

## Written Answers.

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**The following are questions tabled by Members for written response and the ministerial replies as received on the day from the Departments [unrevised].**

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*Questions Nos. 1 to 11, inclusive, answered orally.*

*Questions Nos. 12 to 18, inclusive, resubmitted.*

*Questions Nos. 19 to 27, inclusive, answered orally.*

### Inland Waterways Development

28. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the studies she plans to undertake in relation to the feasibility of extending Erne navigation from Belturbet to Killykeen and Killeshandra, County Cavan; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19998/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** Waterways Ireland manages and maintains the navigation on the River Erne in County Cavan as part of the Shannon – Erne Waterway. Waterways Ireland public jetties are provided in both Belturbet and Kilconny and the navigation channel is provided with navigation markers and signage as and where required. The upper limit of the managed navigation on the River Erne is currently just below Erne Bridge between Belturbet and Kilconny.

I have been informed by Waterways Ireland that a number of studies have been undertaken since the late 1980's to examine the feasibility of extending the navigation upstream from Belturbet to Lough Oughter. The results of these studies have not been taken forward due to budgetary constraints, extent of assessments required, anticipated impacts on the designated habitat, constraints on works due to environmental legislation, and the remit of Waterways Ireland.

While there are no plans currently for a navigation extension scheme, Waterways Ireland have advised me that there may be potential in the waters of the Lough Oughter area being promoted as a distinct Blueway as Blueways Ireland (National Trails Office, Canoeing Ireland and other state bodies) is currently considering the establishment of Blueways beyond the Waterways Ireland network of inland waterways.

To this end Waterways Ireland has met with the Chief Executive of Cavan County Council, Council officials and elected representatives concerning Blueways developed successfully on the Waterways Ireland network and to advise on possible ways forward.

Waterways Ireland is happy to support Cavan County Council with advice should it decide to develop a Blueway on the River Erne from Belturbet to Killykeen and Killeshandra.

*Questions Nos. 29 to 31, inclusive, answered orally.*

## **Scéim na mBóithre Áise**

32. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Pat The Cope Gallagher** den Aire Cultúir, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta an dtabharfaidh sí cur síos ar na pleananna atá aici scéim na mbóithre áise a chur ar bun an athuair do bhóithre nach bóithre contae iad, bóithre áise a fhad le tithe agus feirmeacha, i gceantar na Gaeltachta amháin; agus an ndéanfaidh sí ráiteas ina thaobh. [19976/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Joe McHugh):** Faoi Scéim na mBóithre Áise de chuid na Roinne, a bhfuil tagairt déanta di ina cheist ag an Teachta, chuirte airgead ar fáil do na húdaráis áitiúla ar mhaithe le obair dheisiúcháin a dhéanamh ar bhóithre beaga faoi leith sa Ghaeltacht.

Le go mbeadh bóthar cáilithe chun críche na scéime ba ghá roinnt coinníollacha faoi leith a bheith comhlíonta, ina measc; gur bóthar é nach raibh faoi chúram an údaráis áitiúil ábhartha agus gur bóthar é a bhí ag freastal ar theach amháin ar a laghad móide gabháltas talún nach le húinéir an tí é. Bhí sé mar choinníoll faoi leith chomh maith nach raibh aon gheata transna an bhóthair a thabharfadh le tuiscint don saol fodhlach go raibh cosc orthu an bóthar a úsáid. Mar is eol don Teachta tá an scéim ar fionraí le tamall de bhlianta anois.

Tuigtear go gcuimsítear feabhas ar bhóithre den chineál atá luaite faoi Scéim Feabhsúcháin Áitiúil atá faoi stiúir na Roinne Forbartha Tuaithe agus Pobail.

*Question No. 33 answered orally.*

## **Architectural Heritage**

34. **Deputy Fergus O'Dowd** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the schemes available to support built heritage projects in County Louth; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19983/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** The protection and management of our architectural heritage is set out in the provisions of relevant legislation as are the roles of local authorities and the responsibilities of owners.

Financial support for the protection of architectural heritage is provided by my Department through a number of schemes. These schemes are administered via the local authorities.

The Built Heritage Investment Scheme is a scheme for the repair and conservation of protected structures (i.e. structures on the local authority Record of Protected Structures). The Scheme is designed to leverage private capital for investment in a significant number of labour-intensive, small scale conservation projects across the country and to support the employment of skilled and experienced conservation professionals, craftspeople and tradespersons in the repair of the historic built environment. €2m has been provided for the Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2018. 370 projects have been approved for funding, including five projects in County Louth with aggregate grant aid of €50,000.

The Structures at Risk Fund enables conservation works to heritage structures in both private and public ownership, which are protected under the Planning and Development Acts and are deemed to be at significant risk of deterioration. €1,324,000 has been provided for the Structures at Risk Fund 2018. 76 projects across the country have been approved for funding, including four projects in County Louth aggregating €120,000 in grant aid.

Details of all projects funded under both schemes are available on my Department's website

and all local authority websites. While the closing date for the 2018 schemes has now passed, my Department remains in contact with local authorities throughout the year to ensure the best use of funding, including by reallocating unused funding where, for example, projects do not go ahead.

My Department has provided €350,000 of funding to the OPW in 2018 to assist in the conservation and presentation of historic buildings and national monuments in State ownership. My Department's National Monuments Service also works in close collaboration with the OPW on survey, excavation and research work to optimise the protection, management, interpretation and presentation of national monuments in State care.

The Heritage Council, which my Department funds, also provides grants for the protection and preservation of the built heritage. It is primarily a matter for the Heritage Council to decide how its funding should be allocated across the range of research, education and conservation programmes it supports annually, having regard to competing priorities for limited resources. Grant schemes for 2018 are advertised by the Heritage Council on its website [www.heritage-council.ie](http://www.heritage-council.ie).

