development joint council committees to deliver Axes 3 and 4 of the NI Rural Development Programme 2007 – 2013	14 February 2009	
The Wine Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 (S.R. 2009 No. 354)	District Councils to enforce these Regulations in so far as they relate to retail sale.	1 December 2009	These regulation replace the Common Agricultural Policy (Wine) (England and Northern Ireland) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 in so far as they relate to the north of Ireland
Water Environment (Floods Directive) Regulations (NI) 2009	Compliance with EU Floods Directive	14 December 2009	The Regulations place a statutory duty on all responsible authorities, including District Councils, to exercise their relevant functions in a manner which ensures compliance with the requirements of the EU Floods Directive. The Regulations also place obligations on public bodies, if requested, to provide information and assistance to the Department in implementing these Regulations in the north of Ireland.
The Dogs (Licensing and Identification) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 S.R. No. 396 (Replaces Schedule 8 of S.R. 1983 No. 378)	Legislation sets the colour for Licence discs. Administered by local Councils	1 January 2010	This legislation is made every 4 years

Title of Legislation	Powers / responsibilities devolved to local Government	Date legislation came /to come into operation	Additional Information
Diseases of Animals Act 2010	District Councils are given power to inspect, cleanse and disinfect vehicles	12 March 2010	Legislation amends the Diseases of Animals (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 (NI 22)
The Eggs and Chicks Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010	<p>The Regulations are enforced by DARD and District Councils.</p> <p>District Councils are required to enforce the provisions of the EU Regulations as they apply to the retail sale of eggs within their area</p>	28 April 2010	The 2010 Regulations replaced the Eggs and Chicks (No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008 (S.R. 2008 No. 451) which contained the same enforcement provisions. The 2008 (No. 2) Regulations replaced the Eggs and Chicks Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008 (S.R. 2008 No. 98) which contained the same enforcement provisions.
The Beef and Veal Labelling Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010	<p>These Regulations are enforced and executed by DARD or any District Council, or by DARD and any District Council acting jointly.</p> <p>District Councils are required to enforce the provisions of the EU Regulations in relation to beef labelling in retail premises within their area.</p>	17 May 2010	The 2010 Regulations replaced the Beef and Veal Labelling Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 (S.R. No. 2) which contained the same enforcement provisions. The 2009 Regulations replaced the Beef Labelling (Enforcement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2001 (S.R. No. 271) which also contained the same enforcement provisions.
Welfare of Animals Act (NI) 2011	Enforcement of welfare provisions with respect to "other animals" and licensing and registration functions by local Councils.	March/April 2011	Powers will not commence until 12 months after Royal Assent is received (March/April 2012).

Title of Legislation	Powers / responsibilities devolved to local Government	Date legislation came /to come into operation	Additional Information
Dogs (Amendment) Act 2011	Builds on enforcement responsibilities devolved to local authorities by the Dogs (NI) Order 1983 to introduce a small number of new offences and improve resourcing of local authority dog warden services (by increased licence fees and fixed penalties.)	March 2011 – Summer 2012 (some secondary legislation required)	Key powers and responsibilities for dog control (dog licensing and control of stray dogs) were devolved to local authorities in 1983. The Dogs (Amendment) Act 2011 does not substantively add to or subtract from these.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Libraries

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether he is considering alternative community uses for libraries which are threatened with closure.

(AQW 4836/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (Mr N McCausland): It is the responsibility of Libraries NI to dispose of any of their property if it were to become vacant. In line with established procedure this would initially involve consideration of transfer within the public sector which provides an opportunity to find an alternative community use for the building.

Libraries

Mr G Campbell asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, of the new libraries which have opened since 2008, what was the percentage change in the number of people who used each new library in its first year compared to the number of people who had used the library, that was previously in that location, in the year before the new library opened.

(AQW 4963/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Four new libraries have opened since 2008: Antrim Library, Bangor Library, Dungiven Library and Grove Library.

As there are different ways to measure the number of people who use libraries it is recommended that the overall increase is best represented by showing all four measures: New Borrowers, Issues, Public Access Terminals (PAT) and Visits.

Please refer to the tables in the attached annex.

Annex 1**Antrim Library****OPENED IN ITS NEW LOCATION IN FEBRUARY 2010.**

Measurement	Feb 2009-Jan 2010	Feb 2010-Jan 2011	Percentage Change
New Borrowers	696	2,644	+280%
Issues	34,224	75,901	+122%
*PAT Sessions	15,680	34,248	+118%
Visits	85,222	114,646	+35%

Bangor Library

Opened in November 2008 in its Hamilton Road location. The library was in temporary accommodation in the Flagship centre while the building work was carried out.

Measurement	Nov 2007-Oct 2008	Nov 2008-Oct 2009	Percentage Change
New Borrowers	1,713	6,347	+271%
Issues	110,244	220,380	+100%
PAT Sessions	24,718	45,599	+84%
Visits	144,144	281,833	+95%

Dungiven Library

Opened in September 2010. As the new library has only been open for six months, attached is a six month comparison for the same period the previous year.

Measurement	Sep 2009-Feb 2010	Sep 2010-Feb 2011	Percentage Change
New Borrowers	104	434	+317%
Issues	6,339	12,274	+94%
PAT Sessions	856	1,479	+73%
Visits	5,307	9,656	+82%

Grove Library

Opened in Grove Well-being Centre in May 2008. Previously it was called Skegoneill Library and located on an adjacent site.

Measurement	May 2007-Apr 2008	May 2008-Apr 2009	Percentage Change
New Borrowers	187	850	+355%
Issues	15,116	25,674	+70%
PAT Sessions	5,046	9,888	+96%
Visits	45,924	67,035	+46%

*PAT = Public Access Terminals

Proposed Ulster-Scots Academy

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the business case for the proposed Ulster-Scots Academy including the terms of reference, the Academy's purpose and any potential locations.

(AQW 5004/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The Business Case for the Ulster-Scots Academy was completed in 2004. An update of this has been prepared to review and refresh the Academy concept and to move the work forward in a way which reflects the needs of the Ulster-Scots community. The Terms of Reference for the review of the business case are attached.

This update provides me with a strategic and operational context for the development of an Academy. As this policy is a work in progress, I cannot comment further at present, however I plan to make an official announcement on the way forward before the Assembly rises. Business Case Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for this assignment require early work conducted (including an economic appraisal) to be updated in accordance with HM Treasury (The Green Book) and Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) guidance – The Northern Ireland Guide to Expenditure Appraisal and Evaluation (NIGEAE).

The nature of the Terms of Reference implies that much of the background analysis presented in this report has been taken from earlier work however, further analysis and in-depth challenge has been undertaken to ensure the outcome is consistent with the most up to date and accurate information and evidence available. In particular this business case will respond to key issues raised during previous work on the subject including:

- the need to minimise potential duplication of effort and investment across the wider Ulster-Scots community in Northern Ireland, specifically in relation to the Ulster-Scots Agency;
- maximising the impact of investment made in the area of Ulster-Scots by ensuring a more competent and strategic approach to development and also that the Ulster-Scots community feel engaged and part of the proposed solution; and
- ensuring that the proposed solution represents value for money and is accepted by key stakeholders.

Gilford Library

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what consideration was given to the impact of renovation work and structural repairs to the viability of Gilford Library.

(AQW 5076/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: This is fundamentally an operational issue for Libraries NI and the future of Gilford library is subject to public consultation as part of its ongoing strategic Review of the libraries estate.

The criteria being used to identify the viability of public libraries are:

- Fit for purpose;
- Capable of delivering on the vision of Libraries NI;
- In the right location; and
- Sustainable.

I would refer you to the Libraries NI website for additional background information on this Review.

Football: North Antrim

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much funding his Department has invested in football in the North Antrim Constituency since 2007.

(AQO 1217/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Sport Northern Ireland is responsible for the development of sport in Northern Ireland including the distribution of funding. Since 2007, Sport NI has awarded £1,101,980 to projects in the North Antrim Constituency and specifically in the Ballymena and Ballymoney areas.

Ulster Scots: West Tyrone

Mr A Bresland asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what action his Department has taken over the past four years to assist the Ulster-Scots community in West Tyrone to develop its culture and heritage.

(AQO 1218/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure does not fund community groups directly however support and funding has been provided by the Department's ALBs and through the Community Festival Funding for Ulster-Scots cultural and heritage projects in West Tyrone.

The Ulster-Scots Agency has awarded grants to the value of over £190,000 for a wide range of projects to assist the Ulster-Scots community in West Tyrone including funding for music tuition, dance tuition, Ulster-Scots festivals, week long Ulster-Scots summer schools and after schools clubs for children.

The Arts Council of NI provides funding to the Ulster-Scots Community Network which, although based in Belfast, works throughout Northern Ireland. The organization includes a Development Officer with responsibility for West Tyrone, Londonderry and Donegal.

World Police and Fire Games

Mr T Lunn asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for his assessment of Northern Ireland's state of readiness and capacity to host the World Police and Fire Games in 2013.

(AQO 1220/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: A Company Limited by Guarantee which will be sponsored and monitored by my Department has been established to deliver the Games in August 2013. I have appointed the Chairman and Directors of the Company and a shadow meeting of the Board was held on 21 February 2011.

The former 2013 Stakeholder Group, that managed the 2013 World Police and Fire Games project until a delivery vehicle was established, had identified and taken forward work on the various workstreams, including: Volunteering, Tourism, Legacy, Transport and Logistics and Sport. This will now be the responsibility of the Company.

Although no final decisions have been made in regard to the location of the sporting venues for the 2013 Games, an advertisement was placed in the Belfast Telegraph by Sport Northern Ireland on behalf of the Stakeholder Group on Friday 2nd July 2010 seeking expressions of interest from venue owners who wished to host sporting events.

Sport Northern Ireland has completed Stage One of the Expression of Interest exercise. Venues both within and outside of Belfast have met the standard and a process to select the venues is currently underway. As yet no final decisions have been made. The new 50m Swimming Pool in North Down Borough Council is scheduled for completion in June 2012 and is under consideration as a venue for the swimming in 2013.

Belfast City Council, on behalf of the Board of Directors, are working in conjunction with the Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau on how best to meet the accommodation needs of all the visitors

expected in August 2013. Options, such as the siting of cruise liners as floating hotels, are being considered, should there be a shortfall in accommodation available for guests.

Irish Football Association

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what progress has been made in relation to the resolution of the management and governance issues associated with the Irish Football Association.

(AQO 1221/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The IFA's current Review of Corporate Governance is being carried out by an Independent Review Panel. The Panel commenced their work during November 2010 and have now got to a stage where they have developed a framework for consultation with stakeholders. The Panel have identified a number of broad areas, including the role and composition of the Board, compliance with the UK Corporate Governance Code, the role of Council, the positions of President and Chairman of the Board and the Committee structure and responsibilities. The Panel which met with the IFA Executive Board on Thursday 24 February 2011, also made a presentation to the IFA Council on 28 February. It will now hold a series of meetings with other stakeholders throughout Northern Ireland in the forthcoming weeks with a view to producing a final report to present to the Executive Board for approval. This will then enable proposals to be put to an Extraordinary General meeting.

I regard the approach now being undertaken by the IFA to the corporate governance of the Association as positive. I will nevertheless continue to take a close interest in the way in which Review develops; in particular the need to ensure that the outcomes clearly demonstrate that the IFA will be fit for purpose.

Sports Facilities: North Down

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what action he is taking to promote the sharing of sports facilities in the North Down area.

(AQO 1222/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Responsibility for taking action to promote the sharing of sports facilities in the North Down area is a matter for the owners of those facilities and North Down Borough Council. However, under my sports strategy, Sport Matters, I am promoting the provision of shared spaces for sport across all areas and amongst all people in Northern Ireland. I have also been encouraging all stakeholders to identify opportunities for greater sharing of facilities and have, for example, been in on-going discussion with the Minister of Education, Catriona Ruane MLA, about the possibility of sharing and opening up school sports facilities to the community.

In addition to this, Sport Northern Ireland, which is responsible for the development of sport including the distribution of funding, requires all successful applicants to its capital programmes to ensure that its facilities are accessible to the wider community and that no person is denied the right to equal access to their sports facilities on grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religious belief, political opinion, marital status, age or having or not having dependents. This condition also applies to any facilities in the North Down area which receive funding from Sport Northern Ireland. Over the last 3 financial years SNI has awarded almost £15.5m to capital projects in the North Down area which are designed, in part, to help promote shared access to sports facilities across the community.

Salmon and Sea Trout Stocks

Mr A McFarland asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for an update on the plans to replenish salmon and sea trout stocks in rivers.

(AQO 1284/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: DCAL, in co-operation with the Loughs Agency, has developed a Salmon Management Strategy for Northern Ireland and the cross border catchments. The strategy is informed with scientifically robust management tools to meet statutory, national and international commitments on an on-going basis. The document is available on the North Atlantic Salmon

Conservation Organisation (NASCO) website at http://www.nasco.int/pdf/implementation_plans/IP_NIreland.pdf

A major element of the DCAL strategy for salmon conservation is the protection, restoration and enhancement of habitats common to the requirements of salmon and sea trout. Details of the activities associated with this are contained in the Focus Area Report on Protection, Restoration and Enhancement of Salmon Habitat available at http://www.nasco.int/pdf/implementation_plans/IP_NIreland.pdf.

DCAL works in partnership with the Rivers Agency and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency in the context of the EU Water Framework Directive River Basin Management Plans, which take an integrated and holistic approach to the protection, improvement and sustainable use of the water environment. DCAL provides conservation advice to competent authorities that regulate activities with potential to impact on salmonid fishes and their habitats.

The River Bush Salmon Station has facilities for salmonid fish supportive breeding programmes. The Department supports the work of a number of angling clubs in this regard, provided that these take heed of advice to safeguard the genetic integrity of salmonid populations.

Department of Education

Behavioural Difficulties

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Education how many school children, under 8 years old, display behavioural difficulties in each Education and Library Board area.

(AQW 4089/11)

Minister of Education (Ms C Ruane): Ní bhailíonn mo Roinn an t-eolas seo.

My Department does not collect this information.

My Department has committed resources including written guidance to assist schools and the Education and Library Boards to develop practices which focus on improving the climate for learning for all pupils. Guidance includes the publication "Promoting and Sustaining Good Behaviour: A Discipline Strategy for Schools" which sets out a support model of progressively more intensive interventions for pupils whose behaviour is challenging.

Schools can access support and advice from their local Education and Library Board on appropriate behaviour programmes and, in certain cases, short term support for individual pupils; general advice on developing whole school approaches and teachers classroom management skills; and immediate advice in response to serious incidents.

Languages Strategy

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education when she intends to publish the Languages Strategy commissioned by her Department.

(AQW 4123/11)

Minister of Education: Choimisiúnaigh mo Roinn tuarascáil ina bhfuil moltaí a d'fhéadfadh straitéis nuatheangacha a fhoirmiú, agus tá dréacht den tuarascáil sin, atá a chóir críochnaithe, faighte againn ó Lárionad Ábhar um Theangacha, Theangeolaíocht agus Léann Ceantair Ollscoil na Ríona/Ollscoil Uladh (QUB/UU Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies).

My Department commissioned a report containing recommendations that might inform a modern languages strategy and has received a near final draft of that report from the QUB/UU Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies.

The original commission, which predated the restoration of devolution, envisaged a wide ranging report that would focus on the place of language learning not just in schools but for the economy and for society more generally. For that reason, we have identified the need to engage with other relevant departments on the final draft of the report.

The feedback received is being relayed to the two universities and I expect that they will be in a position to submit their final report to me very shortly. Recognising that it will contain recommendations for other Ministers, I intend to circulate that final report to the Executive. As Education Minister I will also be looking carefully, within the resources available to me, at how best to move forward on those recommendations that are focused on the teaching and learning of modern languages in schools. I will be doing so informed by the success of my Primary Languages Programme which is built on the recognition that early language learning builds both important communication skills and positive attitudes to learning another language.

General Teaching Council

Mr P Butler asked the Minister of Education to provide a breakdown of the funding allocated to the General Teaching Council by her Department in each of the last five years.

(AQW 4221/11)

Minister of Education: D'aistrigh an fheidhm a bhaineann le cáilíochtaí múinteoirí a fhaomhadh ar mhaithe le bheith i dteideal teagaisc/clárúcháin leis an Chomhairle Ghinearálta Teagaisc (GTC) ón Roinn s'agamsa go dtí an GTC i mí Dheireadh Fómhair 2007.

The function of approving teachers' qualifications for the purposes of eligibility to teach/registration with the General Teaching Council (GTC) transferred from my Department to the GTC in October 2007. In order to cover the costs to the Council of undertaking this transferred function, the Department has allocated funding to the GTC over the last five years as follows:

Financial Year	Approval of Qualifications (£k)
2006/07	0
2007/08	29
2008/09	71
2009/10	72
2010/11	73

The GTC's other statutory functions are funded entirely via income from the teachers' registration fees charged by it. In line with current arrangements in England and Wales, DE reimburses this fee to the teachers as part of their salary and has provided funding of around £1.1m per annum over the last five years for this purpose.

My Department's Draft Budget 2011-2015 includes a proposal to remove the reimbursement to teachers of the GTC registration fee.

Colin Area of Belfast

Ms J McCann asked the Minister of Education to detail what percentage of the overall budget of the South Eastern Education and Library Board was spent in the Colin area of Belfast, in each of the last four financial years.

(AQW 4753/11)

Minister of Education: Sonraítear thíos an céatadán den bhuiséad foriomlán de chaiteachas Bhord Oideachais agus Leabharlann an Oirdheiscirt i gceantar Ghleann Chollainn i mBéal Feirste, i ngach ceann de na ceithre bliana airgeadais seo chuaigh thart.

The percentage of the overall budget of the South Eastern Education and Library Board spend in the Colin area of Belfast, in each of the last four financial years is detailed below.

Financial Year	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Percentage of overall SEELB Budget spent in the Colin area of Belfast	4.59%	4.81%	4.66%	4.56%

Teachers and Principals Deemed Unsatisfactory

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the level of support and training that is available for teachers and principals whose work has been deemed unsatisfactory; and (ii) how the support and training is delivered, monitored and assessed by her Department.

(AQW 4789/11)

Minister of Education:

- (i) Cuireann nósanna imeachta a bhíonn á ndrúachtú i gcomhpháirt le chéile ag údaráis fostaíochta múinteoirí i gcomhairle leis an Roinn Oideachais meicníocht ar fáil do Bhoird Ghobharnóirí le déileáil le múinteoirí a meastar a gcuid oibre a bheith míshásúil.
- (i) Procedures drawn up jointly by teachers' employing authorities in consultation with the Department of Education provide Boards of Governors with the mechanism for dealing with teachers whose work is deemed to be unsatisfactory. The procedures were ratified by the Teachers' Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee (Schools) and are currently under review by the Committee.

Where there are concerns regarding a teacher's work, the school Principal, in consultation with the employing authority, arranges a training and support programme designed to address those aspects of the work which have been deemed unsatisfactory. The length, format and intensity of this programme depend upon the nature and seriousness of the weakness(es) in the teacher's work.

- (ii) The programme of support is drawn up in consultation with the teacher concerned, implemented within a specified time frame, normally within three months, and monitored by the Principal.

These procedures apply to all teachers, including principals and vice principals. In cases of concern regarding a principal's work, the support programme is arranged and monitored by the Board of Governors in consultation with the employing authority.

The work of a teacher, principal or vice principal, may be evaluated as unsatisfactory as part of a school inspection carried out by the Department's Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI). The Department requires schools to put in place action plans to address any areas including the quality of teaching or leadership, identified through the inspection as being in need of improvement. The Department evaluates the quality of the school's action plan and monitors and evaluates progress against its implementation through the ETI. Where the provision is evaluated as satisfactory or as less than satisfactory, schools routinely have a follow-up inspection and the report is published on the ETI website.

Vacancies for Enrolment

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Education whether the removal of temporary classrooms has been taken into account when assessing the number of vacancies for enrolment.

(AQW 4862/11)

Minister of Education: Bíonn seomraí ranga sealadacha san áireamh i ríomh uimhir rollaithe scoile má sainíodh iad mar spásanna múinteoireachta lánaimseartha.

Temporary classrooms are included in the calculation of a school's enrolment number if they have been designated as full-time teaching spaces. It is the responsibility of the school to notify the Department

of any changes in accommodation which need to be taken into account at the annual review of enrolment numbers.

Enrolment Places

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Education how the maximum number of enrolment places in a school is calculated.

(AQW 4863/11)

Minister of Education: Comhairtear áiteanna rollaithe mar a leanas:

Enrolment places are calculated as follows:

Statutory Pre-school sector: Enrolment numbers are approved on the basis of multiples of 26 ie a 1:13 pupil teacher ratio.

Primary Schools: Enrolment numbers are calculated on the actual floor space available for teaching purposes in two stages:-

- i each room with 50m² or more available for teaching purposes is regarded as having a capacity of 29 pupils; and
- ii. for rooms with less than 50m² available for teaching purposes, the total

area of those rooms (excluding storage) is aggregated and divided by 1.72. The resulting figure rounded down to the nearest whole number, is the total capacity for those rooms.

The total of i and ii is the school's enrolment number.

Post-Primary Schools: Enrolment numbers are calculated based on the number of centrally timetabled teaching spaces over 28m² multiplied by a Room Usage Factor of 87% and a Pupil Teacher Ratio of 14.5 (non grammar schools) or 16.0 (grammar schools) divided by a teacher contact ratio of 0.76.