In terms of funding for future years, *Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage 2018 – 2027* represents a major capital investment scheme of close to €1.3 billion in funding over the next 10 years. In addition to many other significant initiatives, this plan will see increased investment in protecting and celebrating our built heritage across the country. More details on the commencement and completion dates for projects and programmes, as well as the timing of the expenditure in relation to them, will emerge as we go through the process of appraisal and planning as required under the Public Spending Code.

### National Concert Hall

35. **Deputy Willie Penrose** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the additional facilities that may be required at the National Concert Hall if the recommendations of the Boaden report in respect of the future of the National Symphony Orchestra is implemented; the way in which the funding will be provided to facilitate the NCH in enabling such a transfer to take place; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20005/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** As I stated in my reply to the Priority Question No 1 earlier today, both the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment and I have welcomed the recommendations of the RTÉ report in relation to the provision of orchestral music.

The report has recommended that the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra should be a national cultural institution in its own right, or within the National Concert Hall. It should be noted that the National Symphony Orchestra has been located in the National Concert Hall since it opened in 1981 and it provides the backbone to the Hall's orchestral music programme. Therefore, there is no change in venue required for any organisational change.

I have also recently announced a major €78m plan to redevelop the National Concert Hall as part of the Government's capital investment plan for Culture, Language and Heritage. This includes provision of a larger hall and proper rehearsal facilities for the National Symphony Orchestra. There is now an opportunity for the National Symphony Orchestra to play an even stronger role in the cultural life of the national as part of these wider developments.

Officials in our Departments have been asked to advance the recommendations of the report as a matter of priority. This will require intense engagement between both our Departments and

RTÉ, and with the National Concert Hall. The concerns of employees of the orchestras will be to the forefront of considerations and there will need to be significant engagement with them in this regard.

I expect to bring an early report to Government to chart a way forward including the steps which will be needed to address the recommendations.

### **Commemorative Events**

36. **Deputy Aindrias Moynihan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht when the public consultation into the way in which the significant events of the 1918 to 1923 period will be appropriately remembered will report; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20142/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** The Decade of Centenaries public consultation process was launched by my predecessor, Minister Heather Humphreys T.D. in October of last year. The original closing date for receipt of submissions was 31st January 2018 and this was subsequently extended to 28th February.

The objective of this process was to give interested parties the opportunity to submit their views and ideas around how the events between 1918 and 1923 might be appropriately and respectfully remembered, in line with the principles expressed in the Second Statement of the Expert Advisory Group on Commemorations. I was very encouraged by the response - 73 submissions were made, with 20 of these coming from local authorities.

The Government will continue to be supported in its approach to remembering the significant historical events between 1918 and 1923 by the guidance of the Expert Advisory Group on Commemorations, chaired by Dr Maurice Manning and by the All Party Consultation Group on Commemorations once established. The Expert Advisory Group has considered all of the submissions received and is now formulating the guidance that it will provide to Government to inform the State's approach to the remembrance of significant historical events and themes over the remainder of the Decade. I expect this to be provided to me in the coming weeks.

In relation to the 2018 Commemoration Programme which is already underway; this comprises four thematic strands commemorating the significant historical event which took place in 1918:

- the death of John Redmond and the decline of the Irish Parliamentary Party
- the end of World War 1
- the introduction of voting rights for women and their right to stand in Parliamentary elections
- the emergence and divergence of Irish identity in 1918.

In planning events for the remainder of the decade I am of the view that local authorities will have a key role in supporting engagement and facilitation in local communities and in developing suitable commemorative initiatives at county level and in line with the principles expressed in Second Statement of the Expert Advisory Group on Commemorations.

### **Heritage Sites**

37. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the degree to which she continues to support, maintain, preserve and promote heritage sites throughout the country with particular reference to the need to ensure that nothing is lost that can be preserved for future generations; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20075/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** My role is set out in the provisions of relevant legislation, as are the roles of local authorities and the responsibilities of owners.

I recently launched *Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage 2018-2027*, a major capital investment of close to €1.3 billion in funding for culture and heritage over the next 10 years. This plan will see increased investment in protecting and celebrating our built and natural heritage across the country.

Investment will include targeted supports for our built heritage such as the *Built Heritage Investment Scheme* and the *Historic Structures Fund* which help the owners and custodians of our heritage buildings to protect our valuable built heritage and ensure that vital traditional building skills are not lost. A major investment programme in our National Parks is envisaged with significant investment in visitor facilities and a strong emphasis on conservation and protection of biodiversity. The investment will also enable us to make our archaeological heritage more open to everyone, through better conservation, improved facilities and access.

*Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage* will also support significant investment in recreational facilities including trails networks. The plan provides €60 million over 10 years for biodiversity. It is envisaged that this will be spent on maintaining and restoring important habitats such as peatlands. The funding will directly support employment in the heritage, conservation and archaeological sectors. By safeguarding and preserving our heritage sites, we will also promote tourism and sustainable regional development.

More details on the commencement and completion dates for projects and programmes, as well as the timing of the expenditure in relation to them, will emerge as we go through the process of appraisal and planning as required under the Public Spending Code. These will be designed and delivered with a strong emphasis on conservation and allow us to protect and preserve our most fragile environments and, investing in our culture, language and heritage, provide a well-being benefit for all.

Ireland's archaeological heritage is of international significance. I am the owner or guardian of almost 1000 national monuments in State care right across the country ranging from prehistoric burial monuments, to medieval fortifications and religious sites. Our national monument portfolio also includes more modern structures such as the eighteenth-century terrace at 14-17 Moore Street. Local authorities are responsible under the National Monuments Acts for maintaining the national monuments of which they are guardians.

The Heritage Council, which my Department funds, also provides grants and supports for the protection and preservation of our heritage. It is primarily a matter for the Heritage Council to decide how its funding should be allocated across the range of research, education and conservation programmes it supports annually, having regard to competing priorities for limited resources. Grant schemes for 2018 are advertised by the Heritage Council on its website [www.heritagecouncil.ie](http://www.heritagecouncil.ie).



38. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the number of vacancies on the board of the National Museum; when she plans to fill these vacancies; the process by which the vacancies will be filled; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19978/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** Section 19(1) of the National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997 (the 1997 Act) provides that the Board of the National Museum of Ireland shall consist of a chairperson and not less than 13 or more than 15 ordinary members.

There are currently three vacancies, one of which is to be filled by a staff representative, on the Board of the National Museum of Ireland.

Officials in my Department are working with the National Museum of Ireland to fill these vacancies which includes the preparation of the appropriate call for expressions of interest to serve on the Board which will be advertised on [www.StateBoards.ie](http://www.StateBoards.ie). The posts will be advertised in the coming weeks. A panel will then be convened to review the applications received and a short list of names will be submitted to me for final selection and appointment.

The procedure for the filling of the staff representative vacancy is set out in the 1997 Act.

### **Departmental Reviews**

39. **Deputy Catherine Connolly** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the status of her Department's post-project review on a cinema (details supplied); if the review has commenced; and if so, when it will be completed; the terms of reference for the review; the membership of the review team; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20131/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** The post project review of the Pálás Cinema project will be conducted in accordance with the Public Spending Code which is managed by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. The Public Spending Code provides that such reviews should be undertaken once sufficient time has elapsed to allow the project to be properly evaluated with sufficient evidence of the flow of benefits/costs from it. It should be noted that while the project was completed and commenced operation in 2018, it is necessary to wait until 2019 to conduct the review to ensure that there is adequate operational data available for the analysis. This data is essential to assess the degree with which the project is meeting the objectives set for it at its outset. In line with this requirements of the Code, it is my intention that the post project review will commence in quarter one of 2019 and will be delivered within a six month timeframe.

The post project review will include the following terms of reference in respect of the review:

- the development of a logic model for the project to guide the evaluation;
- an examination of the rationale for the State's investment in the Pálás Cinema;
- an assessment of the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the State's investment in the cinema based on the objectives set out for the project at its outset; and
- the identification of any learnings which may be used to improve the Department's appraisal, management or delivery of capital projects in future.

The post project review will be conducted by the Department's Evaluation Unit which is

made up of members of the Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service (IGEES). It will be overseen by a Quality Assurance Group, as set out in the relevant IGEES guidance. It is intended that the members of the review team will come from within and outside the Department, including representatives with relevant expertise in the areas of evaluation, capital investment and culture.

### **Film Industry Tax Reliefs**

40. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if her attention has been drawn to the concerns in the Irish audiovisual industry regarding the need for certainty surrounding the extension of the section 481 tax incentive in its current form beyond 2020; the danger such projects and jobs could be lost to competing locations in view of the lengthy planning horizons for film and television productions; the engagement her Department has had with the Department of Finance regarding this matter; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19982/18]

56. **Deputy Niamh Smyth** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the engagement her Department has had with the Department of Finance in relation to the extension of section 481 film relief; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20000/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 40 and 56 together.

The Government supports the Irish film industry through the twin approach of direct funding through the Irish Film Board and the film tax credit scheme - Section 481 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997.

Section 481 provides a critical support for the Irish production sector, generating thousands of jobs, and providing a strong value proposition for the public purse. My Department continues to work on behalf of the sector through its engagement with key Departments including in relation to the extension of Section 481 beyond 2020.

I understand that the Department of Finance is now undertaking a full review of Section 481 in line with tax expenditure guidelines before any decision to extend the extension of tax credit is formalised. My Department is working closely with Department of Finance on an ongoing basis on the issue.

In partnership with the Departments of Communications, Climate Action and Environment and Business, Enterprise and Innovation, my Department commissioned an economic analysis of our screen based creative industries to provide an input for the development of an industry-wide long term plan for Ireland as a global hub for the production of Film, TV Drama and Animation under Pillar 4 of the Creative Ireland Programme. I intend to publish this economic report and associated plan shortly.

### **Commemorative Events**

41. **Deputy Noel Rock** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the national commemorative events that will be taking place in Glasnevin during the remainder of 2018; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19977/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** It should be noted that Glasnevin cemetery is operated by an independent trust which organises a full

programme of events throughout the year. Further details of the programme should be available from the Trust itself.

The Government, including my Department, works in close partnership with Glasnevin Trust. This includes support for specific events organised by Glasnevin Trust or as a venue to facilitate many aspects of the State's Decade of Centenaries commemorative programme. The Trust has provided a venue for a number of key State ceremonial events, most recently the centenary of the death of Thomas Ashe on 22nd September 2017.

While there are no confirmed formal State commemorative events scheduled for Glasnevin in 2018 my Department is considering the timing and format of ceremonies to mark the ending of World War I in consultation with relevant State partners. For completeness, I might add that I recently announced plans for an official commemoration in Dún Laoghaire on 10th October 2018 to mark the centenary of the sinking of the RMS Leinster and to commemorate all of those who perished in that tragedy.

### **Inland Waterways Maintenance**

42. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the funding provided in her Department's Estimates for 2018 for restoration work on the Ulster Canal; the works which will be undertaken with such funding; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19999/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** Waterways Ireland is currently working on the first phase of reopening navigation from the Erne to Castle Saunderson on the Ulster Canal.

The works to complete the development are in the final phase of delivery and completion is expected in late July 2018.

To date over €2.8m has been spent on the entire Ulster Canal project. Expenditure of €1.133m is forecast to complete navigation to Castle Saunderson in 2018.

In parallel, the next phase of works on the restoration is under active consideration.

This project is important for the border region with potential to stimulate economic activity, giving a much needed boost to job creation and with the growth in water based tourism attracting help attract significant numbers of visitors to the area. This is increasingly significant in the context of Brexit.

I remain committed to the project and I am keen to build on current progress and advance further restoration of the Ulster Canal to Clones and to progress the commitments in the Fresh Start Agreement in relation to the further development of the Ulster Canal.