Enrolment Figures

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Education when the maximum enrolment figures for schools were last calculated.

(AQW 4864/11)

Minister of Education: Is féidir uimhreacha rollaithe na hearnála réamhscoile reachtúil bheith gan athrú mar socraítear iad ar bhonn chóimheasa daltaí le múinteoir 1:13.

In the statutory pre-school sector enrolment numbers remain unchanged as they are set on the basis of a 1:13 pupil teacher ratio.

A primary and post-primary school's enrolment number is reviewed on an annual basis and schools are given the opportunity to either request an increase or decrease in the enrolment number. It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors of the school to notify the Department of any changes in accommodation which may affect consideration of these numbers.

Cycle to Work Scheme

Mr B Armstrong asked the Minister of Education which Education and Library Boards have engaged with the Cycle to Work Scheme.

(AQW 4901/11)

Minister of Education: Ní dheachaigh aon cheann de na cúig Bhord Oideachais agus Leabharlann i ngleic leis an Scéim um Rothaíocht chun na hOibre.

None of the five Education and Library Boards have engaged with the Cycle to Work Scheme. The Association of Chief Executives have determined that in the current challenging financial environment they could not support such a scheme.

School Places

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of pupils, currently in Year 8 and Year 9, in post-primary schools in the North Antrim area who were (i) offered a school place based on their transfer test result, broken down by the grade obtained; and (ii) offered a place without having taken the transfer test.

(AQW 4926/11)

Minister of Education: Sáraíonn úsáid na scrúduithe iontrála malartacha ag scoileanna gramadaí treoir mo Roinne ar an aistriú iarbhunscoile.

The use of breakaway entrance tests by grammar schools is in contravention of my Department's guidance on post-primary transfer. As such, my Department has no involvement in the administration of breakaway tests, nor does it have access to information about test grades obtained by pupils currently in Year 8 in post-primary schools. The information in respect of pupils currently in Year 9 is set out in the table below:

(i) Number of Year 9 pupils offered a school place based on their transfer test result, broken down by grade						(ii) Number of Year 9 pupils offered a school place without having taken the transfer test
A	B1	B2	C1	C2	D	
401	40	56	48	25	22	414

The above table excludes Slemish Integrated College. This is a bilateral college and it is not possible to disaggregate pupils admitted on the basis of test grade.

Ring-fence Funding for Special Education

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of Education whether she intends to ring-fence funding for special education, including associated transportation costs.

(AQW 4927/11)

Minister of Education: Agus mo dhréacht-leithdháiltí agus pleananna coigiltis á gcinneadh agam tar éis fhoilsiú Dhréachtbhuiséad an Choiste Fheidhmiúcháin 2011-15, tá cosaint curtha ar fáil agam do chlár a dhíríonn ar mhíbhuntáiste agus a fheabhsaíonn torthaí oideachais lena n-áirítear oideachas speisialta.

In determining my draft allocations and savings plans following publication of the Executive's Draft Budget 2011-15, I have afforded protection to programmes which target disadvantage and improve educational outcomes including special education. Following the Executive's agreement of the Final Budget allocations for Departments on 3 March, I am now in a position to make final decisions on the allocation of resources for education.

The majority of funding for special education, including transport, is provided to ELBs via Block Grant. Each ELB has discretion over the use of funding provided in the form of Block Grant to cover the remit of services provided within their respective geographical areas, to take account of local needs. This includes special education, transport and a range of other services. Consistent with the approach to approving ELBs financial plans in 2010-11 there will be a requirement for ELBs to continue to protect front-line services as outlined in my draft Budget proposals. It is the responsibility of each ELB to consider how best to meet the needs of all children in their area and make decisions, where necessary, about alternative methods of service provision, to meet those needs.

Assaults on School Staff

Mr G Campbell asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of (i) teaching staff; and (ii) non-teaching staff who have been assaulted by a pupil or a parent in each of the last three years. **(AQW 4928/11)**

Minister of Education: Ní bhailfionn an Roinn ná na húdaráis fostaíochta an t-eolas a iarradh.

Neither the Department nor the employing authorities collect the requested information.

Statistics on the reasons for suspensions and expulsions of pupils are gathered each year but no statistics are available on assaults on school staff by parents. The table below provides the number of occasions where pupils were suspended or expelled for physical attack on staff in each of the last three school years for which figures are available:-

	Number of suspensions for physical attack on staff	Number of expulsions for physical attack on staff
2007/08	228	1
2008/09	265	2
2009/10	241	5

Notes

- 1 These figures relate to all pupils undertaking Key Stage 1-4 in primary and post-primary schools.
- 2 The information reflects the number of individual suspensions, as opposed to the number of pupils suspended. Pupils may be suspended more than once.
- 3 The information cannot be disaggregated by teaching and non-teaching staff.

New Primary School in Carrick, Warrenpoint

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of Education when (i) the announcement of the successful tender for the new primary school in Carrick, Warrenpoint will be made; and (ii) the sod-cutting ceremony on this site will take place.

(AQW 4930/11)

Minister of Education: Fógraíodh an tairiscint rathúil do thógáil an fhoirgnimh scoile nua do Bhunscoil na Carraige, an Pointe ar 1 Márta 2011.

The announcement of the successful tender for the construction of the new school building for Carrick PS. Warrenpoint was made on 1 March 2011. It is anticipated that the sod-cutting ceremony to mark the start of construction work will take place on Wednesday 16 March 2011.

Review of Literacy and Numeracy Strategy

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 4426/11, in relation to the Review of Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (i) in which language the document was produced; (ii) the languages into which it was translated; and (iii) the language to which 'literacy' in the title refers.

(AQW 4937/11)

Minister of Education: Mar is gnách le gach foilseachán de chuid na Roinne, cuireadh an doiciméad comhairliúcháin a bhaineann leis an athbhreithniú ar an straitéis litearthachta agus uimhearthachta ar fáil i bhformáid dhátheangach, ag cuimsiú Gaeilge agus Béarla araon.

As is standard with all Departmental publications, the consultation document relating to the review of the literacy and numeracy strategy was produced in a bilingual format, encompassing both Irish and English. The Department was prepared to translate the document into other languages or formats upon request but no such requests were received.

With regard to the strategy, the term 'literacy' is used in an inclusive way and refers to the development of this important skill in English and also, for those learning through the medium of Irish, in Irish. The strategy also makes links to our policies for special educational needs and inclusion to support pupils who do not have the language skills to access the curriculum.

Consultations

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 4426/11, to detail the total cost of each consultation, broken down by (i) printing; (ii) the hire of premises; (iii) translation; (iv) consultants' fees; and (v) other associated costs.

(AQW 4938/11)

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

The information requested is detailed in the table below.

Consultation	Printing	Hire of premises	Translation	Consultants fees	Other associated costs
EQIA consultation on funding for Transfer interviews	NIL	NIL	544.08	NIL	3246.65
DE Draft Budget 2011-2015	NIL	406.25	NIL	NIL	3535.97
Draft Early Years (0-6) Strategy Consultation	NIL	3998.90	2415.36	NIL	12251.00
Disability Action Plan 2010-2013	NIL	NIL	848.00	NIL	3902.00
Community Relations, Equality & Diversity in Education Policy (Note 1)	NIL	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
Teacher Education in a Climate of Change - The Way Forward	NIL	NIL	2097.36	NIL	4670.56
Draft Government STEM Strategy	NIL	NIL	2670.24	NIL	NIL
Consultation on draft Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (NI) 2010	NIL	NIL	400.00	NIL	NIL
Draft Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on the Proposal to withdraw Funding from Preparatory Departments of Grammar schools	NIL	NIL	616.68	NIL	NIL
Common Funding Formula Consultation January 2010	NIL	NIL	419.88	NIL	NIL

Consultation	Printing	Hire of premises	Translation	Consultants fees	Other associated costs
Every School A Good School: The Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion	5522.00	5078.00	2023.00	NIL	10795.00
Consultation on the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) of the Teachers' (Compensation for Redundancy and Premature Retirement) Regulations (NI) 2010 and complementing amendments to the Teachers' Superannuation Regulations (NI) 1998	NIL	NIL	2092.80	NIL	NIL
Consultation on the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Every School A Good School – School Improvement Policy	NIL	NIL	393.00	NIL	NIL
Food in Schools Policy	NIL	NIL	1848.10	NIL	3061.93
School Admissions (Exceptional Circumstances) Regulations 2010	NIL	NIL	643.80	NIL	2662.55
Equality Impact Assessment of the Transfer 2010 Guidance	NIL	310.00	2695.50	NIL	3081.49
Transfer 2010 Guidance	5175.00	NIL	525.15	NIL	3225.00
Consultation on the draft teachers' (Compensation for Redundancy and Premature Retirement) Regulations (NI) 2009	NIL	NIL	643.65	NIL	1214.24
Consultation on Draft Pupil Records and Reporting Regulations and Levels of Progression	NIL	NIL	141.00	13400.00	NIL
Review of Irish-medium Education	3000.00	13395.11	3896.13	21550.51	4605.90
Local Management of Schools - Common Funding Formula	NIL	NIL	717.12	NIL	NIL

Consultation	Printing	Hire of premises	Translation	Consultants fees	Other associated costs
Review of Literacy and Numeracy Strategy	1700.00	NIL	3727.00	17400.00	NIL
Every School A Good School – School Improvement Policy	1700.00	NIL	1657.00	NIL	NIL
Consultation on the Area-based Planning Policy	NIL	NIL	761.85	NIL	NIL
Public Consultation on Building a Better Future	NIL	320.00	NIL	NIL	1543.86
Consultation on Draft Regulations to Prohibit Discrimination by General Qualifications Bodies on the Grounds of Disability	NIL	NIL	280.00	NIL	1500.00
Consultation on Draft Amendment Regulations to Prohibit Discrimination by General Qualifications Bodies on the Grounds of Disability	NIL	NIL	300.00	NIL	1500.00
Policy on Supporting Ethnic-Minority Children and Young People who have English as an Additional Language	1216.13	Included in consultants fees	3719.12	16718.25	2477.50

Note 1 - Community Relations, Equality & Diversity in Education Policy. The total costs of this consultation were reported in AQW4426/11 at £15000. Unfortunately a full breakdown of this amount is not yet available.

Policy on Supporting Ethnic Minority Children and Young People

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 4426/11, in relation to the Policy on Supporting Ethnic Minority Children and Young People who have English as an additional language, to detail (i) in which language the document was produced; (ii) the languages into which it was translated; and (iii) which languages, other than English, are spoken by pupils at home according to the latest school census, from rank 1 to 10.

(AQW 4939/11)

Minister of Education: Táirgeadh an doiciméad comhairliúcháin maidir le ‘Tacú le Leanáí as Mionlaigh Eitneacha agus le Daoine Óga a bhfuil Béarla acu mar Theanga Bhreise’ i mBéarla agus aistríodh go dtí na 6 barrtheanga é mar a léiríodh i ndaonáireamh Dheireadh Fómhair 2006.

The consultation document on ‘Supporting Ethnic-Minority Children and Young People who have English as an Additional Language’ was produced in English and translated into the top 6 languages as indicated in the October 2006 census. These were Chinese (Cantonese), Filipino, Hindi, Lithuanian, Polish and Portuguese. The document was also translated into Braille following a request.

The final policy ‘Every School a Good School - Supporting Newcomer Pupils’, launched in April 2009, was produced in English and Irish. A summary of the policy was translated into the top 6 languages as

indicated in the October 2008 census. These were Chinese (Cantonese), Filipino, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese and Slovakian.

The latest school census was taken in October 2010. The top ten languages, other than English, spoken by newcomer pupils at home according to that census are as follows:

	Language	Pupils
1	Polish	2,832
2	Lithuanian	1,170
3	Portuguese	605
4	Tagalog/Filipino	410
5	Chinese (Cantonese)	351
6	Malayalam	327
7	Latvian	274
8	Slovak	242
9	Chinese (Mandarin)	137
10	Hindi	132

The figures above relate to children in voluntary and private pre school centres, nursery schools, primary schools, post-primary schools and special schools.

Education Psychology Service

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 4427/11, what action she intends to take to reduce the number of children waiting to be assessed by the Education Psychology Service. **(AQW 4941/11)**

Minister of Education: Tá na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlann (BOL) freagrach as soláthar seirbhísí síceolaíochta oideachais do leanaí agus do dhaoine óga.

The Education and Library Boards (ELBs) have responsibility for the provision of educational psychology services to children and young people. The five ELBs' Educational Psychology Services are working together to deliver an agreed action plan which promotes commonality, consistency and equity of practice and service delivery. It is expected that this will result in greater uniformity in the way services are delivered.

Each ELB continues to work closely with schools, children and parents to ensure that they are able to carry out educational psychology assessments as soon as possible. An increase in the number of referrals from Health and Social Care Trusts has, however, increased the pressure upon the Educational Psychology Services. Trends show that increasing numbers of pre-school children and children and young people with possible diagnoses of autism spectrum disorders are being referred. Boards are working in partnership with the Health and Social Care Trusts to address these trends as swiftly as possible.

My Department continues to provide funding towards the delivery of the Doctorate in Educational, Child and Adolescent Psychology by Queens University in order to ensure an appropriate flow of qualified educational psychologists are available to be recruited by the ELBs.

Suspended Teachers

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the number of teachers who are currently suspended; (ii) the length of time of each suspension; (iii) the total cost incurred in each case,

including pay and National Insurance Contributions/superannuation; and (iv) the total cost of substitute teachers employed to fill these posts.

(AQW 4947/11)

Minister of Education: Ar 28 Feabhra 2011, tá ochtar múinteoirí ar fad atá ar tréimhse fionraíochta.

At 28 February 2011 there are a total of 8 teachers who are on a period of suspension. The table below outlines the duration of each suspension in calendar days also all costs inclusive of employers' national insurance and superannuation contributions.

No. of Teachers	Start Date of Suspension	Total Number of Calendar Days Absent	Total Cost of Absence resulting from Suspension	Total Cost of Substitute Cover
Teacher 1	04/12/2009	451	£58,275.45	£32,511.60
Teacher 2	10/12/2009	445	£54,875.54	£28,617.87
Teacher 3	01/03/2010	364	£76,473.92	£79,388.57
Teacher 4	24/08/2010	188	£70,543.83	£34,819.90
Teacher 5	30/11/2010	90	£11,690.35	£8,732.20
Teacher 6	03/12/2010	87	£10,506.41	£6,394.46
Teacher 7	07/01/2011	52	£9,516.19	£3,610.99
Teacher 8	12/01/2011	47	£8,776.74	£3,087.35

Convergence Programme Management Board

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Education when a democratically chosen representative from the former South Eastern Education and Library Board will be co-opted to the Convergence Programme Management Board.

(AQW 4967/11)

Minister of Education: Níl aon phlean ann faoi láthair ionadaí tofa go daonlathach a chomhthoghadh ó Bhord Oideachais agus Leabharlann an Oirdheiscirt ar Bhord Bainistíochta an Chláir Choinbhéirseachta (PMB).

There are currently no plans to co-opt a democratically chosen representative from the South Eastern Education & Library Board onto the Convergence Programme Management Board (PMB). Membership of PMB consists of the Chairs of the Education and Library Boards and a Commissioner from the SEELB.

Commissioners for the South Eastern Education and Library Board

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the cost of employing commissioners for the South Eastern Education and Library Board in each year since 7 July 2006.

(AQW 4968/11)

Minister of Education: Tá na costais seo a leanas, lena n-áirítear táillí laethúla, taisteal, cothú agus gach costas eile, curtha ar fáil ag Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlann an Oirdheiscirt.

The South Eastern Education and Library Board has provided the following costs which include daily fees, travel, subsistence and all other expenses.

Financial Year	Costs
2006/07	£81,472

Financial Year	Costs
2007/08	£108,637
2008/09	£79,472
2009/10	£83,717
2010/11	£49,683 (up to 31 December 2010)

Convergence Programme Management Board

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Education to detail the remuneration to members of the Convergence Programme Management Board since its formation.

(AQW 4969/11)

Minister of Education: Ní bhfuair aon chomhalta de Bhord Bainistíochta an Chláir Choinbhéirseachta (PMB) a luach saothair as a bheith i láthair ag PMB, ach is féidir go ndearna comhaltaí éileamh le haghaidh taistil agus cothabhála go díreach tríd a mBoird féin.

No member of the Convergence Programme Management Board (PMB) has been remunerated for their attendance at PMB, however members may have claimed for travel and subsistence directly through their respective Boards.

Bytes Projects Based in West Belfast

Ms J McCann asked the Minister of Education if, and by how much, funding for the Bytes Project has been cut in her Department's spending plans; and for her assessment of the impact of these cuts on Bytes Projects based in West Belfast.

(AQW 4992/11)

Minister of Education: Agus mo dhréacht-mholtaí Buiséid á gcinneadh agam, bhí mé in ann roinnt cosanta a sholáthar do roinnt réimsí tábhachtacha lena n-áirítear riachtanais speisialta oideachais, scoileanna méadaithe, seirbhísí comhairleoireachta agus seirbhísí óige.

In determining my draft Budget proposals, I have been able to afford some protection to a number of important areas which include special educational needs, extended schools, counselling services and youth services. The Executive agreed the Final Budget allocations on 3 March and I am now in a position to consider how best to allocate the resources available to me. Until I have had the opportunity to do this,, no decisions on allocations for 2011/12 can be made in relation to any organisation funded by the Department.

Significant savings must be delivered from the education budget over the next four years and I want to protect front line services as far as possible. Funding for the Bytes Project is allocated by the Youth Council. In terms of the impact of any potential reduction in funding to individual organisations funded from the youth budget in 2011/12, this can only be determined by the Youth Council and Education and Library Boards when they receive their budget allocations.

Year 1 School Places

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Education how many Year 1 school places are available in (i) Towerview Primary School; (ii) Ballymagee Primary School; and (iii) Kilmaine Primary School for the 2011/12 academic year.

(AQW 4995/11)

Minister of Education: Seo a leanas na huimhreacha iontrála le haghaidh Bliain 1 atá ar fáil i (i) mBunscoil Towerview; (ii) Bunscoil Bhaile Mhig Aoidh; agus (iii) Bunscoil Kilmaine don bhliain acadúil 2011/12

The approved admission numbers for Year 1 available in (i) Towerview Primary School; (ii) Ballymagee Primary School; and (iii) Kilmaine Primary School for the 2011/12 academic year are as follows

Primary School	Approved admissions number
Towerview	46
Ballymagee	87
Kilmaine	58

Private Finance Initiative Contract

Mr R McCartney asked the Minister of Education whether a Private Finance Initiative contract for a school building programme can limit the hours during which (i) a school can be used by the community; and (ii) school facilities can be used by the community.

(AQW 5005/11)

Minister of Education: Nuair a fhaightear foirgnimh scoile trí chomhpháirtíocht phríobháideach phoiblí (PPP), agus úsáid bainte as an Tionscnamh Príobháideach Airgeadais (PFI), ní bhíonn na huaireanta a bhaineann le húsáid na scoile ná háiseanna na scoile ag an phobal teoranta.

The procurement of school buildings through a Public Private Partnership (PPP), using the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) does not limit the hours during which a school or school facilities can be used by the community. A school procured using PPP actively encourages community use by making the whole school fully available for the prescribed hours as set down in the contract, as well as for a generous bank of additional hours during which the community can use the facilities for any event which would normally be expected to take place in a school. Furthermore, the design of PPP schools also takes community usage into account by incorporating the ability to segregate certain areas of the school from the remainder, for reasons of security and utility usage.

The Working Group on Community Use of Schools, established to make recommendations for consideration by both DE and ESA, has reported to DE. The report contains 36 wide ranging recommendations many of which impact on policy and operational areas outside the remit of DE. The Department will ensure that guidance for schools takes account of any issues raised in response to the recommendations.

Draft Partnership Agreement

Mr C Lyttle asked the Minister of Education to detail the nature of the new draft Partnership Agreement that has been prepared to formalise existing arrangements between schools and the Department for Employment and Learning Careers Service.

(AQW 5014/11)

Minister of Education: Déanann Comhaontú Seirbhíse Comhpháirtíochta um Scoileanna-Gairmeacha na socruithe atá ann ar feadh roinnt blianta foirmeálta agus tógann sé orthu.

The Schools-Careers Service Partnership Agreement formalises and builds on the arrangements which have existed for a number of years. The focus of the Partnership Agreement is to provide a framework for joint support from schools and the Careers Service to enable all learners in post-primary education to develop their career plans and career decision making skills most effectively.

The Partnership Agreement details the menu of services offered to schools by the Careers Service at Key Stage 3, 4 and Post 16 and lists the roles and responsibilities of the Careers Advisors, Principals and Careers Teachers in the provision of high quality Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance for young people. The Partnership Agreement will be reviewed and evaluated in due course.

School Inspections

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister of Education what indicators of effectiveness are used to measure (i) the extent to which inspections improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools; and (ii) the quality of educational provision within schools.

(AQW 5056/11)

Minister of Education: Tá an t-eolas seo ar fáil go poiblí ar shuíomh gréasáin na Cigireachta Oideachais agus Oiliúna sa cháipéis ‘Together Towards Improvement’ ag an nasc seo a leanas: www.etini.gov.uk/index/together-towards-improvement.htm

This information is publicly available on the Education and Training Inspectorate’s website in the document ‘Together Towards Improvement’ at the following link: www.etini.gov.uk/index/together-towards-improvement.htm

Department for Employment and Learning

Regional Colleges: Industrial Tribunal of Fair Employment Tribunal Cases

Mr Pól Callaghan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the total amount spent in settlements of industrial tribunal or fair employment tribunal cases by each Regional College, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 4423/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning (Mr D Kennedy): The information requested has been supplied by each Further Education College and is attached at Annex A.

Annex A

2007/08

College	Belfast Metropolitan College	Northern Regional College	North West Regional College	South Eastern Regional College	Southern Regional College	South West College
Amount spent in settlements of industrial tribunal or fair employment tribunal cases	Undisclosed*	0	0	0	Undisclosed*	0

2008/09

College	Belfast Metropolitan College	Northern Regional College	North West Regional College	South Eastern Regional College	Southern Regional College	South West College
Amount spent in settlements of industrial tribunal or fair employment tribunal cases	Undisclosed*	Undisclosed*	0	£ Undisclosed*	0	0

2009/10

College	Belfast Metropolitan College	Northern Regional College	North West Regional College	South Eastern Regional College	Southern Regional College	South West College
Amount spent in settlements of industrial tribunal or fair employment tribunal cases	Undisclosed*	0	£4,966	0	Undisclosed*	0

* The College have indicated that due to the terms applied to the settlement, they are not at liberty to disclose the settlement amount

Students: Sexual Offences Prevention Order

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) how many students attending Further and Higher Education facilities are subject to a Sexual Offences Prevention Order; and (ii) what procedures are in place to protect other students, particularly those who are young or classed as vulnerable.

(AQW 4663/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning:

- (i) There are seven students attending Further Education Colleges who are known to be subject to Sexual Offences Prevention Orders. One other person subject to an Order is entering the Steps to Work Programme and is due to take up a placement at a Further Education College shortly. There is currently one student enrolled at a Higher Education Institution who is subject to a Sexual Offences Prevention Order (SOPO).
- (ii) Any individual subject to a SOPO is, depending on the nature of the offence and assessed level of risk, managed and monitored by an appropriate criminal justice agency such as the PSNI, the Probation Board, the Youth Justice Agency, Social Services or, on a multiagency basis, by a Local Area Public Protection Panel. When seeking to enrol in a College or University, the individual is subject to a risk assessment carried out by the relevant agency in collaboration with the College or University. All students with SOPOs have been subject to this process and appropriate measures have been put in place to ensure the safety of all other students.

Colin Area of Belfast

Ms J McCann asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail what percentage of his Department's budget was spent in the Colin area of Belfast, in each of the last four financial years.

(AQW 4812/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The figures below represent the amount of funding paid to training suppliers in the Colin area of Belfast for the last four financial years for the delivery of Training for Success, ApprenticeshipsNI and Jobskills training.

Financial Year	Amount of Funding
2009/10	£3,024,067.27
2008/09	£1,761,987.84

Financial Year	Amount of Funding
2007/08	£1,436,958.83
2006/07	£1,390,964.84

The Department has provided funding to one project in the Colin area under the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme, 2007-2013, involving a DEL contribution of £121,617.

With regard to such DEL programmes as Steps to Work, Step-Up to Science and Discovering Queen's, however, identification of all expenditure specifically in the Colin area would require a major manual exercise at disproportionate cost. For this reason, it is not possible to provide an accurate assessment of the percentage of my Department's budget spent in the Colin area.

Union Flag

Mr P Butler asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many (i) further education colleges; and (ii) buildings of his Department's arm's length bodies display a Union flag.

(AQW 4818/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Neither Further Education colleges nor any of the Department's arm's length bodies are specified in The Flags (Northern Ireland) Order 2000 or The Flags Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000.

Consequently, the colleges and ALB buildings do not display the Union flag.

Suicide Prevention

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline where suicide prevention sits within his Department's Programme for Government.

(AQW 4854/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The Executive's Programme for Government has "reducing the incidence of suicide" as one of a number of objectives that contributes to PSA 8, "Promoting Health and Addressing Health Inequalities". My Department is represented on a variety of Inter-Departmental Groups dealing with the subject of suicide prevention. My Department's main role in suicide prevention is to help people develop their skills and assist them into work, thereby raising their self esteem and sense of well-being.

Students from the Republic of Ireland

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many students from the Republic of Ireland were enrolled in each university in Northern Ireland in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 4897/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The numbers of students from the Republic of Ireland enrolled at Northern Ireland Universities in each of the last ten years is given in the table overleaf.

Academic year	Queen's University of Belfast	University of Ulster	Stranmillis University College	St Mary's University College	Total
2000/01	1,260	2,090	20	55	3,425
2001/02	1,170	2,055	30	65	3,320
2002/03	1,135	2,205	25	65	3,430
2003/04	1,025	2,465	35	65	3,590

Academic year	Queen's University of Belfast	University of Ulster	Stranmillis University College	St Mary's University College	Total
2004/05	1,180	2,520	40	65	3,800
2005/06	965	2,650	40	45	3,700
2006/07	880	2,200	35	45	3,165
2007/08	875	2,340	35	40	3,290
2008/09	930	2,250	35	25	3,240
2009/10	920	2,810	35	35	3,800

Source: HESA

Note: Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5. Due to rounding figures may not sum to totals. 2009/10 is the latest year for which data are available.

Essential Skills Strategy

Ms M Ritchie asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the costs associated with the implementation of the Essential Skills Strategy for each of the last three years.

(AQW 4908/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The cost of implementing Essential skills in each of the last three years has been £7.8 million in 2008/09, £9.4 million in 2009/10 and £11.1 million in 2010/11. These costs include programme expenditure and other activities such as research, tutor training, curriculum development and advice and marketing.

European Social Fund

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many applications were made under Tranche 2 of the European Social Fund, and how many of the successful applications were for (a) regional; and (b) local projects.

(AQW 4932/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: A total of 112 applications were made to the second call of the NIESF Programme. 100 met the minimum quality threshold and bid for £43.1 million in ESF. In the context of a finite ESF budget of just over £30 million, my Department has given due consideration to the equitable distribution of the available funding, and concluded that in the first instance we should ask the top scoring 83 projects, in merit order, to look again at their overall costs, and we have offered these applicants some 75% of the amount they bid for.

Of the 83 successful projects, 17 will offer a service throughout Northern Ireland. The remaining 66 projects will either operate in their local areas or provide training to specific geographical areas which are not Northern Ireland wide.

European Social Fund

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the projects that were successful under Tranche 2 of the European Social Fund; and to detail how many were from women's organisations.

(AQW 4933/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Under the second call for ESF funding a total of 112 applications were received with 100 meeting the minimum quality threshold and bidding for £43.1 million in ESF against a finite ESF budget of £30 million. 83 of these applications have been offered

funding at 75% of the allocation bid for on a merit order basis subject to a successful economic appraisal. Of the 83 projects offered funding 9 were from women only groups, an increase from 8 to 9 compared to the first call. The remaining applicants fall into the following broad categories of disability voluntary sector, community and voluntary sector, ex offenders, colleges and public authorities.

European Social Fund

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, in relation to the applications made under Tranche 2 of the European Social Fund, to outline why the minimum points threshold is different from that in Tranche 1.

(AQW 4935/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: A second Call for applications under Priority 1 of the Northern Ireland European Social Fund (NIESF) Programme 2007 -13 was launched on 23 September 2010. The selection process and scoring procedures for the second Call were not changed and were consistent with arrangements applied under the preceding Call. A minimum pass mark of 130 marks was applied to applications to the second Call, as was the case for the preceding Call.

The second Call for applications to Priority 1 was over-subscribed and it was not possible to offer funding to all applications that met the minimum pass mark. A cut-off point of 134 marks was required for an allocation from the funding available under Priority 1.

Priority 1 of the European Social Fund

Ms D Purvis asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the criteria used to assess applications for funding under Priority 1 of the European Social Fund, including the points system used by his Department to assess the extent to which the projects met the selection criteria outlined in the application and supporting documents.

(AQW 4964/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: A second Call for applications under Priority 1 of the Northern Ireland European Social Fund (NIESF) Programme 2007 -13 was launched on 23 September 2010. Details of the associated selection criteria and scoring procedures are set out in the ESF Promoter's Operating Manual 2007-13 which is publicly available from the European Funding section of the Department's website. [Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.](http://www.delni.gov.uk/index/esf/niesfprog0713/ni-esf-forms-guidance.htm)

www.delni.gov.uk/index/esf/niesfprog0713/ni-esf-forms-guidance.htm

Training for Women Network

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the impact on communities if the Training for Women Network does not receive funding from the European Social Fund.

(AQW 4973/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The second open and competitive call for projects seeking funding under the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme period 2007-2013 has seen a growth in the number of funded projects from 72 in the first call to 83 projects in the second call, an increase of 15%. In addition the number of women's projects has increased from 8 in the first call to 9 in the second call. At the same time the number of projects supported in the community and voluntary sector has increased from 32 in the first call to 38 in the second call, an increase of 16%.

On this basis the provision of projects to support the objectives of the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme generally and specifically to women has increased. This will result in greater support being provided to communities throughout Northern Ireland.

Training for Women Network whilst awarded a score above the quality threshold did not receive sufficient marks to receive funding under the second open and competitive call to the Northern Ireland European Social Fund.

The Northern Ireland European Social Fund budget has been maintained at 2007 levels, with an increase in the number of projects in the women's and community and voluntary sector providing valuable support to communities throughout Northern Ireland.

European Social Fund

Mr P Frew asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the economic and vocational criteria used to select the organisations for the European Social Fund Schemes that are match funded by Health and Social Care Trusts.

(AQW 4975/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: A second Call for applications under Priority 1 of the Northern Ireland European Social Fund (NIESF) Programme 2007-13 was launched on 23 September 2010. All applications were subject to the same selection criteria and scoring procedures. Detailed information on the selection and scoring procedures are set out in the ESF Promoter's Operating Manual 2007-13, which is publicly available from the European Funding section of the Department's website www.delni.gov.uk/index/esf/niesfprog0713/ni-esf-forms-guidance

Education and Training Inspectorate

Ms M Ritchie asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the number of inspections and surveys conducted by the Education and Training Inspectorate in each of the last three years; and the grade awarded in each case.

(AQW 4977/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The tables attached detail the inspections and surveys conducted within the last three years (Annex 1).

Annex 1

For each of the Business Years below the dates relate to 1 April to 31 March

Further Education Inspections 2008/2011

Number of Inspections and Associated Performance Levels for the Further Education Colleges over Past Three Business Years

Performance Level	Out-standing	Very Good	Good	Satis-factory	Inadequate	Unsatis-factory
08/09		1	2	1		
09/10		1	2	2		
10/11			2	1		

Work-based Learning Inspections 2008/2011

Number of Inspections and Associated Performance Levels for the Work-based Learning over Past Three Business Years

Year*	Number Outs-tanding	Number Very Good	Number Good	Number Satis-factory	Number Inadequate	Number Unsatis-factory
TfS/ANI Inspections						
2008/09	1	1	3	1	1	
2009/10		1	4	1	3	

Year*	Number Outstanding	Number Very Good	Number Good	Number Satisfactory	Number Inadequate	Number Unsatisfactory
2010/11	2	3	3	2		
Steps to Work						
2008/09*						
2009/10			2	1		
2010/11		3		1		
New Deal						
2008/09			1			

Two-phase longitudinal inspections were carried out in the Steps to Work adult employment programmes and no performance level was provided during the first phase. Only the overall performance levels, covering both phases of the inspection, are included;

Further Education and Work-based Learning Follow-up Inspection including Steps to Work and New Deal 2008/2011

2008/09: Five follow-up inspections took place. These were re-evaluated as: 3 Good and 2 Satisfactory.

2009/10: Five follow-up inspections took place. These were re-evaluated as: 5 Good.

2010/11: To date, Five follow-up inspections have taken place. These were re-evaluated as: 1 Very Good, 2 Good, 1 remained satisfactory and 1 remained inadequate.

In addition, two Further Education Colleges are currently in follow-up inspection procedures.

Number of Surveys and Evaluations and Associated Performance Levels for the Further Education and Work-based Learning over Past Three Business Years

Performance Level	Out-standing	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory
08/09			2			
09/10		3	6	1		
10/11					1	

Over the past 3 years a number of reports were commissioned by the Department for Employment and Learning covering a range of thematic areas, including, for example, Special Educational Needs, Information and Learning Technology and Cultural Diversity. These reports do not contain descriptor levels.

Number of Inspections	
2008/2009	2
2009/2010	1
2010/2011	6

European Social Fund

Ms D Purvis asked the Minister for Employment and Learning why the minimum points threshold used to assess applications for funding under Priority 1 of the European Social Fund was raised in the most recent round of applications; and how his Department calculated this threshold.

(AQW 4994/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: A second Call for applications under Priority 1 of the Northern Ireland European Social Fund (NIESF) Programme 2007 -13 was launched on 23 September 2010. The selection process and scoring criteria for applications were not changed and were consistent with arrangements applied under the preceding Call. A minimum pass mark of 130 marks was applied to applications to the second Call, as was the case for the preceding Call.

The second Call for applications was significantly over-subscribed and it was not possible to offer funding to all applications that met the minimum pass mark. The Department set a cut-off point of 134 marks for an allocation from the finite funds available under Priority 1. The cut-off point was applied in order to ensure that available funds were distributed to as many projects as would be practicable.

A total of 83 applications met the cut-off score of 134 or more. The available funds enabled each of the 83 projects to receive a conditional offer of funding amounting to 75% of the amount they initially sought. This arrangement resulted in a much greater number of projects to be funded than would otherwise have been the case.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr C Lyttle asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether any student has received Education Maintenance Allowance due to exceptional circumstances, despite failing to meet age requirements.

(AQW 5042/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The Student Loans Company, which administers the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme on behalf of my Department and the Department of Education, has confirmed that no Northern Ireland domiciled student has received Education Maintenance Allowance payments if he/she has not fulfilled the age requirements of the scheme.

I should also advise that there is no scope for “exceptional circumstances” cases as the scheme is administered by the Student Loans Company in strict accordance with the age criterion which is in line with current Department of Education legislation.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Legislation

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail all legislation, since May 2007, that has gone through, or is going through, the Assembly which devolves powers or responsibilities from her Department to local government authorities.

(AQW 4847/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Mrs A Foster): My Department has not enacted any legislation since May 2007, nor is it currently in the process of enacting legislation, to devolve powers or responsibilities from DETI to local government authorities.

Suicide Prevention

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline where suicide prevention sits within her Department's Programme for Government.

(AQW 4855/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The Programme for Government has, under PSA 8, a target to reduce suicide rates in Northern Ireland. This PSA is led by the Department for Health and Social Services and this target also includes responsibility for the Department for Education.

While my department does not have any PSA targets directly relating to this area I am aware of evidence, including that reported to the Health Committee, which indicates that unemployment is a potential risk factor in the case of suicide.

Undoubtedly unemployment contributes to economic hardship and this in turn can have many consequences for individuals. It is for these reasons that we have every motivation to promote employment and the benefits it brings for the individual and society.

As a result, I believe it is an imperative that we do all that we can in the current economic climate to ensure that there are employment opportunities. This is why, even in the currently constrained financial position, I secured funding for a package of measures to support the promotion of 5,000 jobs in Northern Ireland as part of the recently announced draft Budget proposals.

Draft PPS 16 - Tourism

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail her Department's, and any of its agencies, input into the formulation of Draft PPS 16 - Tourism.
(AQW 4871/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Tourism is a major contributor to economic development in Northern Ireland and it is essential that the planning system supports its future development in terms of facilitating tourism in appropriate locations. DETI and NITB officials have therefore had extensive engagement with officials in DOE on the preparation of PPS 16.

My Department supports the core principles of PPS 16: for example the need to facilitate tourism development in an environmentally sensitive manner, safeguarding tourism assets from inappropriate development, utilising the tourism potential of settlements, sustaining a vibrant rural community and ensuring a high standard of quality and design for all tourism developments.

The NITB has organised a series of policy engagement group meetings to discuss PPS 16 with the tourism industry and other stakeholders and is actively encouraging the sector to respond to the consultation within the 25 March deadline.

I hope to have a meeting with the DOE Minister in the near future to discuss PPS 16.

Decentralisation of Public Sector Jobs

Mr Pól Callaghan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for an update on the implementation of the plan to decentralise public sector jobs within her Department, and its agencies, since the publication of the Bain Report.
(AQW 5089/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The report by Professor Sir George Bain on Location of Public Sector Jobs did not identify any areas of the Department or its NDPBs for relocation.

Department of the Environment

Extended Driving Test

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of the Environment (i) what is the minimum driving disqualification for a driving offence before the Extended Driving Test has to be taken; and (ii) how this Test differs from the standard Driving Test.
(AQW 4766/11)

Minister of the Environment (Mr E Poots): The requirement to undertake an extended driving test is dependent upon the offence for which the person is convicted, rather than the length of period of disqualification ordered by a court. Where a person is disqualified for certain offences, irrespective of the period of disqualification, the court must order that person to be disqualified until passing the appropriate driving test. The appropriate driving test is defined by Article 41 of the Road Traffic Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 as being either a test of competence or an extended driving test.

For the purposes of the extended driving test, these offences are: manslaughter by the driver of a motor vehicle; causing death, or grievous bodily injury, by dangerous driving; dangerous driving; causing death, or grievous bodily injury; or disqualification for repeated offences.

Where a person is disqualified for any other offence involving obligatory endorsement the court may order the person to be disqualified until passing a test of competence, but not an extended driving test.

The standard car and motorcycle driving test involves at least 30 minutes on-road driving and test routes approximately ten miles in length. The extended driving test increases the on-road driving time to at least 60 minutes, with test routes between 18 to 24 miles in length. The longer testing period will mean that a greater proportion of the test will examine the candidate's performance in open road driving, thus enabling a more thorough check of their basic skills to ensure they are applied competently and safely on a wide range of road and traffic conditions. The assessment criteria is exactly the same as the standard test, however candidates will be required to demonstrate the required skills and aptitude over a longer period of time, thus making the test more demanding.

Planning Applications

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the average length of time it takes to process a planning application for a renewable energy source, such as a wind farm, in the Armagh City and District Council area.

(AQW 4820/11)

Minister of the Environment: Within the Armagh City and District Council area over the last 4 years, on average it has taken Planning Service 18.4 weeks to process renewable energy applications. The Public Service Agreement target for major applications is to process 60% of major applications to decision or withdrawal in 23 weeks which Planning Service achieved within the Armagh Local Government Area.

Website for Tracking Planning Applications

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of the Environment since the new Public Access website for tracking planning applications states that one of the important dates to note is the 'expiry date for standard consultation', why the Planning Service, in explaining the delays in processing applications, states that it is awaiting consultation responses, when the 'expiry date for standard consultation' has passed.

(AQW 4826/11)

Minister of the Environment: The comments of consultees are an important part of the development management process as they provide inputs to be considered on a range of relevant matters for example, road safety, environmental protection and the provision of services.

Whilst ePIC reflects target response times for consultation requests by way of Service Level Agreements, there is currently no statutory timescale which places an obligation on consultees to respond to planning applications within a specified timeframe.

Legislation

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment to detail all legislation, since May 2007, that has gone through, or is going through, the Assembly which devolves powers or responsibilities from his Department to local government authorities.

(AQW 4850/11)

Minister of the Environment: The attached table details all legislation, since May 2007, that has gone through, or is going through, the Assembly, which devolves powers or responsibilities from my Department to local government authorities. The table sets out the titles of the relevant legislation, the powers or responsibilities devolved, and the date when the legislation has been, or is expected to be, made.

Title of Legislation	Summary of Powers / Responsibilities Devolved to Councils	Date / Expected Date of Enactment
The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill (Northern Ireland)	The Bill is designed to improve the quality of the local environment by giving district councils additional powers to deal with litter, nuisance alleys, graffiti and fly-posting, abandoned and nuisance vehicles, dogs, noise and statutory nuisance.	The Bill is expected to receive Royal Assent in late March / early April 2011.
The Waste and Contaminated Land (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011	One of the main objectives of the Act is to legislate for a partnership between the Department and the local government sector in tackling illegal waste activity. The Act therefore gives new powers to district councils in relation to the investigation and enforcement of illegal waste offences so that councils and the Department have identical powers in this regard.	Received Royal Assent on 10 February 2011.
The Planning Bill	The Bill will deliver a reformed planning system and transfer the majority of planning functions to district councils as part of the implementation of local government reform.	The Bill is currently at Consideration Stage. Subject to completion of all Assembly Stages, it is expected to receive Royal Assent in April / May 2011.
The High Hedges Bill (Northern Ireland)	The Bill is intended to provide a means of resolving disputes between neighbours with regard to the adverse impact on the reasonable enjoyment of property due to an evergreen/semi-evergreen hedge acting as a barrier to light.	The Bill is expected to receive Royal Assent in late March / early April 2011.
The Local Government Finance Bill (Northern Ireland)	<p>The Bill will give councils more direct control over, and responsibility for, the management of their financial affairs. It will remove the current requirements for councils to obtain permission from the Department for borrowing, for establishing certain funds, or for the application of their funds or proceeds from the sale of capital assets.</p> <p>This will be replaced by a prudential regime for capital finance, which will, for example, allow councils to determine for themselves how much they can afford to borrow, and to operate within affordable limits in accordance with the prudential regime and recognised accounting codes of practice.</p>	The Bill is expected to receive Royal Assent in late March

Planning Application

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to planning application C/2009/0143/F, to detail the reasons why approval was granted contrary to (i) advice provided by the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside that it would impact negatively on tourism in the area; (ii) recommendations from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board; (iii) advice that the site is an important part of the Giant's Causeway, Antrim and Causeway Coast Signature Project ; and (iv) the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland and Policy TOU 2, Protection of Tourist Assets.