### **National Parks**

43. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her plans to designate further national parks in view of the fact that Ireland has a low number and square kilometres of national parks compared to the EU average; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [18007/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** The Na-



tional Parks and Wildlife Service of my Department manages an extensive conservation and recreational property portfolio of some 85,000 hectares. Our 6 National Parks account for circa 65,000 hectares with another almost 20,000 hectares of nature reserves and other heritage sites. The existing National Parks are managed from a conservation perspective, and attract in excess of 4 million visitors annually.

Given the resources available for capital investment within our National Parks and Nature Reserves, I am ever mindful of the need to focus on the core responsibilities relating to the management of the existing Parks and Reserves lands and have no plans at present to increase the number of National Parks in the country.

However, as part of my Department's continuing commitment and contribution to protecting our heritage and improving our tourism and recreation product, we have been exploring ways to optimise the sustainable potential of heritage sites under our control in a way that is compatible with conservation objectives.

In this context, it should be noted that in late 2016 my Department negotiated the extension of Wicklow Mountains National Park by purchasing almost 4,900 acres of Dublin Uplands at Glenasmole in 2016 at a cost of €800,000. The purchase underpins the Government's on-going commitment to the preservation of our natural heritage for future generations of citizens and visitors alike to enjoy.

In 2017 the entire Wild Nephin area was consolidated into the ownership of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. This creates a State – Owned wilderness project of over 11,000 hectares and aims to provide increased nature conservation benefits and biodiversity as well as enhanced recreational and social benefits through the 're-wilding' of the forest which adjoins the National Park. Thanks to the acquisition, we will be returning the area to a natural wilderness state.

My Department, in conjunction with Fáilte Ireland, launched a strategic partnership last year with a view to growing tourism revenues in the rural areas where the parks are located and increasing Ireland's appeal as a recreation destination. Fáilte Ireland invested capital funding of €550,000 to kick-start the initiative. This initial funding focussed on the five National Parks and five Nature Reserves situated on the Wild Atlantic Way in addition to Wicklow Mountains National Park. The funding facilitated the undertaking of feasibility, scoping and design of tourism and recreational projects, building on the strengths of each location, as well as further promoting track and trails within our National Parks and Nature Reserves for walkers and tourists.

One of the outputs from the partnership with Fáilte is "*Experiencing the Wild Heart of Ireland*"; an interpretative masterplan for the development of our National Parks and Reserves, and it is currently being finalised. This will prioritise and deliver significant investment at these important nature conservation, public amenity and tourism sites and underpins the objectives of Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage. The investment in our National Parks will create memorable and meaningful experiences of Ireland's landscapes, wildlife and culture. This will be done through sensitive design and the development of authentic experiences, providing better access to nature and an increased understanding of society's conservation responsibilities.

I recently launched "Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage", a ten year plan setting out the Government's objectives for capital investment in Ireland's culture, language and heritage. A major investment programme in our National Parks is envisaged under this Plan with significant investment in visitor facilities and a strong emphasis on conservation and protection of biodiversity. Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage will support significant investment in recreational facilities including trails networks. These will be designed and

delivered with a strong emphasis on conservation and allow us protect and preserve our most fragile environments and investing in our culture, language & heritage provide a well-being benefit for all.

Over the period of the plan, the following projects are planned:

- Improvement of visitor facilities at Connemara and Glenveagh National Parks;
- New walking and cycling trails at Ballycroy National Park;
- Investment in outdoor recreational facilities in Killarney National Park;
- Investment in interpretation at our Nature Reserves; and
- Enhancement of the visitor experience at Wicklow National Park.
- Strategic park enhancements

So while I have no plans to expand the Park network at present, my Department is actively ensuring the preservation, protection and presentation of the assets we already own.

### **Regional Development Funding**

44. **Deputy Tom Neville** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if she will provide additional information on the provisions contained in the Investing in Our Culture, Language and Heritage 2018-2027 plan for a regional production fund aimed at assisting with the cost of filming outside counties Dublin and Wicklow. [19918/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** The Government's capital investment plan *Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage 2018-2027* provides for funding of €200m to be invested in media production and audio visual industries through the Irish Film Board over the next 10 years which will have a positive impact right across the country.

This will assist in realising the vision under Pillar 4 of the Creative Ireland Programme to develop Ireland as a centre of excellence in media production.

Related to this my Department will soon publish the report on the "Economic Analysis of the Audiovisual Sector in the Republic of Ireland" and related Government Plan for the Audiovisual industry which will set out in greater detail how it is proposed to develop the industry further.

### **Hare Coursing Data**

45. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the number of hares dying at coursing clubs by club in 2017 and to date in 2018; if post mortems have been carried out in all cases; the number which had pre-existing conditions; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19896/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** Figures available to my Department from the Irish Coursing Club indicate that during the 2016/17 and 2017/18 hare coursing seasons the number of hares that died at coursing meetings was 26 and 24 respectively. The reports generated by the Irish Coursing Club and the National Parks and

Wildlife Service for the 2016/17 and 2017/18 seasons, which would include information to identify the coursing clubs where hares died and if post mortems were carried out, are available on the website of the NPWS at [www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie).

### Commemorative Events

46. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht when the all-party consultation group on commemorations will next meet; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19980/18]

57. **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht when the cross part advisory the decade of centenaries all party committee will be re-established; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19996/18]

61. **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht when the first meeting of the decade of centenaries all-party committee will take place. [20137/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 46, 57 and 61 together.

In the lead up to the State's commemoration of the centenary of the events of 1916, the All-Party Consultation Group on Commemorations proved very constructive. The Group's input will also be beneficial in informing the State Commemorative Programme for the remainder of the Decade of Centenaries.

Last September, my predecessor Minister Humphreys, wrote to the Ceann Comhairle requesting the Business Committee to nominate Deputies and Senators to the group.

Parties in the Northern Ireland Assembly that are not represented in the Dáil or Seanad were also requested to make nominations.

Most nominations have now been received and I expect to receive outstanding nominations shortly. I will then be in a position to convene an early meeting of the Group.

### Departmental Funding

47. **Deputy Catherine Connolly** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the funding allocated to Galway 2020 to date; all expenditure, including salaries and rent; the governance structures in place to monitor the expenditure and the projected further funding from her Department between now and the end of 2020; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20130/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** In December 2014 the Government decided that Ireland should exercise its right to nominate a European Capital of Culture for 2020 and committed in principle at that time to provide €15m to the selected project. The Government's support represents the largest single contribution to the overall cost of Galway 2020 as the European City of Culture, which is €45.7m. The balance of the funding is sourced from city and county local authorities, and commitments from business and sponsorship. The EU Commission's award is €1.5m. The city of culture is being delivered by the Galway 2020 Company with a board which represents the relevant partners. My Department officials continue to work and support the Galway 2020 Company and its Board with the preparations for delivery of the programme, "Making Waves". Mr Declan McGonagle is my

Department's representative on the Board. My Department provided a first tranche of funding of €250,000 in December 2017 toward certified expenditure already incurred for Galway 2020. The audited accounts for 2017 for Galway Cultural Development and Activity Company Limited by Guarantee, the legal structure set up to undertake all the activities of Galway 2020, show total expenditure of €749,129 to end 2017 of which €229,132 was on salaries, €240,921 on overheads, including rent of €39,788 with the remaining €279,076 spend on programme costs. The balance of the €15m grant will be advanced to Galway 2020 through a performance delivery agreement which is currently being drafted.

### **Legislative Programme**

48. **Deputy Fergus O'Dowd** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the status of the main provisions and the current status of the Heritage Bill 2016; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19972/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** The Heritage Bill, which has passed all stages in Seanad Éireann, passed Committee stage in Dáil Éireann yesterday. The Bill has three main Parts, amending the Canals Act 1986, the Wildlife Acts and the Heritage Act 1995.

The principal purpose of the Bill is to implement the Report of the Critical Review of the Heritage Council approved by Government in 2013.

The Bill also amends the Canals Act 1986 to allow the making of bye-laws by Waterways Ireland for the regulation of boating and management of the canals.

The Bill also provides for controlled burning of vegetation under strict regulation in the month of March on a pilot basis for a two year period, and for the managed cutting of roadside hedges, under strict regulation, in August, again for a two year pilot period. The Bill also clarifies the powers of authorised officers under the Wildlife Acts and harmonises the provisions of the Roads Act 1993 with the Wildlife Acts.

#### **Burning of vegetation in the month of March**

The provision in the Heritage Bill is not a blanket approval allowing the indiscriminate burning of vegetation in March. The legislation provides for Regulations (on a two-year pilot basis) to allow burning in certain areas of the country, at specified periods in the month of March, for example where burning has been impossible earlier in the year due to adverse weather.

#### **Cutting of hedges in August**

The Regulations will require that any cutting of roadside hedges in August may only be of the current year's growth. Heavier cutting must still be done during the existing permitted period, i.e. between September and the end of February. There will be a public consultation process including consultation with relevant stakeholders in finalising these Regulations which are for a two-year pilot period.

#### **Harmonising the Wildlife Act with the safety provisions in the Roads Act**

Section 70(2) of the Roads Act obliges landowners to ensure that vegetation on their land is not a hazard to road safety. A local authority may serve notices on landowners to deal with vegetation, for safety purposes, along public roads. However, the Wildlife Acts state that such works may not be undertaken by landowners.

The conflict between these two pieces of legislation needs to be resolved and so the provision in the Heritage Bill is designed to harmonise both sets of legislation, clear up any confusion and remove conflict.

### **Regulation of boating on the Canals**

The amendments to the Canals Act will allow Waterways Ireland to make bye-laws to regulate boating on the canals and to manage the use of the canals and will enhance the ability of Waterways Ireland to manage these waterways for the benefit of all their users.

Our waterways make a vital contribution to tourism, attracting visitors from around Ireland and from abroad. There are over 14,000 registered boat owners on the seven waterways managed by Waterways Ireland. There are over 500 boats on the Royal Canal, Grand Canal and Barrow Navigation and Waterways Ireland is seeking to encourage more visiting boats onto the waterways. The existing bye law regime is not conducive to advancing this objective. The proposed bye-laws are intended to encourage tourism and leisure craft users by supporting the investment already made by Waterways Ireland in new infrastructure and facilities along the canals and by enhancing Waterways Ireland's ability to manage, care for and maintain the canals and to help to develop them as a vibrant recreational and tourist amenity for all waterway users.

### **The Heritage Council**

In implementing the recommendations of the Report of the Critical Review of the Heritage Council approved by Government in 2013, this Bill will refocus the activities and functions of the Heritage Council, with a particular emphasis on engagement with communities and local authorities. The Bill also introduces the non-remuneration of Board members while continuing their entitlement to expenses incurred in discharge of their duties, reduces the size of the Board and removes the requirement for statutory Standing Committees on wildlife, archaeology, architectural heritage and inland waterways. The Heritage Council retains the right to set up Committees as it sees fit.

### **Arts Promotion**

49. **Deputy Niamh Smyth** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht when a location (details supplied) will commence hosting exhibitions; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20002/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** I am delighted to say that an exhibition entitled Seamus Heaney: Listen Now Again will open on to the public on 6 July 2018 at the location referred to by the Deputy .

The new cultural offering will add to Ireland's reputation as a centre of literary celebration. The exhibition will take visitors on a multi-sensory journey from Heaney's origins through his remarkable poetic career.

The exhibition will draw on the National Library's extensive archive of Heaney documents and will feature the poets's original manuscripts as well as letters, unpublished works, diary entries, photographs, note books and multi-media recordings.