(AQW 4852/11)

Minister of the Environment:

- (i) I am aware of the opinion provided by the Council of Nature Conservation and the Countryside (CNCC) that the development was inappropriate in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is contrary to Policy DES 4 of the Planning Strategy for Rural Northern Ireland (PSRNI). CNCC was also of the view that the proposal is contrary to Policy TOU 2 of the PSRNI.

NIEA assessed the impact on areas within its remit which included the AONB. They considered that, on balance, the proposal was acceptable in the long term within the AONB and provided Planning Service with conditions to be attached to any permission granted. Taking into account the assessments undertaken by Planning Service on advice from NIEA, I am satisfied that the proposal will not result in a negative impact on tourism in the area.

- (ii) & (iii) I am aware of the opinion provided by NITB stating they do not support the proposal for a landfill site at this location.

I am however satisfied that the proposal will not impact negatively on tourism in the area. While I am aware that part of the Ulster Way is in close proximity to the site, the vast majority of the route threads its way through Cam Forest and Springwell Forest to the South and West of the site. Although there will be an increase in HGV traffic along the Craigmore Road, it already is a feature within the immediate vicinity and it will be relatively short-term in nature.

The proposed landfill is located within an existing quarry and other quarries also feature in the surrounding area. In this regard, I am satisfied that the proposal will not result in an adverse impact on the area as a tourism asset.

- (iv) Policy TOU 2 of the PSRNI is applicable as the proposed site is located within Binevenagh AONB and is within a Countryside Policy Area.

NIEA assessed the impact on areas within its remit which included the AONB. They considered that on balance the proposal was acceptable in the long term within the AONB and provided Planning Service with advice on conditions that could be attached to any permission granted. In this regard, I am therefore satisfied that the proposal is not contrary to Policy TOU 2 of the PSRNI.

Suicide Prevention

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of the Environment to outline where suicide prevention sits within his Department's Programme for Government.

(AQW 4856/11)

Minister of the Environment: The current Programme for Government, which spans 2008 – 2011, contains 23 high level Public Sector Agreements, and responsibility for their delivery lies with the NICS departments. PSA 8 sets a target for the reduction in the incidence of suicide in Northern Ireland by at least 15%, and is led by the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

My department does not have any targets directly relating to PSA 8 and suicide prevention. It has lead responsibility for PSA 14 (Promoting Safer Roads) and PSA 22 (Protecting our Environment and reducing our Carbon Footprint). In addition it contributes part input to PSA 20 (Improving public services), for which DFP is the lead Department. The Department also reports on 3 Key Goals and Commitments for which it has responsibility relating to the work of Planning Service, NIEA and Environmental Policy Division.

The Department recognises that suicide prevention is a communal issue and supports DHSSPS's Protect Life suicide prevention strategy and the work of the Ministerial Co-ordination group on Suicide Prevention which comprises representatives from DHSSPS, OFMDFM, DCAL, DE, DRD and DEL.

Kerb-Side Glass Recycling Facilities

Mr P Butler asked the Minister of the Environment when all District Councils will provide kerb-side glass recycling facilities for households.

(AQW 4866/11)

Minister of the Environment: Northern Ireland is required to meet the European statutory household waste recycling target of 50% by 2020. The most recent data indicates that we are currently recycling around 35.6% of household waste. Much progress has been made to date and councils and householders are to be commended for their efforts in this regard. It is clear that further progress is required in coming years to ensure we can deliver the statutory targets.

Waste management is a key function of local government and my Department has no statutory powers to compel Councils to provide a particular kerb-side collection scheme. I also recognise that Councils will have their own priorities and methods for providing kerb-side collections for different waste streams in order to meet statutory targets.

However I have made it clear that waste is a top priority for me and my Department. I have made available resources to local government through the Rethink Waste communications campaign and the Rethink Waste Fund. The latter, in particular, has seen over £4 million capital funding earmarked by the Department for local government waste initiatives including kerb-side glass collections, for example, funding of a Larne Borough Council project to enable the Council to collect an additional 295 tonnes of glass per annum for recycling from around 500 households.

Draft PPS 16 - Tourism

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the involvement of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in the formulation of Draft PPS 16 - Tourism.

(AQW 4870/11)

Minister of the Environment: The Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment was fully involved in the formulation of Draft PPS 16. Officials from both Departments met regularly to discuss issues and progress policy development. My Department worked with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to ensure that the impact of the policy on rural areas was fully considered.

Heavy Goods Vehicles Drivers

Mr G Campbell asked the Minister of the Environment whether he is aware of any distinctions between Heavy Goods Vehicles drivers who have been diagnosed as diabetic and are based in (i) Northern Ireland; (ii) Great Britain; and (iii) the rest of Europe, as regards their entitlement to drive as part of their job description.

(AQW 4929/11)

Minister of the Environment: The current medical standards regarding the physical fitness of applicants for, and holders of, Northern Ireland driving licences are derived from Council directive 91/439/EEC of 29 July 1991. Commonly referred to as the second directive on driver licensing, this applies to all member states of the European Union. The minimum health standards in both Northern Ireland and Great Britain equal or exceed the requirements of the second directive.

Under the second directive, diabetes requiring insulin treatment is prescribed as a relevant disability in respect of Group 2 licences such as those for the drivers of goods vehicles and passenger-carrying vehicles. This means that the Department must refuse to grant a licence to a person who suffers from diabetes requiring insulin treatment. An exception exists where the licence applied for confers

entitlement to drive only medium-sized goods vehicles and the applicant is able to meet certain prescribed conditions.

There are no differences between the substance or application of the medical standards in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Some minor variations may exist among the member states of the European Union. However, all are required by the second directive to refuse to issue Group 2 licences to persons who suffer from diabetes requiring insulin treatment, other than in the most exceptional cases.

Illegal Waste Activity at 67 Tullyrusk Road, Hannahstown, Belfast

Mr M McLaughlin asked the Minister of the Environment whether his Department's officials have established that illegal waste activity is continuing to take place at 67 Tullyrusk Road, Hannahstown, Belfast, BT17 ONJ.

(AQW 5046/11)

Minister of the Environment: Officials from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency's Environmental Crime Unit received a report of this allegation on 28 February 2011. In line with their prioritisation of the investigation of serious and persistent environmental offences, officials will be investigating the site this week.

Removal of Waste at Ballymartin Gaelic Athletic Club in Ballymartin

Mr W Clarke asked the Minister of the Environment to outline the time-scale for the removal of the waste at Ballymartin Gaelic Athletic Club in Ballymartin, County Down.

(AQW 5049/11)

Minister of the Environment: Discussions on arrangements for the Ballymartin repatriation are ongoing, but my officials anticipate that work at the site will commence in June 2011.

NI Water Infrastructure

Mr B McCrea asked the Minister of the Environment how many applications they have received, in each of the last three years, that have required an extension to the existing NI Water infrastructure.

(AQW 5051/11)

Minister of the Environment: Due to the way information is recorded on the current system of electronic data retrieval, in order to provide accurate figures for the information requested can only be provided by carrying out a manual search of all our existing files in Headquarters and in all Divisional Planning Offices. This is disproportionate in terms of time and costs and would result in un-validated statistics being released.

Licensed Taxi Drivers

Mr C McDevitt asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the total number of licensed taxi drivers broken down by (i) public hire drivers; and (ii) private hire drivers.

(AQW 5134/11)

Minister of the Environment: At 8 March 2011, there were 19,191 licensed taxi drivers in Northern Ireland. Although taxi vehicles are classified as either for public hire or for private hire, there is no differentiation between public and private hire drivers. All licensed drivers may drive either public or private hire taxi vehicles.

Wind Farm at Fardross, Slieve Beagh, Clogher

Mr W Irwin asked the Minister of the Environment, given that a wind farm was recently granted planning approval in Cumbria at a location where there is a recorded presence of hen harriers, what steps he is

taking to ensure parity of policy in the processing of the planning application, M/2006/1754/F, for a wind farm at Fardross, Slieve Beagh, Clogher.

(AQW 5160/11)

Minister of the Environment: In Northern Ireland planning applications for wind farm developments have received permissions in locations where the presence of hen harriers has been recorded. These include Lendrums Bridge, Hunters Hill, Screggagh, Tievnameenta, Bin Mountain Lough Hill, Gruig and Slieve Rushen windfarms. The presence of the hen harrier is not in itself an absolute block on windfarm development.

Planning application M/2006/1754/F for a windfarm at Fardross, Slieve Beagh relates to a site lying entirely within the Slieve Beagh Special Protection Area, a European designated site. I have instructed my officials to write to the European Commission to ask them to consider our approach in the light of the Commission's own guidance on Wind Energy and European designated sites and the challenging targets set for renewable energy in Northern Ireland.

Health Risks Associated with the Illegal Waste Sites

Mr T Gallagher asked the Minister of the Environment (i) for his assessment of the health risks associated with the illegal waste sites at (a) Slattinagh, Garrison; and (b) Moneygar, Trillick; and (ii) if he can confirm that both sites are safe.

(AQW 5162/11)

Minister of the Environment: Work of repatriating illegally deposited waste back to the Republic of Ireland commenced in August 2010 when waste was removed from the first two sites at Slattinagh, Co. Fermanagh and Trillick in Tyrone to an agreed licensed landfill in Donegal. The nature of waste in both sites was similar – mixed household and commercial waste.

There are a number of risks to human health known to be associated with the way waste behaves in landfill, which are obviously more serious at illegal sites such as these where extensive controls do not exist. These include the risk of odours, release of harmful substances to air or drinking water and release of explosive landfill gas which can migrate over large distances.

Before removing waste from the sites, NIEA and Dublin City Council engaged environmental consultants to assist in the preparation of method statements to ensure works were carried out in a way that protected the environment and human health.

As the waste has now been removed from each site the source of risk to human health has also been removed.

Rose Energy Incinerator at Glenavy

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of the Environment, in light of Mr Justice McCloskey's comments on 2 March 2010, about how the Planning Service should consider the legal submissions from the Communities Against the Lough Neagh Incinerator before issuing a planning decision notice for the Rose Energy incinerator at Glenavy, whether he intends to make such a decision before dissolution of the Assembly or if he will allow the Planning Service time to consider all the important outstanding issues.

(AQW 5185/11)

Minister of the Environment: I am aware that in adjourning the Judicial Review (JR) proceedings Mr Justice McCloskey observed that there are a number of steps in the planning process that still have to be taken, the next one being the issuing of the formal Notice of Opinion and that for the Court to intervene at this stage in the planning process would be inappropriate and could cause delay. I am also aware that Mr Justice McCloskey noted that an application to the Courts for Judicial Review should be a matter of last resort and that this is not an appropriate time for them to intervene. Mr Justice McCloskey adjourned the proceedings to enable the Department to complete the next steps in the planning process.

I wish to consider Mr Justice McCloskey's comments carefully before reaching a view on the way forward. Once I do, I shall of course advise Assembly Members of my decision.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Job Cuts

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the number of job cuts that were planned by each Department in the period 2008-11.

(AQW 4388/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel (Mr S Wilson): The number of reductions already achieved since 1 April 2008 and projected reductions up to 1 April 2011 are set out in the attached table.

Planned reductions in Posts (full-time equivalent) in NICS Departments.

Department	Reductions Achieved from 1 April 2008 to 1 January 2011	Projected further Reductions to 1 April 2011	Total Reductions 2008 to 2011
DARD	154.0	2	156.0
DCAL	45.0	3.7	48.7
DE	57.9	0.6	58.5
DEL	+151.7	+38.9	+190.6
DETI [^]	130.9	+0.9	130
DFP	97.4	+8.2	89.2
DHSSPS	267.5	17.5	285.0
DOE	460.1	28.3	488.4
DRD	264.7	0	264.7
DSD	568.0	79.7	647.7
OFMDFM	64.7	0	64.7
DOJ*	+0.9	0	+0.9
PPS*	0	16	16
Total	1957.6	99.8	2057.5

* DOJ/PPS figures compared to starting baselines at 12 April 2011 (when they joined the NICS)

“+” figure represents an increase in posts.

[^] DETI includes Health and Safety Executive NI

Figures are net of any additional posts transferred into the NICS (eg NIO staff to Central Procurement Division, DFP, or Fisheries Conservancy Board to DARD) and include posts which transferred out of the NICS (eg Tribunal staff seconded to NI Court Service before devolution).

Parking Charges

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he has received any representations from retailers who are seeking rates reductions due to the impact parking charges have had on retail footfall and sales.

(AQW 4690/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: I have received no representations from retailers seeking rates reductions due to the impact of parking charges on retail footfall and sales.

This is a matter that is raised from time to time with the District Valuers (within LPS) by individual retailers who appeal their assessments, but it is not an issue that predominates

HR Connect

Mr D O'Loan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the research report quoted in NIPSA Reports, January 2011 which states that nearly half of Civil Service employees had a negative experience of HR Connect, and that less than one-third of respondents reported a positive experience; and what steps he is taking to address this issue.

(AQW 4805/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: There are a number of strands of work underway which are expected to improve the overall customer experience and satisfaction with HRConnect.

These include completion of the outstanding project deliverables and the improvements identified in the 2010/11 Business Plan. A Service Improvement Plan for 2011/12 which aims to target the areas which are of most concern to customers is under development and implementation of this plan will commence in April 2011.

Legislation

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail all legislation, since May 2007, that has gone through, or is going through, the Assembly which devolves powers or responsibilities from his Department to local government authorities.

(AQW 4883/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Since 2007, the Department of Finance and Personnel has enacted the Building Regulations (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2009 which devolved powers to local government authorities.

NICS Cycle to Work Scheme

Mr B Armstrong asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to explain the delay in the commencement of the NI Civil Service Cycle to Work Scheme.

(AQW 4922/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: There are two issues currently delaying the proposed Cycle to Work Scheme. First, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs has changed its guidance on aspects of cycle to work schemes, which means that the pilot that was run in DRD is no longer suitable for full roll out across the NICS unless changes are made. DFP need to assess the impact of this.

Secondly and more importantly, introducing a scheme means that changes need to be made to the HR systems. This change sits alongside a range of other important changes that need to be made to our systems, some of them arising from statute and others associated with pay. These take priority.

Civil Service Pay Award

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether all Civil Servants have received the incremental pay rises to which they are entitled.

(AQW 4943/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Civil Servants have received incremental payments due in respect of the 2009 pay award. The detail of the 2010 pay award is currently the subject of discussions with the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance.

Decentralisation of Civil Service Jobs

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on the decentralisation of Departments and the relocation of Civil Service jobs.

(AQW 4988/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: There is no centrally directed programme for the decentralisation of Departments or the relocation of civil service jobs. Any decisions about relocating Departments or civil service jobs will have to be taken on the basis of the normal considerations of business need, value for money and affordability.

Public Expenditure Reductions

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what is the likelihood that the remaining £758m of the £1.6bn of additional revenue to help mitigate the impact of public expenditure reductions will be realised; and when he will be in a position to make an announcement on this matter.

(AQW 4997/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The £758 million of potential additional revenue will only be factored into firm departmental allocations when there is confidence that the measures can be delivered.

The Final Budget publication reflects only those revenue generating measures that are robust. The Budget Review Group will continue to explore and develop, where appropriate, all remaining new revenue raising proposals.

Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit's Review of the DHSSPS

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the timescale for the Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit's review of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

(AQW 5118/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: As part of the finalisation of Budget 2011-15, the NI Executive agreed that the Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit (PEDU) would be commissioned to identify the scope to make savings in the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS).

A draft Terms of Reference for this review has been developed with a significant amount of work to be taken forward in the coming months. However, the key issue is implementation which means that there will need to be an ongoing role for PEDU to provide support to the department in the timely and effective implementation of actions to deliver savings.

Increase in Rates Collection

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the expected level of increase in rates collection by Land and Property Services; and to outline the financial implications this will have for local government.

(AQW 5143/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Land & Property Services will this year collect or discharge an estimated 96% of April 2010 rate assessments. This is an increase from 94.5% in 2009-10 and indicates continuing progress in improving the operation of the rating system. I expect there to be further consolidation of rate collection performance in 2011-12.

The financial implications of rate income for district councils are set out in the Penny Product figures that are estimated for each Council in November of each year, with quarterly updates of progress during the year. The most recent figures provided to Councils were the 2011-12 Estimated Penny Product (EPP) in November 2010, and a quarterly progress report on 2010-11 Actual Penny Product in January 2011. The EPP for 2011-12 showed an average 0.97% growth on 2010-11.

In essence, the Penny Product is calculated from rate assessments raised, not rates collected. Income to Councils therefore increases if rate assessments increase – either through new entries in the Valuation List, or through an increase in the District Rate. Improvements in collection levels do not directly affect the Penny Product.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Land Deemed Surplus to Requirements

Dr A McDonnell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail any (i) land; and (ii) property owned by his Department which is currently deemed surplus to requirements, including the location of the land or property and any plans for its disposal.

(AQW 777/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Mr M McGimpsey): A table showing DHSSPS retained land and property deemed surplus to requirements is attached.

DHSSPS retained land and property currently deemed surplus to requirements	Location of land and property
Braniel Health Clinic	16 Glen Road BELFAST
Land and property at Knockbracken Healthcare Park	Saintfield Road BELFAST
Property at Falls Road	149 Falls Road BELFAST
Property at Falls Road	151 Falls Road BELFAST
Ormeau Road Clinic	137-141 Ormeau Road BELFAST
Land at Downshire Hospital	Ardglass Road DOWNPATRICK
Land and property at Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital	Donaghane and Riverview Road OMAGH
Land at Drumcoo	Derrygore Road ENNISKILLEN
Glasvey Special Care School	Loughermore Road BALLYKELLY
Land and property at Gransha Hospital Site	Gransha Park LONDONDERRY
Land at Omagh General Hospital	Woodside Avenue OMAGH
Land at Knock Golf Club	Upper Newtownards Road DUNDONALD
Land at Whiteabbey Hospital	34 Station Road NEWTOWNABBEY

There are plans for each of the identified properties. These plans are subject to confirmation of funding, resolution of planning and legal issues and verification from the relevant HSC Trust on land requirement for future health needs.

Review into the Western Health and Social Care Trust

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when he will be in a position to provide an answer to AQW 3257/11, which was due for answer on 13 January 2011.
(AQW 3572/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The member was provided with an answer to AQW 3257/11 on 24 January 2011.

Efficiency Plan for the Health Committee

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will provide an efficiency plan for the Health Committee as part of his budget proposals for 2011-2015.
(AQW 3727/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Whilst it is clear that, in order to deliver services within a budget which is below that required to keep pace with inflation, demographic change and increased demand, it will be necessary to deliver efficiency savings, I am not in a position to provide such a plan. The work which the HSCB has undertaken would suggest that in order to do this without damaging services would require strategic change both in terms of service configuration and delivery and would require me to have a budget of £4.8 million not the £4.6 million which the Draft Budget proposes. It is inevitable that with the extent of shortfall between the proposed budget and assessed need that there will be cuts to services. That will be unavoidable.

Interviews with Media Outlets

Mr G Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many bids for interviews he received from media outlets between the 24 January 2011 and 31 January 2011, in connection with the health incidents at the Western Health and Social Care Trust; and how many interviews he carried out as a result of these requests.
(AQW 4036/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: A total of four interview bids were received by my department during this period.

All bids were referred to and interviews conducted by the HSC Board.

Follow-up Patient Review Appointments

Mr T Buchanan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many (i) 3 month; and (ii) 6 month follow-up patient review appointments were cancelled in each Health and Social Care Trust in each of the last three years.
(AQW 4657/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information on the number of (i) 3 month and (ii) 6 month follow-up patient review appointments that were cancelled in each Health and Social Care Trust in each of the last three years is not collected centrally by my Department. Provision of these data by Health and Social Care Trusts would incur a disproportionate cost.

Draft Budget 2011-15

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether the reference in the draft Budget 2011-15 to stopping the practice of putting new patients on high-cost drugs includes Anti-Tumour Necrosis Factor drugs.
(AQW 4658/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My Department remains committed to providing specialist drugs, including anti-TNF drugs, where possible throughout Northern Ireland. In that regard,

my Department included a substantial bid for demographic change and demand growth as part of its request for funding over the Draft Budget period.

However, whilst the demand for services continues to grow, the Draft Budget proposals leave my Department with an estimated funding shortfall of £800 million by 2014/15. This will present significant challenges in order to deliver on the overall objectives for health, social services and public safety and maintain the current level of services.

Anti-Tumour Necrosis Factor Drugs

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patients are currently on a waiting list for Anti-Tumour Necrosis Factor drugs.

(AQW 4659/11)

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

Draft Budget 2011-15

Mr C Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he intends to protect statutory funding for the Northern Ireland Hospice in the draft Budget 2011-15.

(AQW 4669/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My Department remains committed to protecting and supporting palliative care throughout Northern Ireland. In that regard, my Department included a substantial bid for demographic change as part of its request for funding over the Draft Budget period.