### **Film Industry Development**

50. **Deputy Niamh Smyth** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if she



was consulted in relation to the sale of a studio (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20004/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** I was consulted by my colleague, the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Deputy Heather Humphreys about the matter referred to by the Deputy. Both myself and Minister Humphreys welcomed the acquisition of the studios referred to by a company which proposes to invest in the facility in the future.

### **Departmental Funding**

51. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the status of her Department's funding contribution to a project (details supplied) in County Cork; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19897/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** The project to which the Deputy refers consists of a design, construction and operation of a new facility with a capacity of approximately 6,000 persons, capable of accommodating a range of events including concerts, festivals, family entertainments, cultural, sports, exhibitions, conferences and trade shows.

This is a public private partnership project led by the local authority. My Department has committed funding of €12m to the local authority, which is itself contributing €8m to the project. A Service Level Agreement is in place between my Department and the local authority setting out the terms and conditions of the grant of €12 million and to date, €1m has been paid to the local authority. Since the initial grant was allocated, the cost of the project has, however, increased significantly. As a result, the local authority has approached my Department seeking an additional contribution of €10m to the project.

My Department is analysing the application for additional funding while seeking to ensure prudent management of the grant. The project has significant procurement, state aid, legal and match funding complexities and the Department's analysis aims to ensure that this flagship development is delivered in line with legal requirements and in accordance with the Public Spending Code.

### **Commemorative Events**

52. **Deputy Michael Moynihan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her plans to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the 1949 declaration of a Republic in 2019; and if plans will include all political parties. [17971/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** On 18th April 1949, The Republic of Ireland Act 1948, came into operation and the State became a republic.

The 75th anniversary of that significant event arises on 18th April 2024. I will consider how this anniversary might be appropriately remembered in consultation with my Government colleagues.

I am also happy to discuss the issue with the All Party Consultation Group on Commemorations, which I am in the process of reconvening.

## National Museum

53. **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if the funding allocation for the National Museum of Ireland will be accounted for in view of the lack of a financial controller on its staff. [20135/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** As the National Museum of Ireland is a statutory body under the National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997, I have no responsibility for the day to day operations of the Museum. It is a matter for the Museum itself to decide on the optimum staffing arrangements. I am informed that the finance department in the Museum is currently staffed by:

My Department is not aware of any issues in relation to the Finance Department and notes that the performance delivery agreement between my Department and the Museum serves to ensure that resources are used in an effective and cost effective manner to deliver quality services to the public. The agreement includes details of the requirements for financial drawdown. As with other state agencies, the Museum is also subject to audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

## National Orchestras

54. **Deputy Niamh Smyth** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her views on the findings of the independent review of orchestral services in RTÉ; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20001/18]

66. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if her attention has been drawn to the Boaden report in respect of the future of the National Symphony Orchestra and the RTÉ Concert Orchestra and the report's recommendation that the NSO become a national cultural institution; the action she plans to take on foot of this report; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19979/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 54 and 66 together.

I refer the Deputies to my reply to Priority Question No 1 earlier today.

## Architectural Heritage

55. **Deputy Tom Neville** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the supports being provided by her Department for built heritage projects in County Limerick for 2018 and 2019. [19919/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** My role with regard to the protection and management of our architectural heritage, is set out in the provisions of relevant legislation as are the role of local authorities and the responsibilities of owners as regards heritage assets.

Financial support for the protection of architectural heritage is provided by my Department through a number of schemes. These schemes are administered via the local authorities.

The Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) is a scheme for the repair and conservation of structures on the local authority Record of Protected Structures. The BHIS is designed to

leverage private capital for investment in a significant number of labour-intensive, small scale conservation projects across the country and to support the employment of skilled and experienced conservation professionals, craftspeople and tradespersons in the repair of the historic built environment. €2m has been provided for the Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2018. 370 projects have been approved for funding, including 36 projects in Limerick City and County aggregating €108,000 in grant aid.

The Structures at Risk Fund (SRF) enables conservation works to heritage structures in both private and public ownership, which are protected under the Planning and Development Acts and are deemed to be at significant risk of deterioration. €1,324,000 has been provided for the Structures at Risk Fund 2018. 76 projects across the country have been approved for funding, including two projects in Limerick aggregating €35,000 in grant aid.

Details of all projects funded under both schemes are available on my Department's website and all local authority websites. While the closing date for the 2018 schemes has now passed, my Department remains in contact with local authorities throughout the year to ensure the best use of funding, including by reallocating unused funding where, for example, projects do not go ahead.

My Department has provided €350,000 of funding to the OPW in 2018 to assist in the conservation and presentation of historic buildings and national monuments in State ownership. My Department's National Monuments Service also works in close collaboration with the OPW on survey, excavation and research work to optimise the protection, management, interpretation and presentation of national monuments in State care.

The Heritage Council, which my Department funds, also provides grants for the protection and preservation of the built heritage. It is primarily a matter for the Heritage Council to decide how its funding should be allocated across the range of research, education and conservation programmes it supports annually, having regard to competing priorities for limited resources. Grant schemes for 2018 are advertised by the Heritage Council on its website [www.heritage-council.ie](http://www.heritage-council.ie).

In terms of funding for future years, *Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage 2018 – 2027* represents a major capital investment scheme of close to €1.3 billion in funding over the next 10 years. This plan will see increased investment in protecting and celebrating our built heritage across the country. More details on the commencement and completion dates for projects and programmes, as well as the timing of the expenditure in relation to them, will emerge as we go through the process of appraisal and planning as required under the Public Spending Code.

*Question No. 56 answered with Question No. 40.*

*Question No. 57 answered with Question No. 46.*

### **Architectural Heritage**

58. **Deputy Peter Burke** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the supports available for built heritage projects in counties Longford and Westmeath. [19974/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** My role with regard to the protection and management of our architectural heritage, is set out in the provisions of relevant legislation as are the roles of local authorities and the responsibilities of owners.

Financial support for the protection of architectural heritage is provided by my Department through a number of schemes. These schemes are administered via the local authorities.

The Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) is a scheme for the repair and conservation of protected structures (i.e. structures on the local authority Record of Protected Structures). The BHIS is designed to leverage private capital for investment in a significant number of labour-intensive, small scale conservation projects across the country and to support the employment of skilled and experienced conservation professionals, craftspeople and tradespersons. €2m has been provided for the Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2018. 370 projects have been approved for funding, including 16/projects in Counties Longford and Westmeath with an aggregate grant aid of €100k.

The Structures at Risk Fund enables conservation works to heritage structures in both private and public ownership, which are protected under the Planning and Development Acts and are deemed to be at significant risk of deterioration. €1,324,000 has been provided for the Structures at Risk Fund 2018. 76 projects across the country have been approved for funding, including three projects in County Longford with aggregate grant aid of €50,000 and three further projects in County Westmeath with an aggregate grant aid of €43,000.

Details of all projects funded under both schemes are available on my Department's website and all local authority websites. While the closing date for the 2018 schemes has now passed, my Department remains in contact with local authorities throughout the year to ensure the best use of funding, including by reallocating funding where, for example, projects do not go ahead.

My Department has provided €350,000 of funding to the OPW in 2018 to assist in the conservation and presentation of historic buildings and national monuments in State ownership. My Department's National Monuments Service also works in close collaboration with the OPW on survey, excavation and research work to optimise the protection, management, interpretation and presentation of national monuments in State care.

The Heritage Council, which my Department funds, also provides grants for the protection and preservation of the built heritage. It is primarily a matter for the Heritage Council to decide how its funding should be allocated across the range of research, education and conservation programmes it supports annually, having regard to competing priorities for limited resources. Grant schemes for 2018 are advertised by the Heritage Council on its website [www.heritage-council.ie](http://www.heritage-council.ie).

In terms of funding for future years, *Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage 2018 – 2027* represents a major capital investment scheme of close to €1.3 billion in funding over the next 10 years. This plan will see increased investment in protecting and celebrating our built heritage across the country. More details on the commencement and completion dates for projects and programmes, as well as the timing of the expenditure in relation to them, will emerge as we go through the process of appraisal and planning as required under the Public Spending Code.

### Cultural Policy

59. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which she will be in a position to continue to utilise events of a cultural and heritage nature to promote the national image at home and abroad with particular reference to the need to generate increased interest in such matters among young persons; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20074/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** Irish culture and heritage are indisputable assets when it comes to promoting Ireland's image and reputation at home and abroad among all age groups.

My Department supports a broad range of programmes and initiatives across its remit to promote Ireland's image, including in particular the Creative Ireland Programme and Culture Ireland.

The remit of Culture Ireland, a division of my Department, is to promote and advance Irish arts worldwide thus strengthening Ireland's cultural profile and global reputation. Strategic priorities include providing support for the international presentation of Irish artists and arts organisations, developing new and diverse international audiences and markets for Irish arts, and linking culture into the Government's international promotion strategy in tandem with other relevant Government Agencies.

This year, Culture Ireland is presenting Culture Ireland GB18, a year-long programme of Irish arts in Great Britain that aims to showcase Irish artistic excellence in partnership with significant UK institutions, venues and festivals, to build on the unique (and in many respects shared) cultural relationship between the two countries and expand the reach of Irish culture to new audiences.

Great Britain is a key market for Ireland in terms of tourism, trade and investment promotion and the GB18 programme enables us to use our culture and heritage as a unique door-opener for Ireland and Irish business, and an effective means of articulating our values at a time of change in Ireland's wider relationship with Britain.

The Creative Ireland Programme is a culture-based programme led by my Department designed to promote individual, community and national wellbeing. Its core proposition is that participation in cultural activity drives personal and collective creativity, with significant implications for individual and societal wellbeing and achievement.

Pillar I - 'Enabling the Creative Potential of Children' and Pillar II - 'Enabling Creativity in Every Community' of the Programme will see considerable investment this year in highlighting numerous events of a cultural and heritage nature across the country.

For instance, a sum of €3m (€2m from my Department and €1m from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government) has been allocated to all 31 local authorities (€96,000 each approximately) to enable them support an extensive programme of activities, events and initiatives in each county. In addition, each local authority has been allocated funding to host Cruinniú na nÓg, a day of day of youthful creativity that will be held on the 23 June 2018 and which is specifically targeted at children and young people. Further details regarding Cruinniú na nÓg will be made available shortly.

The Creative Youth Plan, an initiative under Pillar I launched in December 2017 is underpinned by the principle that the arts and culture need to be at the centre of education. This will by its very nature increase interest in Irish culture and heritage among young people. Work is currently underway in progressing the 18 actions contained within this plan which can be accessed at <https://creative.ireland.ie/en/library>

Pillar V of the Creative Ireland Programme aims to enhance Ireland's global reputation as a creative and cultural nation and presents an unique opportunity to create a unified articulation of Ireland's values, capabilities and beliefs for the outside world with direct and indirect economic and social benefits. The [www.ireland.ie](http://www.ireland.ie) website articulating this vision was re-launched in March 2018 as a cross-sectoral initiative to showcase Ireland as a place to live, to visit, to



invest, to study, and do business in.

We will continue to work across Government in 2018, to further enhance Ireland's cultural and artistic reputation, particularly in the context of the recently launched ten-year plan "Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage 2018-2027" which sets out the Government's objectives for capital investment in Ireland's culture, language and heritage. This plan can be accessed at <http://www.chg.gov.ie/news-centre/news-centre-publications/>

### Wildlife Protection

60. **Deputy Joan Burton** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht if her attention has been drawn to the concerns of an organisation (details supplied) in respect of the Heritage Bill for the breeding of birds and bees during the month of March; the engagement her Department has had with concerned NGOs such as the organisation and An Taisce regarding the draft legislation; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19981/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** Section 40 of the Wildlife Acts 1976, as amended, prohibits the cutting, grubbing, burning or destruction of vegetation, with certain strict exemptions, from 1 March to 31 August.