However, whilst the demand for social care services continues to grow, the Draft Budget proposals leave my Department with an estimated funding shortfall of £800 million by 2014/15. This will present significant challenges in order to deliver on the overall objectives for health, social services and public safety and maintain the current level of services.

Draft Budget 2011-15

Mr C Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether funding will be allocated in the draft Budget 2011-15 to support delivery plans associated with 'Living Matters: Dying Matters - A Palliative and End of Life Care Strategy for Adults in Northern Ireland'.

(AQW 4670/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I remain committed to protecting and supporting palliative care throughout Northern Ireland. In that regard, my Department included a substantial bid for demographic change as part of its request for funding over the Draft Budget period.

However, whilst the demand for services continues to grow, the Draft Budget proposals leave my Department with an estimated funding shortfall of £800 million by 2014/15. This will present significant challenges in order to deliver on the overall objectives for health, social services and public safety and maintain the current level of services.

Neurology Referrals

Mr Pól Callaghan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the current anticipated waiting times for (i) urgent; and (ii) routine neurology referrals in each Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 4673/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The waiting times for (i) urgent and (ii) routine neurology referrals in each Health and Social Care Trust at the 18th February 2011 are outlined in the tables below.

(i) Urgent Referrals

HSC Trust	Patients Waiting for a First Neurology Appointment by Weeks Waiting (Urgent referrals)				
	0 - 6	> 6 - 9	> 9 - 13	> 13 - 26	> 26
Belfast	192	26	26	20	0
Northern	58	16	23	34	3
South Eastern	36	3	20	44	6
Southern	5	1	1	1	0
Western	39	5	2	8	0

Source: HSC Trusts

(ii) Routine Referrals

HSC Trust	Patients Waiting for a First Neurology Appointment by Weeks Waiting (Routine referrals)				
	0 - 6	> 6 - 9	> 9 - 13	> 13 - 26	> 26
Belfast	586	119	232	624	6
Northern	169	30	82	285	117
South Eastern	134	29	68	107	9
Southern	138	4	18	12	0
Western	258	70	118	463	274

Source: HSC Trusts

Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services

Mr C McDevitt asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the Equality Impact Assessment on accommodation for Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust area.

(AQW 4680/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: In March 2010 the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust consulted on the proposal to relocate Child and Adolescent Mental Health out-patient Services to Forster Green. On 16th February 2011, the Trust issued a letter to all those who responded to the Equality Impact Assessment Consultation Document. After consideration of all responses to consultation, the Trust decided that the proposed move should not proceed.

Fertility Services

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will continue to invest at least the current annual amount of £1.5 million in fertility services over the next four years.

(AQW 4725/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Currently, fertility services have recurrent funding of over £3m per year.

As the future budget has not yet been finalised, it is too early to predict what the possible impact may be on service provision across the whole of the health service. However, if I have to consider further controls on budgets, no area of the health service will be free from scrutiny and funding allocations will have to be prioritised.

Infertility Services

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of how the planned reduction in grants to the voluntary sector might affect infertility services.

(AQW 4726/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My Department does not provide core grant funding to any voluntary sector body involved in the provision of fertility services.

The commissioning of fertility services, including counselling services which may be commissioned from the voluntary sector, is a matter for the Health and Social Care Board. The Board will commission services based on assessed population needs, with due consideration given to competing priorities for health and social care.

Private Office Staff

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the (i) number; and (ii) grade of staff employed in his Private Office.

(AQW 4728/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: There are 12 staff employed in my Private Office, broken down by grade as follows:

Grade	Number of Staff
Staff Officer	1
Executive Officer 1	1
Executive Officer 2	4
Administrative Officer	4
Administrative Assistant	1
Typist	1

HomeStart Scheme in Newcastle and Ballynahinch

Ms M Ritchie asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will commit funding to the HomeStart scheme in Newcastle and Ballynahinch, as the organisation has now reached crisis point.

(AQW 4738/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My Department, through the Health and Social Care Board, is currently providing financial support to the majority of locally-based Home Start schemes, including Down District which incorporates Newcastle and Ballynahinch. This funding is delivered through the Health and Social Care Trusts and, as I understand it, will continue in 2011/12.

Action on Disability

Ms C Ní Chuilín asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given that he has stated his intention to support frontline services, whether a funding bid has been made for Action on Disability for the 2011-15 period, an organisation that provides vital services and support for children and young people with a disability and their families.

(AQW 4745/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My Department has submitted a range of funding bids to meet the increased demand over the 2011-15 period across health, social care and

public safety services, including the needs of people of all ages who have disabilities, and their families.

However the Draft Budget proposals leave my Department with an estimated funding shortfall of £800 million by 2014/15. This will present significant challenges in order to deliver on the overall objectives for health, social services and public safety and maintain the current level of services.

Foyleville Nursing Home

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given that the Western Health and Social Care Trust had determined that it would continually review the operation of Foyleville Nursing Home, why the Trust subsequently decided to close this nursing home.

(AQW 4746/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: As part of its Comprehensive Spending Review proposals in 2008, the Western Health and Social Care Trust proposed that Foyleville Residential Home would cease to operate from 30th September 2009, a recommendation which I endorsed on 9th April 2009.

The Trust subsequently engaged in a 12-week consultation exercise on the proposal, and as a result of this consultation, the Trust revised its proposal and recommended that Foyleville continue to provide Residential Care to existing permanent residents for as long as it continued to meet their assessed care needs.

The Trust continued to meet with residents, their families and carers, and staff to review the situation and ensure Foyleville continued to meet the assessed care needs of each individual. In May 2010, the number of permanent residents had reduced to 5. In consultation with those residents, their families and carers, and staff in the home, it was agreed that residents could have their social care needs better met in alternative accommodation. The final residents moved from Foyleville on 14th June 2010 and it ceased to operate as a Statutory Residential Home.

Care Packages

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how care packages to assist older people in their homes are allocated; and at what stage is it deemed more suitable for a person to enter a residential facility.

(AQW 4755/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Care packages are allocated to older people following a comprehensive assessment of each individual's needs. The assessment process includes an evaluation against the risks to the client's independence that result from needs both in the immediate and long term. In line with Regional Access Criteria for Domiciliary Care, appropriate domiciliary care services will be provided if the individual risk assessment identifies a critical or substantial risk to independence and help cannot be sourced from elsewhere.

As circumstances change, domiciliary care may not be the best way of supporting some service users. The stage at which an admission to a residential or nursing home is considered will depend on factors such as intensity of each service user's needs, the safety of the service user and care worker, pressure on the family and cost effectiveness of the package.

Colin Area of Belfast

Ms J McCann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what percentage of the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust's annual budget was spent in the Colin area of Belfast, in each of the last four financial years.

(AQW 4756/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Expenditure information is not collected at the level requested and is therefore unavailable.

Compensation Scheme for Patients who Contracted Hepatitis C

Mr G Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether consideration is being given to a compensation scheme for patients who contracted Hepatitis C through contaminated blood, similar to the scheme recently announced for parts of Great Britain.

(AQW 4760/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I am considering the expert review team's report and the recommendations which the Department of Health (London) is implementing for patients affected by contaminated blood.

In principle I would seek to maintain parity with England, however until I have fully considered the financial implications of this along with other pressures on my budget I am not in a position to make any firm commitments on this issue.

Health Service

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department has considered adopting the changes that are being implemented by the Coalition Government to the way the local NHS is run in England and implementing them in the Health Service.

(AQW 4762/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The core aims of the Coalition Government's reforms to the NHS in England have already been addressed in Northern Ireland as part of my reforms of Health and Social Care, which came into effect in April 2009.

For example, I established a Public Health Agency (PHA), specifically charged with improving poor health and wellbeing and addressing inequalities. I have also established Local Commissioning Groups (LCGs) as committees of the Health and Social Care Board. LCGs, which are led by primary care professionals and include members from the voluntary and community sector and local government, are responsible for the assessment of local health and social care needs and the development of services to meet that need.

In November 2010, I launched Primary Care Partnership Pathfinder Projects. Primary Care Partnerships will be established by Local Commissioning Groups to develop and implement integrated care pathways and develop plans for more cost effective prescribing. Membership of PCPs will include health professionals from primary, secondary, and community care sectors as well as social care professionals and patient representatives.

Patient and Client Council

Mr R McCartney asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) why the Patient and Client Council has postponed a series of public meetings that were due to be held in February and March 2011; (ii) for his assessment of the impact this will have on the public's opportunity to express their views on the Health Service; and (iii) whether this series of meetings will be rearranged and held before the end of this Assembly term.

(AQW 4767/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The decision to postpone a series of public meetings due to be held in February and March is as a result of guidelines received by the Department and other public sector bodies from the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service. The guidance advises civil servants on their role and conduct in the run up to an election. The Department informed the Patient Client Council that as a result of this election guidance its officials were no longer able to take part in the roadshows. OFMDFM also indicated that officials from the HSCB should not attend the roadshows as public comment on the issues likely to arise would be outside the election guidance. The decision to postpone the roadshows was entirely a matter for the Patient Client Council.

There is no impact on the public's opportunity to express their views on the Health Service as their views can still be expressed directly to the Patient and Client Council. They can, for example, at any

time inform the Patient and Client Council about their experience of health and social care and share any concerns or comments they may have about health and social care by telephone, email or in writing.

The Patient Client Council has advised that it intends to reschedule the roadshows for after the election.

Fire and Rescue Service

Mr S Moutray asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 4171/11, whether a costing of the deployment of a fire crew to fill a header tank has been carried out. **(AQW 4771/11)**

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service did not carry out a specific costing of the deployment of a fire crew in this case.

Fire and Rescue Service

Mr S Moutray asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 4171/11, on how many occasions in each of the last five years has a fire crew been deployed to fill a header tank.

(AQW 4774/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested was not recorded by Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service prior to December 2010.

Fire and Rescue Service

Mr S Moutray asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 4171/11, to outline the circumstances in which a retained fire crew was deployed to fill a header tank. **(AQW 4776/11)**

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: A retained fire crew was not deployed at this incident.

Ambulances and Fire Appliances: Hoax Call-Outs

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of times (i) ambulances; and (ii) fire appliances attended hoax call-outs in the last twelve months; and the costs incurred.

(AQW 4800/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Between 1 January and 31 December 2010 the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service responded to 824 malicious false alarm calls; the estimated cost was £2,219,032. This represents a 17.3% reduction in mobilisations to malicious false alarms compared to 2009.

During the same period the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) attended 1,526 possible hoax calls. NIAS estimates that responding to hoax calls cost £228,900 in 2010.

Phase II of the Royal Victoria Hospital Redevelopment Plan

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the works that will be carried out in Phase II of the Royal Victoria Hospital redevelopment plan.

(AQW 4806/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Phase 2 of the Royal Group of Hospitals redevelopment programme encompasses 2 distinct projects. Phase 2a saw the completion in June 2007 of a 5 storey Imaging Centre at a capital cost of £2m.

The construction contract for Phase 2b, the Critical Care Building, was signed in July 2008 with completion anticipated in 2012. It includes Accident & Emergency; Theatres; Intensive Care and High Dependency beds; and, a Burns Unit.

In June 2010 I instigated a review of the top 3 floors of this building to ensure that best clinical use of this accommodation might be made, in terms of addressing the areas of highest need. As a result of the review, a business case which is currently being appraised, was prepared. It includes proposals to locate part of the new women's hospital in the new critical care building which is currently under construction.

As well as a plan to locate post natal beds and outpatient services on the top three floors of the critical care building, the proposal includes a new build which will house the remaining maternity services including delivery theatres, birthing rooms, antenatal services and neonatology. This new build will be linked to the main building by a bridge.

Causeway Hospital

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQO 1047/11, what steps have been taken at the Causeway Hospital to sustain services on a 24-hours a day, seven days a week basis.

(AQW 4815/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The delivery of services at the Causeway Hospital is a matter for the Northern Health and Social Care Trust. In recent months, due to difficulties with the recruitment of medical staff the Trust has found it necessary to employ a significant number of locum staff to work in the Causeway Hospital in order to sustain services on a 24 hour day, 7 day week basis. The Trust continues to keep this situation under review.

Swine Flu Admissions to Hospital

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how the number of people admitted to hospital with swine flu is recorded and monitored.

(AQW 4816/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information on people admitted to hospital with swine flu was monitored for both: (i) general hospital beds, and (ii) critical care beds.

- (i) For those patients admitted to general hospital beds, a daily return was set up by the HSC Board from 12 January 2011 for hospitals to report the number of patients each day in a hospital bed with confirmed or suspected swine flu. The information for this daily return was provided from a bed report completed by hospital bed management teams. This information was submitted by each Trust to the HSC Board by noon each day to 3 February 2011 to monitor the impact of swine flu on overall bed occupancy.
- (ii) The Critical Care Network facilitated a daily conference call with all of the critical care units across Northern Ireland to establish the number of patients in critical care each day with both confirmed and suspected swine flu. The Critical Care Network submitted a daily return to the HSC Board to monitor the impact of swine flu on critical care capacity.

Swine Flu Admissions to Hospital

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 4177/11, why the figures for the number of people admitted to hospital with swine flu in each week since 29 November 2010 are not available.

(AQW 4819/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Following assessment of the potential impact of swine flu on health services, the HSCB, in discussion with the PHA and Critical Care Network, took the decision to move to Phase 2 of its Critical Care escalation plan from 5th January 2011. Information on

the numbers of patients with swine flu and other flu-like illness in critical care beds was collated and monitored centrally daily from that date.

Following a further assessment of the situation on Tuesday 11th January, it was decided to centrally collate and monitor information on patients with swine flu symptoms in general hospital beds on a daily basis.

Replies to Assembly Questions

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to how many Assembly Questions he has replied stating that “the information is not available” or that “the information could only be provided at disproportionate cost”, in each year since May 2007; and what this number represents as a percentage of the questions asked in each year.

(AQW 4821/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I refer the member to the answer I gave to AQW 25/11.

Staff Salaries

Mr G Campbell asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many staff paid by his Department received a salary of (i) over £200,000; and (ii) between £100,000 and £200,000 per annum in 2010.

(AQW 4843/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The requested information is available in the Department’s Resource Accounts: these have been published annually since 2001/02, and contain a remuneration report which includes the details sought by the Member.

The Department’s Resource Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2010 is available on the DHSSPSNI website.

Parkinson’s Disease

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of (i) patients diagnosed with Parkinson’s Disease; and (ii) dedicated Parkinson’s nurses, in each Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 4861/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:

- (i) Information on the number of patients diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease is not available.
- (ii) Information on the number of dedicated Parkinson’s nurses employed by each Trust is provided in the table below.

HSC Trust	Headcount	Whole-time Equivalent
Belfast	2	1.8
Northern	1	1.0
South Eastern	0	0
Southern	1	1.0
Western	2	2.0

Source: NI HSC Trusts

IVF and ICSI Fertility Treatment

Mr Pól Callaghan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many (i) couples; and (ii) individuals; received publicly funded (a) IVF; and (b) ICSI fertility treatment, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 4873/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust has advised that activity for IVF and ICSI in the last three years is as itemised in the table below. All treatments were provided to couples. The following information relates to couples only –

Year	IVF	ICSI
2007/08	263	177
2008/09	325	247
2009/10	288	199

Frozen Embryo Transfer

Mr Pól Callaghan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many (i) couples; and (ii) individuals underwent (a) publicly funded frozen embryo transfer; and (b) privately funded frozen embryo transfer within Health and Social Care facilities in each of the last three years.

(AQW 4874/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: As Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety, I am only able to comment on publically funded treatment; any queries on the provision of private services should be directed to the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, who is responsible for the Regional Fertility Centre.

In Northern Ireland, we aspire to provide three cycles of fertility treatment as recommended by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence; however, financial constraints currently make this unachievable. Patients currently receive one cycle of fertility treatment but this is not a full cycle, as the replacement of any frozen embryos has to be financed by the patients. It is hoped that it will be possible to introduce a cycle of frozen embryo transfer (FET) in the future; however, this and further expansion of the service will be dependent on funding availability.

Although we do not routinely provide FET, if a patient eligible for publically funded fertility treatment had a previous private treatment cycle at the RFC and has more than five embryos in storage, then their publically funded cycle must be a FET treatment.

The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust has advised that no individuals have received publically funded FET in the last three years. The following information relates to couples only –

Year	Publically funded FET
2007/08	23
2008/09	11
2009/10	11

Proposed New GP Surgery: Meigh

Mr M Brady asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the proposed new GP surgery in Meigh, including when the work will begin.

(AQW 4919/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Health and Social Care Board has advised that the practice is in the process of finalising finances with their Bank; this is expected to be signed of within the next two weeks.

The project has recently gone out to tender and it is anticipated work will commence in late May or early June, subject to finances being approved.

NI Music Therapy Trust

Mr B McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the educational settings where music therapy is provided for children and young people who have severe learning disabilities in the West Tyrone constituency; and (ii) if he can offer an assurance that funding for NI Music Therapy Trust will continue.

(AQW 5140/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Part (i) of this question is for the Department of Education to answer.

Part (ii) Responsibility for commissioning services at regional level rests with the Health and Social Care Board. The Northern Ireland Music Therapy Trust, being a regional project, should engage directly with the Board about funding issues. It is for the Board to determine the level of funding it makes to individual groups, based on assessed need, the resources it has available to it and its priorities at that time.

In addition, I can advise that the current three-year Departmental funding cycle for Northern Ireland Music Therapy Trust ends in March 2011 and the Trust has applied for a renewal of the grant. This is being considered under the normal Departmental procedures.

Home-Start Schemes in Ballynahinch and Newcastle

Ms M Ritchie asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline his plans for the continuation of funding for Home-Start schemes in Ballynahinch and Newcastle.

(AQW 5159/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Responsibility for commissioning services at a locality level rests with the Health and Social Care Trusts, and projects should engage direct with them about funding issues. It is for the Trusts to determine the level of funding that they make to individual groups, based on assessed need, the resources they have available to them and their priorities at that time. My Department, through the Health and Social Care Board, is currently providing financial support to the majority of locally-based Home Start schemes, including Down District which incorporates Ballynahinch and Newcastle. This funding is delivered through the Health and Social Care Trusts and, as I understand it, will continue in 2011/12. It is for the Down District project to decide how best to use the funding being provided to it.

St Luke's Hospital, Armagh

Mr W Irwin asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the strategic plans for the St. Luke's Hospital site and the future of health provision in Armagh City.

(AQO 1224/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My Department and the Southern Trust are leading on the Strategic Development Plan for the St. Luke's site. A Steering group was established in February 2010, comprising of DHSSPS, the Southern Health and Social Care Trust and Armagh City and District Council, with the aim of developing a strategic plan which takes into account the Estate Requirements of the Southern Health and Social Care Trust and makes best use of the site. Working with stakeholders and interested parties within and external to the Steering Group, they have explored economic alternatives for the use of the site which would benefit the population of Armagh, including users of health and social services.

The Southern HSC Trust has developed a number of service realignments aimed at maximising delivery of safe, high quality effective and efficient care for the Armagh area. These plans have included the establishment of a Centre of Excellence for Older People's services delivering integrated multi-disciplinary care teams including Dementia care in the Mullinure Building on the St. Luke's site.

Royal Victoria Hospital: Critical Care Centre

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the new critical care centre at the Royal Victoria Hospital will be completed.

(AQO 1225/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The new Critical Care building, currently under construction is due to be completed during 2012 and, if approved, the new planned maternity element of the scheme will be finished in 2014.

However, I submitted bids for £1.8bn of capital to address the legacy of under investment and I have received less than half of that, £851m. With contractual commitments of £250m and annual fixed costs of £100m for maintenance of an ageing HSC estate this leaves only £200m for new investment.

This level of funding is insufficient to meet the demands being placed on the health service and the impact on the health capital programme will be disastrous. Some very difficult decisions are going to have to be made.

Royal Victoria Hospital: Neurology

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the impact on patient care arising from the reduction in neurology beds at the Royal Victoria Hospital.

(AQO 1230/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The specialist neurology unit in the Royal Victoria Hospital continues to provide a high quality service to patients from across Northern Ireland. An analysis of the monthly activity for inpatients and day cases indicates a continuing increase in admissions compared with the previous year. However with the exception of video EEG the 13 week target for inpatients and day cases will be achieved by the end of March 2011

In respect of the recent changes made as part of the Trust's modernisation programme in Neurology, I have been absolutely assured by the Trust that the reduction in the number of beds in the unit will not impact on patient care. In addition waiting list initiative clinics are held on a regular basis and additional clinics have been provided for both new and review outpatients.

A new 'Hold and Treat' system recently introduced will ensure full utilisation of clinic capacity and deliver improvements in terms of waiting times.

Funding is also available to appoint an additional consultant neurologist later this year and this will help to ensure the delivery of more responsive services.

Hospitals: Delayed Discharges

Ms M Ritchie asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if there are any plans to address the issue of delayed patient discharges, following the Public Accounts Committee's report on Arrangements for Ensuring the Quality of Care in Homes for Older People.

(AQO 1231/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My Department is preparing a formal response to the Public Accounts Committee's recent report on Arrangements for Ensuring the Quality of Care in Care Homes for Older People. This will be set out in a detailed Memorandum of Reply to be compiled and published by the Department of Finance and Personnel.

Plans to continue to avoid delayed patient discharges will depend on the scale of the resources made available in the final draft of the 2011-2015 health budget.

DHSSPS: Budget 2011-15

Rev Dr R Coulter asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of his Department's budget allocation in the draft Budget 2011-15.

(AQO 1232/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The draft Budget settlement for my Department is a bad settlement. The Executive has shattered the principle of parity of services. We can no longer proudly claim that there is a national health service.

I need the same settlement for health and social care as DoH in England - 1.3% over inflation over a four year period to give people a recognisable service. Even with that, just as in England, I would still have to find £600 million further cost reductions to keep the service to the patient at the same level.

Even with the additional funding that has recently been made available in the final Budget this still leaves me with the totally unrealistic task of identifying in excess of £100m savings over the next few weeks simply to achieve financial balance alone.

Hospital Appointments

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the report into hospital appointments within Health and Social Care Trusts will be available.

(AQO 1233/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I am not aware of the existence of any report into hospital appointments. I understand from the member's office that she is specifically asking about review appointments.

Trusts have advised me that they are implementing a range of measures, including arranging additional clinics, to meet the targets that I have set.

NHS: Bureaucracy

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he is taking to reduce bureaucracy in the Health Service.

(AQO 1234/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: As a result of the RPA reforms I have implemented there has been a reduction of 1,600 administrative posts to date, saving over £49m per annum. The number of senior managers has reduced by 57% and I have delivered efficiencies of £344m per annum the largest Budget 2007 efficiencies of any NI Department.

I continue to roll out the use of information technology to support the frontline. By exploiting modern technology new clinical systems, such as Electronic Referrals, and the Electronic Care Record we can both improve patient safety and offer significant potential for efficiency gains .

Altnagelvin Area Hospital: Radiotherapy Unit

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he has had any recent discussions with the Minister of Finance and Personnel in relation to the Radiotherapy Unit in Altnagelvin Hospital.

(AQO 1235/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I have met with the Minister of Finance and Personnel 4 times since September 2010 to discuss my budget, however I have not had any formal meetings with him to specifically discuss the Radiotherapy Unit in Altnagelvin Hospital.

Officials in my Department are having ongoing discussions with officials from the Department of Finance and Personnel on the Business Case for the new Unit.

Craigavon Area Hospital: X-rays

Mr S Moutray asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the review by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority on the handling of X-rays at Craigavon Area Hospital.

(AQO 1236/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: On 15 February 2011 in response to public concerns about the reading and reporting of plain film x-ray examinations I commissioned the RQIA to carry out an independent review on the handling and reporting arrangements for radiological investigations across Northern Ireland. The Terms of Reference for the review have been issued and RQIA will provide me with an initial report by 24 (26th) March 2011. Given the short period of time that the review has been underway it would not be reasonable to ask for an update at this stage

Antrim Area Hospital: Palliative Care Unit

Mr A McQuillan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what impact the Palliative Care Unit, due to open this year, at Antrim Area Hospital will have on the Robinson Palliative Care Unit in Ballymoney.

(AQO 1237/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The existing beds within the Robinson Hospital in Ballymoney are not specialist palliative care beds but general beds made available for patients with palliative care needs. I am advised that no change to the number of these beds is envisaged by the Trust.

The Northern Trust has invested £3.22m, at the Antrim Area Hospital site, to provide the first ever specialist palliative care beds in the Trust area. The new unit will provide a purpose-built environment, staffed by a specialist team. The unit will offer a comfortable and caring environment for patients beyond the scope of a normal hospital ward. Patients, their families and carers will be able to access a wide range of services including expert clinical assessment and symptom management, rehabilitation, emotional and social support, practical help, complementary therapies and respite care.

Department of Justice

Education and Training for Prisoners

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister of Justice what steps he has taken to ensure that education and training is obligatory for prisoners serving a sentence of more than three months.

(AQW 4809/11)

Minister of Justice (Mr D Ford): Education and training is not obligatory for prisoners over the age of 16 unless forming part of a court order. However, NIPS actively encourages both sentenced and remand prisoners to participate in a range of academic and non-academic education classes and training courses. This includes an assessment of their essential skills and learning and skills needs on committal, discussion of opportunities with resettlement panels and linking education and training to sentence plans and prisoners' regimes. Where a prisoner agrees to attend an education or training course as part of their sentence plan they are expected to attend, any unreasonable failure to comply can affect their regime status with a consequential impact on access to approved privileges.

Legislation

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister of Justice to detail all legislation, since May 2007, that has gone through, or is going through, the Assembly which devolves powers or responsibilities from his Department to local government authorities.

(AQW 4848/11)

Minister of Justice: Part III of the Justice Bill, which is currently proceeding through the Northern Ireland Assembly, requires district councils to establish Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs). Following Further Consideration Stage on 07 March, Schedule 1 of the Bill provides councils with a range of powers including the determining of membership of the PCSPs; appointment or nomination of political or independent members, and removal of any member; appointment of chair; indemnity of members; insuring members against accidents; and payment of member expenses. Schedule 2 of the Bill provides Belfast City Council with similar powers in relation to District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships.

As the Department of Justice came into existence on 12th April 2010, legislation before this date is not applicable.

Suicide Prevention

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Justice to outline where suicide prevention sits within his Department's Programme for Government.

(AQW 4857/11)

Minister of Justice: Suicide prevention continues to be a high priority for my Department and its Executive Agencies and Arms Length Bodies. For instance, the Northern Ireland Prison Service, the Youth Justice Agency, the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland act as delivery partners for the Northern Ireland suicide prevention strategy and action plan, 'Protect Life: A Shared Vision'. In addition, many of their frontline staff have received Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST).

The Ministerial Forum on Safer Custody, which I chair, is working with senior representatives from the criminal justice, healthcare and voluntary sectors to promote and support the development of best practice in the area of safer custody in our prisons. Accurate and informed risk assessment when a person enters police custody is essential for the management of the risk that a person may attempt or complete suicide. Youth Justice Agency staff work with children who are assessed as being a high risk to themselves on issues such as self-esteem and relationships.

In the related area of mental health, my officials have established a multi-disciplinary, cross-Departmental Criminal Justice Board Mental Health Sub-group and are working closely with the Department of Health and Social Services in relation to the civil and criminal justice implications of the Bamford Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability.

Larne Probation Office

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Justice to outline his plans for the future of the Larne Probation Office.

(AQW 4986/11)

Minister of Justice: The PBNI Larne Office is currently under review in line with other parts of the Probation estate. The review is expected to be completed by June 2011. The Probation Board is considering options for the continuing provision of service to clients in Larne and the surrounding areas and seeking to maintain the current level of service.

Larne Probation Office

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Justice (i) if there are any plans to close the Larne Probation Office, and when these plans would become effective; (ii) for his assessment of the impact of such a closure on staff; and (iii) where existing and new clients would be expected to attend.

(AQW 4990/11)

Minister of Justice: The situation is as follows:

- (i) The PBNI Larne Office is currently under review in line with other parts of the Probation estate. The review is expected to be completed by June 2011. The Probation Board is considering options for the continuing provision of service to clients in Larne and the surrounding areas and seeking to maintain the current level of service.
- (ii) If the Probation presence in Larne is changed from the current Probation Office (which operates on a full-time basis) to a Reporting Centre (operating on a part-time basis only), staff will be re-located to the Antrim Road, Belfast Office, which is in the same team area. Staff will attend the Larne Reporting Centre in support of their supervision of adjudicated offenders.
- (iii) Existing and new clients would be expected to attend the current Larne office for the immediate future. If a decision was taken not to retain a full-time office in Larne, existing and new offenders would be expected to attend a reporting centre in the Larne area.

Hazel Stewart

Mr P Givan asked the Minister of Justice whether the defendant, Hazel Stewart, is in receipt of legal aid, and if so, to detail the cost to date.

(AQW 5097/11)

Minister of Justice: The Legal Services Commission (the Commission) has advised that Hazel Stewart was granted criminal legal aid by the courts for legal representation in the Magistrates' Court and in the Crown Court.

The bills for legal representation in the Magistrates' Court have been assessed and paid and the total costs were £13,135.10 (excluding VAT of £2,298.64).

The Commission has not received any bills for assessment for the Crown Court trial. Provisional estimates suggest that the cost is unlikely to be less than £62,000 (including VAT).

PSNI: Back Pay

Mr R Beggs asked the Minister of Justice for an update on when PSNI civilian staff will receive their back pay entitlement.

(AQO 1246/11)

Minister of Justice: I am very conscious that there has been an expectation amongst police support staff that the issue relating to a potential Equal Pay settlement would have been concluded by now, I continue in my determination to see the resolution of the issue as soon as possible. Members will be aware that resolution will require further discussion between DFP, PSNI and the Policing Board. The DOJ will continue to facilitate that dialogue.

Family Courts: Mediation

Mrs M O'Neill asked the Minister of Justice to outline the mediation process available in Family Courts.
(AQO 1247/11)

Minister of Justice: The processes governing mediation before the Family Courts in Northern Ireland are set out in the "Children Order Advisory Committee Best Practice Guidance".

The guidance emphasises the potential benefits of using mediation in appropriate cases and encourages legal practitioners to give early consideration to a referral to Family Mediation for a pre-mediation information and assessment appointment.

Ideally cases would be referred to Family Mediation before issuing court proceedings. Alternatively, when a case is first listed before the court, the Judge may enquire if the parties are interested in mediation. If the parties agree to mediation the case will be adjourned to facilitate the mediation process.

If mediation is successful and the parties may choose to have the agreement ratified as a Court order or choose to withdraw the summons.

If the mediation was not or only partially successful, the mediator may inform the Court, with client consent, of the areas of agreement and of the issues which remain unresolved and require Court adjudication.

Where a party is eligible for legal aid, the mediation will be provided at no cost to the client. If a party is not eligible for legal aid, the cost of mediation varies depending on the provider.

While we must ensure that access to legal representation will always be available to those who need it, I believe that we should try to find ways of avoiding the costly, adversarial and often stressful experience of a court hearing. For that reason, the Access to Justice Review that I announced last year and which is due to publish its interim report shortly is examining the scope for making greater use of mediation and other forms of Alternative Dispute Resolution.

Parades: Rosslea

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of Justice for his assessment of the release of three men charged with assaulting three police officers, and other related offences, at an illegal dissident republican parade in Rosslea on 13 April 2009.

(AQO 1248/11)

Minister of Justice: The Public Prosecution Service has issued a statement regretting that an administrative error led to the dismissal of this case. The statement also confirmed that an internal review has been carried out by the Public Prosecution Service resulting in additional arrangements being put in place to address the issue which led to the administrative error.

Although the Department of Justice has no responsibility for the Public Prosecution Service, and I have proper regard for the independence of prosecutorial decision making, I continue to be mindful of the importance of the criminal justice system as a whole working effectively.

Youth Justice: Conferences

Mrs C McGill asked the Minister of Justice what is the recommended number of times an individual should participate in a youth conference before alternative measures are introduced.

(AQO 1249/11)

Minister of Justice: Sentencing of young people charged with offences is entirely a matter for the courts and it is the responsibility of District Judges to consider each individual case on merit and award an appropriate sentence proportionate to the crime.

The youth conference is one of a range of disposals open to the courts and there is no recommended ceiling to the number of times an individual should participate. The conference gives the victim an opportunity to engage fully in the process, allows them a platform to be heard, and enables them to have an input into how the young person can put right the harm caused. The legislation allows for repeat conferences and to impose a limit would deny victims of subsequent offences their central position in this process.

Policing and Community Safety Partnerships

Mr P Frew asked the Minister of Justice what measures and incentives will be put in place to attract the widest range of people possible to apply for positions in the new Policing and Community Safety Partnerships if they are established.

(AQO 1250/11)

Minister of Justice: I firmly believe the attraction to all participants is that Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) will be able to contribute effectively to making communities safer and, ultimately, to improving the lives of local people.

As set out in the Justice Bill, membership of PCSPs will be, from the outset, constituted from a wide range of groups:

- elected members, reflecting the make-up of their local council;
- independent members, appointed by the Policing Board from nominations made by the council and in line with guidance issued by my Department; and
- representatives of designated organisations which have a valuable contribution to make in a local context.

In addition, PCSPs will be able to establish delivery committees comprising organisations which can make a relevant contribution, ensuring maximum representation from a broad range of groups.

County Courts: Judges

Mr Pól Callaghan asked the Minister of Justice, in light of the proposals to expand the jurisdiction of the County Courts, whether he has any plans to increase the complement of County Court Judges to address the potential increase in workload.

(AQO 1252/11)

Minister of Justice: The number of county court judges is a matter for the Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Commission to determine in agreement with my Department. My Department has written to the Commission to notify them of the proposals. We will continue to engage with the Commission to ensure this matter is settled before the changes to the county court and district judge jurisdictions are brought into operation.

I am bringing forward the proposed increase in the Small Claims jurisdiction from £2,000 to £3,000 from 2 May. This will provide enhanced access to the quicker and cheaper small claims system. I have consulted the Lord Chief Justice who agrees that there is no obstacle to this increase being brought forward now.

Department for Regional Development

Blue Badge Scheme

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the processes that are in place to safeguard the Blue Badge scheme from being abused.

(AQW 4685/11)

Minister for Regional Development (Mr C Murphy): My Department's Roads Service has advised that all applications for Blue Badges are subject to a stringent assessment against a number of set criteria. All applications are accompanied by two signed photographs, one of which is attached to the badge, which is then laminated. Each badge is numbered and also contains a hologram to make it easier to distinguish between genuine and possible counterfeit badges.

A Guidance Leaflet is issued to all Blue Badge holders explaining where they may, or may not park. This leaflet explains that a Blue Badge may be withdrawn in cases of misuse by the badge holder, or

others. It also warns that it is a criminal offense (maximum penalty £1,000), for a person, other than the person to whom it was issued, to use a Blue Badge. Roads Service may refuse an application for a badge, or request the return of a badge, where misuse of the badge has led to a relevant conviction or a penalty charge notice has been issued on three occasions.

In addition, as part of Roads Service's parking enforcement contract with NSL Services Group, a small team of Traffic Attendants is deployed whose objective is to identify cases of suspected Blue Badge misuse and to issue a PCN for the parking contravention in cases where misuse can be confirmed.

Further information on the Blue Badge Scheme can be found at the following web address:

<http://www.roadsni.gov.uk/index/bluebadge.htm>

Parking Tickets

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of parking tickets issued by traffic wardens that have been quashed in each of the last three years.

(AQW 4693/11)

Minister for Regional Development: Roads Service has advised that details of the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) cancelled in each of the last three years as a result of successful Challenges, Representations, and Appeals, are detailed in the table below:

	PCNs Issued	PCNs cancelled following Challenge, Representation, Appeal
2008/09	140,694	12,868 (9%)
2009/10	129,926	11,804 (9%)
2010/11 (10 months to end Jan 2011)	97,780	8,298 (8.5%)

Parking Charges

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development whether he plans to increase parking charges, and if so, to detail the level of increase.

(AQW 4694/11)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service is currently in the process of implementing an increase in car parking tariffs. The implementation exercise requires changes to both the On-Street Parking Order (NI) and the Off-Street Parking Order (NI). The most significant change being introduced as part of this review will be an increase in the 30p tariffs to 40p in provincial towns, an increase of 33%. These tariffs have largely been unchanged over the past 12 years and it is proposed that the planned changes in car parking tariffs will be introduced early in the 2011-12 financial year.

In addition, the draft Budget for 2011-15 considers options for changes in car parking charges, including:

- an average 15% per annum increase to existing car park income for each of the budget years;
- introducing on-street charging to all towns/cities covered by the Sub Regional Transport Plan and Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (approximately 27 towns/cities); and
- the extension of charging hours for all car parks and on-street Pay and Display.

Prior to the implementation of any changes under Budget 2011-15, Roads Service envisages a high level of consultation on all aspects of parking policy, as well as an opportunity for consultation on individual schemes at the legislation stage.

Impact of Parking Charges on Retail

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) whether he has made an assessment of the impact of parking charges on the retail sector in major towns; and (ii) whether he has had any communication with local Chambers of Commerce and Trade in relation to the level of parking charges. **(AQW 4695/11)**

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service is currently in the process of implementing an increase in car parking tariffs. These proposals are generally in line with the Department's transportation policies to promote public transport and deter commuter parking, through the use of pricing of car parking facilities. In addition, a key financial objective is to fully recover the cost of providing the car park services. This is in line with the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) guidance in Managing Public Money in Northern Ireland (MPMNI).

Although an assessment of the impact of parking charges on the retail sector has not been carried out, Roads Service car park tariffs are generally lower than those of private sector operators. In many instances free, or less expensive, off-street car parks are provided by Roads Service on the periphery of urban centres, which can be used by those requiring all day parking. This enables Roads Service to contribute to the vitality and viability of urban centres by trying to ensure that the most convenient off-street car parks in the urban area are made available to shoppers and visitors.

Roads Service has had no communication with local Chambers of Commerce regarding the implementation of the new parking tariffs, however, the amendments to the On-Street Parking Order (NI) and the Off-Street Parking Order (NI) are published in the local press. Those that relate solely to changes in tariffs will be notified to local Councils in due course, while those seeking to introduce charges for the first time will be subject to a full consultation exercise in accordance with the appropriate legislation.

Car Park in Millisle Beach Park

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development if there are any plans to repair the wall at the car park in Millisle Beach Park. **(AQW 4750/11)**

Minister for Regional Development: For the purpose of reply, I have assumed that the Member is referring to the wall between my Department's Roads Service car park at Ballywalter Road, Millisle and the beach.

My Department's Roads Service has advised that arrangements have been made to carry out repairs to this wall.

However, if the Member is referring to the wall at Ards Borough Council's beach park, the matter should be referred to Ards Borough Council.

Roads in the Ards Peninsula

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the level of investment planned for roads in the Ards Peninsula in each of the next three years. **(AQW 4752/11)**

Minister for Regional Development: It is not possible, at present, to confirm details of planned expenditure for roads in the Ards Peninsula, for the next three years.

I would advise the Member that information on the completed and proposed roads schemes for the current financial year 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.roadsni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-council_reports.htm

Information on future years' programmes of work will, when finalised, be presented in the Spring and Autumn reports to Councils.

A6 Londonderry to Dungiven Dual Carriageway Project

Mr G Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the current status of the A6 Londonderry to Dungiven dual carriageway project; (ii) the estimated cost of the project; and (iii) the expected commencement date.

(AQW 4764/11)

Minister for Regional Development: The overall reduction of 40% in the Executive's Spending Review settlement has had a significant impact on the draft budget available to my Department for infrastructure investment.

Nevertheless, I am pleased to inform you that the draft allocations allow for the start of road improvements on the A6 within the budget period. I believe that priority should be given to Dungiven Bypass.

It is anticipated that draft Statutory Orders will be published later this year for public consultation. It is expected that the consultation process will indicate the need for a public inquiry, which could be expected to take place in late 2011/early 2012.

The estimated cost of this scheme is within the range £350 to £390 million.

Road Improvements and Road Surface Maintenance

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail how much each Roads Service division has spent on (i) road improvements; and (ii) road surface maintenance, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 4769/11)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that its budget allocations are made on the basis of need to its four Roads Service Divisions and, in turn, allocated across Council areas. While it does not maintain the information you have requested on a Divisional basis, it does maintain an analysis of its capital and resource expenditure in each financial year, according to each Council Area.

The table below provides a list of the council areas which each Roads Service Division is responsible for:

Eastern	Northern	Southern	Western
Carrickfergus Belfast Castlereagh Newtownabbey Lisburn North Down	Antrim Ballymena Larne Ballymoney Coleraine Limavady Derry Moyle	Armagh Banbridge Craigavon Newry & Mourne Ards Down	Magherafelt Cookstown Dungannon Fermanagh Omagh Strabane

While Roads Service total expenditure on capital includes major capital schemes, minor capital schemes, street lighting renewal, land, capital structural maintenance & other capital activities, the following table, in response to the Member's query regarding expenditure on road improvements provides details of road improvements for Roads Service expenditure on both Major and Minor Capital Schemes only.

EXPENDITURE ON MAJOR & MINOR CAPITAL WORKS

Council Area	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
	£'000				
Antrim	289	607	1,234	624	1,345
Coleraine	793	342	1,289	315	879
Limavady	749	354	758	1,086	743
Moyle	97	42	142	386	644
Ballymoney	3,091	911	251	494	938
Derry	1,585	2,459	3,281	4,165	25,334
Ballymena	388	1,147	1,878	3,814	8,069
Larne	373	124	982	1,926	1,868
Belfast	1,722	22,317	2,169	4,860	3,766
Castlereagh	540	319	811	259	1,902
Newtownabbey	561	714	357	587	1,329
Carrickfergus	1,136	898	949	943	1,295
North Down	479	171	1,098	553	279
Lisburn	633	822	882	1,411	1,484
Ards	865	552	462	7,849	3,249
Armagh	1,334	952	2,448	2,042	2,392
Newry & Mourne	1,332	490	2,206	2,725	1,822
Banbridge	396	217	323	738	866
Craigavon	3,740	794	952	1,392	999
Down	1,886	508	817	853	944
Magherafelt	1,113	704	2,296	2,174	476
Omagh	1,643	244	3,215	11,234	18,141
Strabane	1,819	1,490	680	410	951
Cookstown	379	193	599	1,025	363
Fermanagh	1,339	660	2,815	3,229	3,428
Dungannon	1,042	762	632	1,065	3,151
Total	29,324	38,793	33,526	56,159	86,657

I should also explain the basis upon which Roads Service divides its total budget for capital expenditure on roads across all the district council areas. 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 the district council, constituency or county in which they are located.

Roads Service's total expenditure on operation and maintenance includes Structural Maintenance, Routine Maintenance, Traffic Maintenance, Winter Maintenance, Street Lighting Maintenance, and Car Parking Maintenance. However the following table, in response to the Member's query regarding expenditure on road surface maintenance, details total expenditure (operation & maintenance + capital) on Structural Maintenance only.

EXPENDITURE ON STRUCTURAL MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES

Council Area	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
	£'000				
Antrim	2,164	1,740	2,096	1,742	2,794
Coleraine	2,431	2,317	2,597	1,862	2,736
Limavady	2,020	1,561	2,391	1,558	2,344
Moyle	1,301	1,187	1,340	993	1,397
Ballymoney	1,527	1,433	1,648	1,463	2,002
Derry	2,667	2,510	2,998	2,673	3,086
Ballymena	3,354	2,471	2,749	2,654	3,339
Larne	1,285	1,280	1,273	1,116	1,704
Belfast	5,408	4,946	6,009	4,630	6,039
Castlereagh	2,073	1,842	2,165	1,623	1,792
Newtownabbey	1,412	1,869	2,846	1,860	2,455
Carrickfergus	754	934	1,186	783	1,036
North Down	2,537	2,368	2,465	1,462	1,755
Lisburn	3,585	3,077	3,066	4,364	4,604
Ards	2,120	2,118	3,335	1,726	3,065
Armagh	4,202	3,661	4,907	4,439	5,388
Newry & Mourne	4,394	3,634	3,944	2,700	5,605
Banbridge	2,205	2,222	2,734	1,880	2,811
Craigavon	3,055	2,948	3,614	2,231	3,867
Down	3,003	2,794	2,552	3,336	3,377
Magherafelt	2,346	1,755	2,771	2,107	2,885
Omagh	3,939	3,458	4,424	2,971	4,923
Strabane	3,146	3,056	3,617	3,028	4,592
Cookstown	1,823	1,980	1,976	1,738	2,145
Fermanagh	3,844	4,522	4,578	4,638	4,951
Dungannon	3,920	3,911	4,051	3,410	4,498
Total	70,515	65,594	77,332	62,986	85,190

NI Water

Mr P Butler asked the Minister for Regional Development to provide an estimate of the costs that would be incurred if NI Water were brought under public ownership.

(AQW 4813/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I should point out that Northern Ireland Water (NIW) is already under public ownership – it is a Government owned company. Although NIW was set up to be a self-financing company this is not the current situation as the current Executive position, which I fully support, is to defer the introduction of additional household water and sewerage payments.

In my statement to the Assembly on 13 September 2010 I said I would put proposals on the status of NIW to the Executive and I intend to do so in the near future. I acknowledged that there are financial implications for the Executive in changing the status of NIW. However, against that there are potentially significant financial implications of leaving things as they are.

A24 Ballynahinch to Belfast Road

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) what resurfacing work (a) has been carried out; and (b) is planned to be carried out on the A24 Ballynahinch to Belfast road in this financial year; and (ii) the total cost of this works.

(AQW 4817/11)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has just completed the resurfacing of a 700 metre stretch of the A24 Ballynahinch to Belfast Road at the Lakeview lay-by. This work, which involved the resurfacing of the carriageway and hard-shoulders, was completed on Friday 25 February 2011 at an estimated cost of approximately £185,000.

I am further advised that there are no current proposals to carry out any additional resurfacing work on this route during this financial year or within the 2011/12 financial year.

Safe Routes to School

Mr M Storey asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the Safe Routes to School initiative.

(AQW 4828/11)

Minister for Regional Development: The Safer Routes to Schools Initiative (SRS) aims to encourage parents, children and teachers to use sustainable modes of travel for the "School Run". Since the inception of the SRS initiative almost 250 schools have benefited from a range of physical infrastructure improvements as well as classroom based awareness resources. My Department's Roads Service aims to have implemented a further 31 schemes by the end of the 2010/11 financial year.

City of Derry Airport

Lord Empey asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to the safety works at the City of Derry Airport, to detail (i) whether he issued a Ministerial Direction for the funding; (ii) what advice he received from his departmental accounting officer in relation to the proposals; (iii) what representations were made to his Department in support of the proposals; (iv) what discussions he has had with the Minister of Finance and Personnel in relation to the proposals and the outcome of any discussions; and (v) whether he has received any applications for funding safety works from any other airports in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 4838/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I issued a Ministerial Direction to my Department, on 21 February 2011, to pay grant towards the cost of safety works at City of Derry Airport. I had previously received advice from my departmental accounting officer that the business case, submitted by Derry City Council in support of its request for grant, although showing significant economic benefits, did not meet the financial assessment criteria necessary to justify further central government investment in the airport.

Having considered the business case, I took the view that the wider economic benefits to the North, arising from further investment in the airport, outweighed this adverse financial assessment. The Executive has considered the competing arguments and has endorsed my decision to issue a Ministerial Direction.

Representations in support of further funding for the airport were made by Derry City Council.

I have attended three meetings involving the Minister of Finance and Personnel at which funding for the airport safety works was discussed. These took place on 25 January 2010, 11 February 2010 and 13 January 2011. The outcome was agreement that the Council's funding request should be considered by the Executive on the basis that the adverse financial assessment was countered by strong political reasons to support grant funding in terms of addressing economic disadvantage in the north west.

I have not received applications for funding of safety works from any other airports in the North.

City of Derry Airport

Lord Empey asked the Minister for Regional Development what financial contribution Derry City Council is making to safety works at the City of Derry Airport, given that it owns the airport.

(AQW 4839/11)

Minister for Regional Development: The estimated final cost of the safety works at City of Derry Airport is £11.5 million and Derry City Council is committed to meeting 25% of these costs, which is a financial contribution of £2.9 million.

Assembly Legislation

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail all legislation, since May 2007, that has gone through, or is going through, the Assembly which devolves powers or responsibilities from his Department to local government authorities.

(AQW 4846/11)

Minister for Regional Development: The Roads (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2010 introduced new arrangements to provide district councils with powers to restrict or prohibit traffic using a road (except motorways) to facilitate the making of a film or the holding of certain sporting, social and entertainment events on roads.

Parking Tickets

Mr M Storey asked the Minister for Regional Development how many parking tickets issued in the North Antrim area have been successfully appealed in each of the last three years.

(AQW 4858/11)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that details of challenges, representations and appeals made against Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) are not compiled on a regional basis. However, for all PCNs issued in the last three years, some 12.6% were challenged with 64% being successful. Following the issue of a Notice to Owner, some 3.6% of PCNs were subject to Representation, with 22% being successful. Some 0.2% of PCNs issued were subject to formal Appeal with 25% being successful.

I am further advised that the number of PCNs issued in the last three years in the district council areas of Ballymena, Ballymoney, Moyle, and Coleraine are detailed in the below:

Council Area	PCNs Issued 2008/09	PCNs Issued 2009/10	PCNs Issued 2010/11 (to end Jan 2011)
Ballymena	4155	3242	3439

Council Area	PCNs Issued 2008/09	PCNs Issued 2009/10	PCNs Issued 2010/11 (to end Jan 2011)
Ballymoney	1348	1110	906
Moyle	347	351	330
Coleraine	5476	3983	3192

I hope you find this information helpful.

Cycle Lanes

Mr P Butler asked the Minister for Regional Development how much his Department intends to spend on cycle lanes in each Belfast constituency over the next five years.
(AQW 4867/11)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that as budget allocations for future years have yet to be confirmed, it is unable to outline its spending plans for cycle lanes in Belfast at this time. Roads Service is fully committed to carrying out further improvements to the cycling infrastructure and it is anticipated that a range of measures will be provided, including cycle lanes, advance stop lines and cycle stands, subject to the availability of funds.

Once work programmes for Roads Service's Eastern Division, which incorporates the Greater Belfast area, have been finalised, details of the proposed works will be contained within the Division's Spring reports to the relevant Councils. These reports, when complete, can be accessed from the Roads Service internet site at the following web address:

http://www.roadsni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-council_reports.htm

In addition to the capital investment in cycling measures by Roads Service, my Department promotes the use of sustainable modes of transport, including cycling, through its Travelwise initiative, as part of its interaction with schools, employers and the general public. I have also established an advisory Active Travel Forum to bring forward recommendations to me for an Active Travel Strategy and this will include proposals to encourage and increase cycling. I expect proposals for a high level Active Travel Strategy in mid-2011.

Seagahan Dam, Armagh

Mr W Irwin asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 4875/11, whether the arrangements for the fishing rights at Seagahan Dam in Armagh were put out to tender.
(AQW 5012/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that the fishing rights for Seagahan Dam were not tendered. The fishing rights are currently leased on a 3 year basis and the annual rental consideration is negotiated by its agents the Land & Property Services, an executive Agency within the Department of Finance and Personnel. Although not part of its core business, NIW and its predecessors have been involved in the leasing of fishing rights for some considerable time and traditionally have renewed the rights with the existing club. There has been no history of more than one fishing club expressing an interest in obtaining the fishing rights at any particular location, indeed fishing clubs will normally be local to the particular lough or dam associated with the club and other clubs are unlikely to be interested. The cost of tendering and selecting suitable fishing clubs against any income from the club is likely to make this exercise uneconomical. However, NIW is currently reviewing their procedures in relation to fishing rights.

Door-to-Door Service in the South Antrim Area

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister for Regional Development what stage the tendering process is at for the door-to-door service in the South Antrim area which is currently operated by Chambers Coaches; and when the process will be complete.

(AQW 5043/11)

Minister for Regional Development: The tendering process for door-to-door services for all operating areas with the exception of the Derry urban service is currently at the stage of tender evaluation. I anticipate that the evaluation process will be completed by the end of March 2011.

Personal Injury Claims

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) how many Personal Injury Claims were made against his Department in each of the last five years; and (ii) how much this cost his Department in (a) legal fees; (b) compensation fees; and (c) any other costs.

(AQW 5048/11)

Minister for Regional Development: The particulars of the number of Personal Injury Claims received and of legal fees, compensation fees and other costs paid in each of the last five years are set out in the table below.

Year	Claims Received	Legal Fees Paid £	Compensation Paid £	Other Costs Paid £
2005/06	762	1,917,997.87	1,628,859.68	25,221.38
2006/07	609	1,759,382.06	1,331,819.15	35,132.23
2007/08	632	1,784,332.04	1,941,861.10	259,091.66
2008/09	695	2,120,955.18	1,634,743.27	183,418.71
2009/10	871	2,169,651.38	1,673,597.28	135,868.12

Refurbishment Work at Coleraine Train Station

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development if he will re-examine the need for refurbishment work to be carried out at night on Platform 2 at Coleraine Train Station, given the impact of the excessive noise on residents.

(AQW 5094/11)

Minister for Regional Development: Translink have told me that NITHC/Translink's Infrastructure Executive contacted you directly on 7 March 2011 following phone calls made to other senior staff.

The Project Manager for this work, with a colleague from the Infrastructure Property Division, will be meeting you and residents' representatives at Coleraine railway station on Thursday 10 March 2011 at 12:00.

I would hope this operational matter can be satisfactorily resolved for all parties concerned.

Department for Social Development

Housing Executive Tenants

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister for Social Development, as of 31 January 2011, how many Housing Executive tenants, in each District Office area, remained unable to live in their homes having had to leave them as a result of the severe winter weather.

(AQW 4166/11)

Minister for Social Development (Mr A Attwood): The table below provides details of the number of Housing Executive tenants in each of the District Office areas who remain unable to live in their homes, having had to vacate them temporarily as a result of the severe winter weather:-

Housing Executive District Office area	Number of Tenants at 3 March 2011
Belfast East	3
Bangor	1
Downpatrick	2
Lisburn, Antrim Street	2
Fermanagh	1

Given the small number of properties, caution must be exercised about providing further particulars with the risk of compromising privacy and identifying tenants. However, I have considered each of the Housing Executive's cases where tenants remained out of their homes mainly for particular personal reasons, including health issues; delays in reporting damage to the property by the tenant; and severity of damage.

Research and Development

Mr C Lyttle asked the Minister for Social Development how much his Department spent on research and development in each of the last five years.

(AQW 4285/11)

Minister for Social Development: The term research and development is generally applied to engineering, scientific or pharmaceutical issues where there is ultimately a marketable end product. In line with this definition and the activities undertaken by the Department for Social Development, I would advise that there have been no such research and development costs in the last five years.

Foodbanks by Registered Charities

Mr G Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development whether his Department supports the creation of foodbanks by registered charities to help local people in need.

(AQW 4707/11)

Minister for Social Development: The Social Security Agency is aware of a pilot food bank scheme currently being operated by the Trussell Trust Charity in conjunction with the Department for Work and Pensions Jobcentre Plus Offices in a number of areas in Great Britain. This involves referring Jobcentre Plus customers, who are ineligible for a Social Fund Crisis Loan, to a neighbouring Trust outlet. The pilot commenced on 4 January 2011 and is due to end on 2 April 2011. It is expected that it will provide information necessary to have a clear view on the effectiveness of the process from Jobcentre Plus, Trussell Trust and customers' perspectives and the impact on Jobcentre Plus business.

I will closely examine the outcome of the pilot scheme. Independently, I have instructed officials to make an assessment of what emergency measures, in terms of alternative accommodation, places of warmth, food etc, may be necessary in the event of a future emergency requiring people to leave their homes. I consider this work to be necessary, going forward given the increasing pressures on people with less work, welfare, money and higher costs, housing need and stress.

Disability Living Allowance Oral Appeal Tribunals

Mrs C McGill asked the Minister for Social Development, for each of the last three years, to detail the cost to his Department of sending Presenting Officers from the Social Security Agency to Disability Living Allowance oral appeal tribunals.

(AQW 4735/11)

Minister for Social Development: The table below sets out the cost of sending Presenting Officers from the Social Security Agency to Disability Living Allowance oral appeal tribunals for each of the last three years. These oral hearings take place across 18 tribunal centres geographically dispersed across Northern Ireland.

Year	Cost
2007/08	£92,917
2008/09	£91,279
2009/10	£84,971

Disability Living Allowance and Employment Support Allowance Oral Appeal Tribunals

Mrs C McGill asked the Minister for Social Development for a breakdown of the cost to his Department of holding (i) Disability Living Allowance; and (ii) Employment Support Allowance oral appeal tribunals in each of the last three years.

(AQW 4736/11)

Minister for Social Development: The table below details the annual expenditure of the Appeal Service for each of the last three years. It also details the total volume of hearings per year, the volume of hearings that are Disability Living Allowance Appeals and Employment Support Appeals and the percentage of the total this represents. The exact expenditure for each of these benefit types cannot be provided in detail as resources are allocated across a wide range of benefit appeals.

Financial Year	Actual Spend	Total Number of Appeal Hearings	DLA Oral Appeal Hearings	DLA - % of Overall Appeal Hearings	ESA Oral Appeal Hearings	ESA - % of Overall Appeal Hearings
2007/08	4'469,212	16,200	6,759	41.72	0	0
2008/09	4'827,704	16,940	7,146	42.18	0	0
2009/10	5'322,808	18,181	6,439	35.42	1,498	8.24

Colin Area of Belfast

Ms J McCann asked the Minister for Social Development what percentage of his Department's annual budget was spent in the Colin area of Belfast, in each of the last four financial years.

(AQW 4758/11)

Minister for Social Development: The amount spent over the last 4 financial years and the equivalent proportion/percentage this represented as compared to the annual budget is set out in the table below. The table excludes social security benefit expenditure, as information broken down by precise geographic area is not available.

	2006-07 £m	2007-08 £m	2008-09 £m	2009-10 £m
Housing	3.54	4.56	3.59	3.15

	2006-07 £m	2007-08 £m	2008-09 £m	2009-10 £m
Urban Regeneration	0.78	1.35	1.97	1.09
Voluntary & community	0.16	0.30	0.40	0.26
Total spend (A)	4.48	6.21	5.96	4.50
Total DSD budget (B)	540	692	759	736
Spend as % of annual budget (A as % of B)	0.83%	0.90%	0.79%	0.61%

The Housing expenditure shown included improvement works, planned and response maintenance, as well as disabled adaptations and private sector grants within the Housing Executive's Dairy Farm District office area. Urban Regeneration expenditure included neighbourhood renewal funding and physical development works, the latter mainly from property maintenance, environmental improvements and public realm schemes. Voluntary & community expenditure included funding for various community forums, the Footprints Women's Centre, various residents associations and other youth related centres/clubs.

Households Below Average Income Publication

Mr G Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development, given that his Department's Households Below Average Income Publication shows that Limavady has a greater number of households in this category than the average, what steps are being taken to ensure that pensioners living in that area are receiving the necessary assistance.

(AQW 4761/11)

Minister for Social Development: My Department's current Benefit Uptake Programme has offered over 200 people living in Limavady Borough Council area the opportunity of a benefit assessment through Citizens Advice. A total of 19,000 people across Northern Ireland have been offered an assessment through Citizens Advice. The Programme also includes an Outreach approach delivered in twelve council areas¹ to ensure older people are aware of their potential entitlements. A free-phone telephone line has been set up for older people to have a benefit assessment. Pension Advisers are available to help with the application process. The results of this Programme will be available in June 2011.

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's (DARD) initiative - Maximising Access to and Uptake of Services, Grants and Benefits in Rural Areas is offered to people living in the Limavady Borough Council area. This is a joint initiative between DARD and the Public Health Agency (PHA) which aims to improve the health and wellbeing of people in rural areas who are living in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

Based on a partnership model, the initiative is being delivered through various agencies, the advice sector and the voluntary and community sector to encourage uptake of grants, benefits and services which people may not otherwise have known about. The initiative aims to reach 4,200 households in the most deprived rural areas.

In addition to the Benefit Uptake Programme, my Department takes significant steps in providing a range of services to make people throughout Northern Ireland aware of their entitlements. This includes Outreach services, participation in local promotional activity, the production of specific publications, some in minority ethnic languages, information on the nidirect website including an online Benefits Adviser Service and general assistance with advice and information through our network of local and centralised offices.

¹ Antrim, Armagh, Ballymoney, Banbridge, Coleraine, Down, Dungannon, Fermanagh, Larne, Magherafelt, Newry & Mourne and Omagh

Agency officials continue to review research to determine which customer groups are missing out on social security benefits. A workshop has been organised for 10 March for voluntary and community organisations to discuss how future uptake activities could be designed to meet this need.

Housing Executive Office in Craigavon

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 4263/11, whether he has sought an explanation from the Housing Executive for why there is such a disparity between the recruitment of people from Protestant and Roman Catholic backgrounds to its Craigavon office.
(AQW 4778/11)

Minister for Social Development: During the last five years the opportunity for recruitment activity in the Housing Executive has been severely restricted due to the need to deliver efficiency savings in running costs through the reduction in staffing levels. The information provided to the previous questions shows a small number of appointments each year most of which were of a temporary nature.

The Housing Executive is employing what the Equality Commission considers to be best practice and what is recognised as being part of international best practice. One of those interventions is an affirmative action plan to encourage people from the Protestant community to consider working in the Housing Executive and to apply for vacancies there. It so happens that fewer people are moving from one place of work to another and areas of recruitment in the Housing Executive in recent times have included Derry and Omagh. Given the religious profile of the communities in those areas, and given the fact that an in-house voluntary redundancy scheme has had a disproportionate impact on people from Protestant backgrounds, progress that could be made is not being made in respect of creating overall balance. This is further compounded by the number of retirements in the organisation from the Protestant community.

Suicide Prevention

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development to outline where suicide prevention sits within his Department's Programme for Government targets.
(AQW 4825/11)

Minister for Social Development: The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) is the lead department on suicide prevention. There are significant interdependencies between the aims of the Investing for Health Strategy and my Department's Neighbourhood Renewal Programme in relation to addressing the social and economic determinants of ill-health.

These shared outcomes are reflected in the current Programme for Government's Public Service Agreement (PSA) 12, which the Department for Social Development leads, that aims to 'Promote decent, energy efficient, affordable housing and regenerate disadvantaged areas and towns and city centres, and support community development to create environments which enhance quality of life and contribute to well-being'. This target is cross referenced to the targets outlined in PSA's 3, 8 and 11, namely to; 'achieve measurable long-term reductions in health, educational and employment differentials for those living in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas'. PSA 8 aims to promote healthy lifestyles, address the causes of poor health and wellbeing and achieve measurable reductions in health inequalities and preventable illnesses. This includes a specific target (objective 4) to reduce suicide rates by 15% by 2011.

In pursuance of these targets my Department works closely with DHSSPS and others to address the underlining issues that contribute to the increased risk of suicide in local communities. At a policy level we continue to be involved in the formulation and oversight of 'Protect Life – A Shared Vision, The Northern Ireland Suicide Prevention Strategy'. We work at a local level in partnership with health officials and communities to deliver action on the ground in relation to a wide range of health related matters. These include; suicide prevention, mental health and well-being, drugs and alcohol and a wide range broad health improvement initiatives.

State Pension Credit

Mr G Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development what steps he is taking to ensure that single people who are entitled to State Pension Credit are claiming their entitlement.

(AQW 4845/11)

Minister for Social Development: My Department introduced a targeted approach to benefit uptake in 2005. Specific exercises from the Benefit Uptake Programme, targeting people with potential benefit entitlement, including State Pension Credit, have been undertaken. By June 2010 this work had generated an additional £33 million of annual benefit and arrears; a substantial amount available to go back into the Northern Ireland economy. While we cannot focus our uptake activities on single people, they were included amongst those contacted. Currently there are over 97,000 awards to State Pension Credit of which approximately 65,000 are to single people, where the term “single” means living alone.

In addition to the Benefit Uptake Programme, a range of services are provided on a daily basis to make people aware of their entitlement which includes a focus on State Pension Credit. This activity covers outreach services, participation in local promotional work, the production of specific publications, some in minority ethnic languages, information on the nidirect website including an online Benefits Adviser Service and general assistance with advice and information through our network of local and centralised offices.

Kitchen Replacement Scheme

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 4294/11, what areas of the Scrabo Estate in Newtownards will be covered by the kitchen replacement scheme; and how many homes will benefit.

(AQW 4860/11)

Minister for Social Development: The table below gives details of the areas in Scrabo Estate that are covered by the kitchen replacement scheme, which totals 160 properties.

Street	Number of Properties
Carmeen Gardens	13
Circular Road	13
Donard Avenue	24
Linden Place	7
Lisbance Drive	35
Lisleen Place	6
Lismara Place	5
Mill Street Court	1
Old Priory Close	3
Quinton Park	7
Rathmullan Drive	39
Shimna Close	6
The Brae	1
Total	160

Legislation

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister for Social Development to detail all legislation, since May 2007, that has gone through, or is going through, the Assembly which devolves powers or responsibilities from his Department to local government authorities.

(AQW 4885/11)

Minister for Social Development: My Department has not made any legislation since May 2007 which devolved powers or responsibilities from this Department to local government authorities.

While there is no legislation going through the Assembly at present to this effect, the Member may wish to note that my Department intended, under the wider Review of Public Administration, to transfer a range of housing and regeneration functions to the new local Councils. However the Executive did not agree a way forward for the reform of local government and subsequently my Department's legislation could not be progressed.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many people in the North Down constituency will be affected by the removal of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance from care home residents.

(AQW 4895/11)

Minister for Social Development: I am pleased that the proposal to remove the mobility component from those in residential care does not appear on the face of the Welfare Reform Bill. This is something which I have lobbied strongly for. I will continue to make representations to both Lord Freud, the Welfare Reform Minister and Maria Miller, Minister for the disabled, in Westminster, for measures which protect the vulnerable in our society.

At January 2011 the number of Disability Living Allowance claimants in the North Down constituency who are in state-funded care homes/residential homes and are currently receiving the mobility component is 200. This is 3.3% of the Disability Living Allowance liveload in North Down constituency (6,139).

Housing Executive Houses in the My Lady's Road Area of South Belfast

Mr J Spratt asked the Minister for Social Development if he plans to provide double-glazing for Housing Executive houses in the My Lady's Road area of South Belfast, given that residents live under the flight path and also experience noise from traffic.

(AQW 4904/11)

Minister for Social Development: The Housing Executive has advised that the dwellings in the My Lady's Road area are included in a window replacement scheme currently programmed for 2012/13. This start date is provisional and depends on funding being available.

Housing Executive Houses in the My Lady's Road Area of South Belfast

Mr J Spratt asked the Minister for Social Development if he plans to provide a more cost-effective heating system for Housing Executive houses in the My Lady's Road area of South Belfast by upgrading from Economy 7 to gas heating.

(AQW 4905/11)

Minister for Social Development: There are no houses in the My Lady's Road area with Economy 7 heating. There are 21 flats with Economy 7 heating in the My Lady's Road area and these are likely to be included in a scheme for replacement in 2012/13. This start date is provisional and depends on funding being available.

Ravenlink Residents Group in South Belfast

Mr J Spratt asked Minister for Social Development if he plans to allocate funding to the Ravenlink Residents Group in South Belfast, which provides an excellent service to young people in the area and currently operates on a voluntary basis.

(AQW 4906/11)

Minister for Social Development: While the Housing Executive does make limited funding available for Community Development Projects, they have not received any application from Ravenlink for consideration for the next financial year 2011/12 and is therefore not in a position to award any funding.

I am aware that Belfast City Council's Community Development Unit allocates small grants to local community based groups through their Community Support Programme. Ravenlink Residents Group may wish to consider applying to the Council for a grant under the Community Support Programme scheme in support of a programme of locally based community work.

Rent Increases in Housing Executive Properties

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the rent increases in Housing Executive properties in each of the last five years; and the total revenue these increases have raised.

(AQW 4910/11)

Minister for Social Development: The table below details the Housing Executive rental increases and the revenue these increases have raised in each of the last 5 years.

Year	% increase	Total Rental income revenue raised £	Annual Increase of Rental income £
2006/07	2.70	229m	2m
2007/08	3.60	234m	5m
2008/09	3.95	241m	7m
2009/10	1.95	249m	8m
2010/11	1.90	251m	2m

It is extremely difficult to put an exact figure on how much additional income is raised through the annual rent increase as rental income is heavily influenced by void property levels. The 2009/10 figure shows a significant increase from 2008/09 as a result of the Voids Reinstatement Programme.

Announcements Relating to Work in the West Belfast Constituency

Mr W Humphrey asked the Minister for Social Development what announcements his Department (i) has made; and (ii) plans to make in relation to its work in the West Belfast constituency between April 2010 and April 2011.

(AQW 4948/11)

Minister for Social Development: Since April 2010, I have made the following announcements by press release relating to events my Department and I have worked on in the West Belfast constituency:

Attwood takes the controls in regeneration of Bass Brewery site	24 May 2010
Attwood commends staff at Shankill Jobs & Benefits Office following shooting	28 May 2010

Attwood enjoys a cuppa in new kitchen scheme in West Belfast	11 June 2010
Alex Attwood meets Shankill business and community leaders	8 July 2010
Social Development Minister Alex Attwood today opened much needed family apartments at Clonard Gardens in West Belfast.	21 July 2010
Ross Street Flats to be demolished – Attwood	28 July 2010
New Jobs & Benefits Office bringing a dynamic and modernised service to Andersonstown	29 July 2010 (Joint announcement with Sir Reg Empey, then minister of DEL)
'A Leap of Faith' for the Stewartstown Road	6 August 2010
'Glen Ten Development' moves to next phase	27 August 2010
Attwood makes final call for views on Ross Street redevelopment	3 September 2010
£280,000 boost for Tullymore Community Centre	3 September 2010
More new homes will put another dent in West Belfast waiting list	3 September 2010
Continued development of Upper Springfield community is crucial – Attwood	10 September 2010
Attwood Hears the Views of Westside Traders	22 September 2010
Attwood wants to build houses on former SSA site In West Belfast	24 September 2010
Much needed regeneration to breathe new life into Lower Shankill – Attwood	30 September 2010
Attwood publishes response to proposed masterplans for Belfast's disadvantaged areas ¹	14 October 2010
Attwood welcomes plans for West Belfast site	20 October 2010
Attwood visits Glen Road, West Belfast to see finished 'ReStore' project	1 November 2010
Attwood launches International Design Competition for West Belfast	17 November 2010
Attwood praises exemplar interface initiative	24 November 2010
Attwood opens refurbished West Belfast landmark	25 November 2010
World's leading architect in Belfast to help decide future of Andersonstown barracks site	29 January 2011
Attwood visits the Colin neighbourhood after recent tragedies to make significant announcement	3 February 2011

1 Covers all areas of Belfast including West.

In the forthcoming weeks before the Assembly elections, the following table details subject areas about which I intend to make announcements relating to the constituency of West Belfast:

Housing	
Customer First	

Town Centre Regeneration

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development what measures have been taken by his Department to encourage town centre regeneration.

(AQW 4950/11)

Minister for Social Development: My Department adopts a number of measures to encourage Town Centre Regeneration. Primarily, Comprehensive Development Schemes, such as that seen in Belfast with Victoria Square have provided a base for economic stability and prosperity during difficult financial times. This particular scheme has realised £400m of private sector investment and has vastly enhanced the potential of Belfast as a prime weekend city-break destination on the European tourism platform. In addition the job creation in the construction industry that a scheme such as Victoria Square brings also provides a significant social and economic boost to the region.

My Department's investment in Public Realm is also critical in providing attractive town centres within which people want to spend time. For example, the recently completed Public Realm scheme in Newcastle, Co. Down has demonstrated a 300% increase in footfall within the town centre and helped to re-position Newcastle as more than a traditional seaside resort. This not only confirms the considerable economic impact of my Department's work but also demonstrates the value added by tailoring development to the unique strengths of each town.

Masterplanning is another critical piece in the jigsaw of town centre regeneration. Thirty years of conflict within Northern Ireland had a huge impact on our towns and city centres. Many suffered major bombing attacks, which not only caused direct damage but also had an indirect impact in the form of many quality, quickly erected replacement buildings. The Masterplanning process provides a concerted and co-ordinated approach to the regeneration of town centres and adopts an outward-looking standpoint, considering not only at what the town itself has to offer, but also the surrounding areas in an attempt to create individual, prosperous and carefully positioned towns that will attract economic activity in their own right and allow small businesses to thrive.

Co-ownership Scheme

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development what measures have been considered to allow the Co-Ownership Scheme to become more accessible to first time buyers.

(AQW 4953/11)

Minister for Social Development: The Co-Ownership Scheme is administered by the Northern Ireland Co-Ownership Housing Association (NICHA). In recent years my Department has provided funding of £15m per year to NICHA; this public investment has allowed private finance to be levered in which enabled 325 homes to be purchased during 2008/09 and 461 homes to be purchased in 2009/10. I have secured a further £3m post-February monitoring for the scheme this year. At present there are no plans to make changes to encourage greater numbers of applicants to the scheme as Co-Ownership are currently receiving significantly more eligible applications than they can afford to support.

Theft of Copper Storage Tanks from Vacant Properties

Mr P Frew asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 4058/11, whether there is now a Housing Executive policy in place in Ballymena to remove copper storage tanks from vacant properties; and for his assessment of the necessity of such a policy given the low number of thefts of these tanks.

(AQW 4974/11)

Minister for Social Development: The Housing Executive has advised that there is no policy in place for the removal of copper tanks from void properties. Any properties deemed at risk are protected by shutters and alarms. Copper cylinders are vulnerable to damage and it would therefore be unwise to remove them and then reinstate such a cylinder due to the potential risk of damage.

Vacant Housing Stock

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the quantity of vacant housing stock and its potential usage.

(AQW 4989/11)

Minister for Social Development: There is currently no central or reliable source of information for the number or condition of empty homes, particularly those in the private sector. Normal churn in the housing market causes properties to move in and out of the empty home designation and once identified the reasons why homes are left empty are varied and complex. The Housing Executive recently implemented an empty homes strategy when it had been thought some 13,000 homes were vacant. Of these the Housing Executive identified a total of 1764 as potentially suitable for use to meet social housing need. This figure allows for unfit properties, those being modernised, those unavailable due to legal issues and those unsuitable for social allocation, due mainly to location and/or affordability. Further analysis showed that only in very few of these cases were the owners not actively trying to sell their properties.

I have also asked the Housing Executive and Housing Associations to look again at the issue of social voids and my officials in Housing and Regeneration continue to work with the Housing Executive to address all those problems associated with empty homes. In addition the introduction of rating of empty homes, which Finance Minister Sammy Wilson intends to introduce from October 2011, will present a further opportunity and incentive to make better use of these properties and increase the supply of affordable housing.

Flats at 127 Woodvale Road, Belfast

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development to list any outstanding work to the flats at 127 Woodvale Road, Belfast; and when this work will be completed.

(AQW 5002/11)

Minister for Social Development: The Housing Executive has advised that the communal area of the flats had recently been replastered and is still awaiting repainting. The contractor has been requested to ensure that this work is completed within the next four weeks. The Housing Executive is not aware of any other outstanding work to the flats and has not received any complaints regarding the condition of the block. However, a Maintenance Officer and a Housing Officer visited the flats on 9 March 2011 and spoke to one of the tenants who reported issues such as damp in the property, a small hole where pipe work enters the property, remedial work needed to the stairway in the communal area and a lack of insulation in the roof space. The reported lack of insulation had been investigated previously and the Housing Executive's contractor advised there is adequate insulation in the roof space. However, as a measure of goodwill, the Housing Executive contractor will carry out a further inspection and will replace insulation in the roof space as necessary. The Housing Executive will also ensure that the other issues are addressed within the next four weeks.

Rodent Infestations

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development to outline the Housing Executive's responsibility regarding rodent infestations in their properties.

(AQW 5003/11)

Minister for Social Development: The Housing Executive has an arrangement with Belfast City Council who deal with infestations in Belfast on their behalf. Outside of Belfast, the Housing Executive's response maintenance contractors either deal with the problem directly or have the appropriate local Council deal with it for an agreed fee.

Written Answers Index

Department for Regional Development	75	Disability Living Allowance and Employment Support Allowance Oral Appeal Tribunals	86
A6 Londonderry to Dungiven Dual Carriageway Project	78	Disability Living Allowance Oral Appeal Tribunals	86
A24 Ballynahinch to Belfast Road	81	Flats at 127 Woodvale Road, Belfast	94
Assembly Legislation	82	Foodbanks by Registered Charities	85
Blue Badge Scheme	75	Households Below Average Income Publication	87
Car Park in Millisle Beach Park	77	Housing Executive Houses in the My Lady's Road Area of South Belfast	90
City of Derry Airport	81	Housing Executive Houses in the My Lady's Road Area of South Belfast	90
City of Derry Airport	82	Housing Executive Office in Craigavon	88
Cycle Lanes	83	Housing Executive Tenants	84
Door-to-Door Service in the South Antrim Area	84	Kitchen Replacement Scheme	89
Impact of Parking Charges on Retail	77	Legislation	90
NI Water	81	Ravenlink Residents Group in South Belfast	91
Parking Charges	76	Rent Increases in Housing Executive Properties	91
Parking Tickets	76	Research and Development	85
Parking Tickets	82	Rodent Infestations	94
Personal Injury Claims	84	State Pension Credit	89
Refurbishment Work at Coleraine Train Station	84	Suicide Prevention	88
Road Improvements and Road Surface Maintenance	78	Theft of Copper Storage Tanks from Vacant Properties	93
Roads in the Ards Peninsula	77	Town Centre Regeneration	93
Safe Routes to School	81	Vacant Housing Stock	94
Seagahan Dam, Armagh	83		
Department for Employment and Learning	39	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	16
Colin Area of Belfast	40	Draft PPS 16 - Tourism	18
Education and Training Inspectorate	44	Legislation	18
Education Maintenance Allowance	46	New Headquarters	18
Essential Skills Strategy	42	Rural Development Programme	16
European Social Fund	42	Sale of Puppies	17
European Social Fund	42	Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster	16
European Social Fund	43	Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster	17
European Social Fund	44		
European Social Fund	46	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure	21
Priority 1 of the European Social Fund	43	Football: North Antrim	24
Regional Colleges: Industrial Tribunal of Fair Employment Tribunal Cases	39	Gilford Library	23
Students from the Republic of Ireland	41	Irish Football Association	25
Students: Sexual Offences Prevention Order	40	Libraries	21
Suicide Prevention	41	Libraries	21
Training for Women Network	43	Proposed Ulster-Scots Academy	23
Union Flag	41	Salmon and Sea Trout Stocks	25
Department for Social Development	84	Sports Facilities: North Down	25
Announcements Relating to Work in the West Belfast Constituency	91	Ulster Scots: West Tyrone	24
Colin Area of Belfast	86	World Police and Fire Games	24
Co-ownership Scheme	93		
Disability Living Allowance	90		

Department of Education	26	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety	57
Assaults on School Staff	31	Action on Disability	61
Behavioural Difficulties	26	Altnagelvin Area Hospital: Radiotherapy Unit	70
Bytes Projects Based in West Belfast	37	Ambulances and Fire Appliances: Hoax Call-Outs	64
Colin Area of Belfast	27	Anti-Tumour Necrosis Factor Drugs	59
Commissioners for the South Eastern Education and Library Board	36	Antrim Area Hospital: Palliative Care Unit	71
Consultations	32	Care Packages	62
Convergence Programme Management Board	36	Causeway Hospital	65
Convergence Programme Management Board	37	Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services	60
Cycle to Work Scheme	29	Colin Area of Belfast	62
Draft Partnership Agreement	38	Compensation Scheme for Patients who Contracted Hepatitis C	63
Education Psychology Service	35	Craigavon Area Hospital: X-rays	71
Enrolment Figures	29	DHSSPS: Budget 2011-15	70
Enrolment Places	29	Draft Budget 2011-15	58
General Teaching Council	27	Draft Budget 2011-15	59
Languages Strategy	26	Draft Budget 2011-15	59
New Primary School in Carrick, Warrenpoint	31	Efficiency Plan for the Health Committee	58
Policy on Supporting Ethnic Minority Children and Young People	34	Fertility Services	60
Private Finance Initiative Contract	38	Fire and Rescue Service	64
Review of Literacy and Numeracy Strategy	31	Fire and Rescue Service	64
Ring-fence Funding for Special Education	30	Fire and Rescue Service	64
School Inspections	39	Follow-up Patient Review Appointments	58
School Places	30	Foyleville Nursing Home	62
Suspended Teachers	35	Frozen Embryo Transfer	67
Teachers and Principals Deemed Unsatisfactory	28	Health Service	63
Vacancies for Enrolment	28	HomeStart Scheme in Newcastle and Ballynahinch	61
Year 1 School Places	37	Home-Start Schemes in Ballynahinch and Newcastle	68
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment	46	Hospital Appointments	70
Decentralisation of Public Sector Jobs	47	Hospitals: Delayed Discharges	69
Draft PPS 16 - Tourism	47	Infertility Services	61
Legislation	46	Interviews with Media Outlets	58
Suicide Prevention	46	IVF and ICSI Fertility Treatment	67
Department of Finance and Personnel	54	Land Deemed Surplus to Requirements	57
Civil Service Pay Award	56	Neurology Referrals	59
Decentralisation of Civil Service Jobs	56	NHS: Bureaucracy	70
HR Connect	55	NI Music Therapy Trust	68
Increase in Rates Collection	56	Parkinson's Disease	66
Job Cuts	54	Patient and Client Council	63
Legislation	55	Phase II of the Royal Victoria Hospital Redevelopment Plan	64
NICS Cycle to Work Scheme	55	Private Office Staff	61
Parking Charges	55	Proposed New GP Surgery: Meigh	67
Performance and Efficiency Delivery Unit's Review of the DHSSPS	56	Replies to Assembly Questions	66
Public Expenditure Reductions	56	Review into the Western Health and Social Care Trust	58
		Royal Victoria Hospital: Critical Care Centre	69
		Royal Victoria Hospital: Neurology	69

Staff Salaries	66	Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister	1
St Luke's Hospital, Armagh	68	Appointments and Nominations	2
Swine Flu Admissions to Hospital	65	City of Culture 2013	15
Swine Flu Admissions to Hospital	65	Draft Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration	13
Department of Justice	71	Draft Savings Delivery Plans	1
County Courts: Judges	75	European Microfinance Scheme, PROGRESS	1
Education and Training for Prisoners	71	Maritime and Coastguard Agency	12
Family Courts: Mediation	73	Maze/Long Kesh Development Unit	10
Hazel Stewart	73	Maze/Long Kesh Site	11
Larne Probation Office	72	Non-Departmental Public Bodies and Arm's-Length Bodies	13
Larne Probation Office	73	Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People	4
Legislation	72	Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration	15
Parades: Rosslea	74	Regional Childcare Strategy	13
Policing and Community Safety Partnerships	75	Report into the Commissioner for Children and Young People	11
PSNI: Back Pay	73	S.A.V.E.R. N.A.V.E.R. Organisation	11
Suicide Prevention	72	St Andrews Agreement	14
Youth Justice: Conferences	74	St Patrick's Barracks in Ballymena	12
Department of the Environment	47	Strategic Investment Board	5
Draft PPS 16 - Tourism	51	Strategic Support Fund	9
Extended Driving Test	47	Suicide Prevention	12
Health Risks Associated with the Illegal Waste Sites	53	Ulster Defence Regiment Memorial	11
Heavy Goods Vehicles Drivers	51		
Illegal Waste Activity at 67 Tullyrusk Road, Hannahstown, Belfast	52		
Kerb-Side Glass Recycling Facilities	51		
Legislation	48		
Licensed Taxi Drivers	52		
NI Water Infrastructure	52		
Planning Application	50		
Planning Applications	48		
Removal of Waste at Ballymartin Gaelic Athletic Club in Ballymartin	52		
Rose Energy Incinerator at Glenavy	53		
Suicide Prevention	50		
Website for Tracking Planning Applications	48		
Wind Farm at Fardross, Slieve Beagh, Clogher	52		

Revised Written Answers

Friday 11 March 2011

(AQO 1130/11)

Considerable work has been carried out on a Regional or Minority Languages Strategy for the Ulster-Scots language, heritage and culture and the Irish language.

However there remains an outstanding issue in relation to cultural rights of children in the classroom. On 8 February 2011 I met the Minister for Education to try to progress this matter.

If my concerns around this issue can be addressed it would be my intention to bring a draft strategy to the Executive before the end of this Assembly.

(AQW 4130/11)

(i) I became aware that Philip Holder had been considered for the position of the Chair of NI Water on 21 May 2010. (ii) Yes, I wrote to the First Minister and deputy First Minister on 12 January 2011 to advise them accordingly.



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