Following a review of Section 40, which involved, inter alia, consideration of submissions from interested parties including from An Taisce and the organisation in question, proposals were announced in December 2015 to introduce legislation to allow for managed hedge cutting and burning at certain times within the existing closed period on a pilot two year basis. The legislation required to allow for these pilot measures is included in the Heritage Bill 2016, which was published in January 2016.

I am aware of a recent submission made to my Department by the organisation concerned on the provisions on hedge cutting and burning in the Heritage Bill and various organisations have raised their concerns at meetings with my Department.

The Bill has completed its passage through Seanad Éireann and completed Committee Stage in Dail Éireann yesterday.

In the meantime, the existing provisions relating to Section 40 of the Wildlife Acts remain in force.

*Question No. 61 answered with Question No. 46.*

### National Monuments

62. **Deputy Peter Burke** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the status of plans to pursue ownership of the Granard Motte. [19973/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** I am aware of the State's long association with Granard Motte which came into its care in 1926. Because the monument is in my guardianship, as Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, it enjoys a high level of protection under the National Monuments Acts. Any ground disturbance or other works at or in proximity to the monument can only take place with my formal consent under those Acts. Also, the Office of Public Works is charged with maintaining the monument and has full access to it for that purpose.

I appreciate the significance of this national monument and its appeal to the people of Longford. I am strongly in favour of full ownership being acquired by the State. Unfortunately previous negotiations towards that end on behalf of my Department and Longford County Council failed to achieve a successful result. In that context, the Deputy will appreciate the constraints of public procurement policy with regard to the purchase price and the requirement for value for money to be achieved.

However, following further communication between my Department, the local authority and the Office of Public Works the negotiations are being reopened and I hope there will be a positive outcome.

### **National Concert Hall**

63. **Deputy Alan Kelly** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht when the refurbishment of the National Concert Hall will proceed as part of Ireland 2040; when the works will go to tender; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20008/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** Under its plan 'Investing in our Culture, Heritage and Language' the Government intends to invest €460m in a significant number of capital projects in our National Cultural Institutions over the period 2018 to 2027. Included in this figure is €78 million for the re-development of the National Concert Hall.

Investments under this plan will be subject to appraisal and evaluation in line with the Public Spending Code. This includes the consideration of a range of options prior to committing any funding to the project, an evaluation of the financial and economic implications of the project prior to procuring the project, and robust project management arrangements throughout the implementation phase.

More details on the delivery of this project will emerge as my Department goes through this process of appraising and planning for this important investment.

### **Irish Language**

64. **Deputy John Curran** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her plans to offer a grant or bursary scheme to parents wishing to send their children to the Gaeltacht; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19901/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Joe McHugh):** The Deputy will be aware that under the provisions of Scéim na bhFoghlaimoirí Gaeilge (Irish Learners' scheme) the cost of attending recognised Irish summer college courses is subvented by way of a daily grant (currently €10 per student) which is payable to qualifying householders who provide suitable accommodation to attending students.

This investment (in support of the overall objectives of the *20-Year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2022*) accounted for exchequer expenditure in excess of €4.07m in 2017 and provided learning opportunities to more than 26,000 students who resided with 659 registered households while attending courses provided by 49 recognised Gaeltacht Irish summer colleges.

I understand that a number of organisations, including Educational and Training Boards, in addition to a number of Irish summer colleges, currently provide scholarships in order to further

enable attendance.

By way of underpinning the measures in hand in support of the language and, by extension the 20-Year Strategy, the issue of scholarships is currently being considered.

### **Arts and Culture Capital Scheme**

65. **Deputy Niamh Smyth** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the status of her Department's review of the cap in the percentage for the arts scheme; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20003/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** In 1997 the Government approved the inclusion in budgets for all Exchequer-funded capital construction projects of up to 1% as funding for an art project, subject to an overall cap of €64,000.

Under the terms of the Scheme, funds to commission a per cent for art piece are factored into and funded from the overall budget of each capital project by the public body undertaking it. This is a matter for each project promoter or commissioning body.

My Department has responsibility for the promotion of the Per Cent for Art Scheme and set out guidelines in 2004 to assist project managers to operate the scheme and to provide a common national approach to its implementation. Guidelines on the Per Cent for Art Scheme are available on the Public Art website [www.publicart.ie](http://www.publicart.ie). and on the Department's website.

The current cap was set by Government in 1997 and given the period which has elapsed since the cap was last adjusted in 1997, my predecessor asked the Department to conduct a review of the scheme. My Department has carried out an initial scoping exercise on the operation of the scheme and will now be consulting on a more formal basis with Departments and Agencies who operate the scheme. I expect to receive proposals for changes to the scheme in the coming months.

*Question No. 66 answered with Question No. 54.*

### **Limistéir Pleanála Teanga**

67. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** den Aire Cultúir, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta conas a chinnteoidh an tAire go bhfuil an t-airgead atá curtha ar fáil do phleanáil teanga caite ar phleanáil teanga agus é tagtha chun solais nach raibh ach 11% de mhaoiniú do phleanáil teanga caite uirthi. [20139/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Joe McHugh):** Ar mhaithe le cabhrú tuilleadh le feidhmiú na *Straitéise 20 Bliain don Ghaeilge 2010-2030*, a bhfuil an próiseas pleanála teanga mar chuid lárnach de, bunaíodh ciste faoi leith in 2014. Baineadh leas as an gciste seo ó 2014 i leith chun cúram a dhéanamh d'fheidhmiú an phróisis pleanála teanga, ar cuireadh tús lena fheidhmiú ar an talamh an bhliain sin, chomh maith le maoiniú a dhéanamh ar raon de thograí, bearta agus tionscnaimh faoi leith mar thaca breise d'fheidhmiú na *Straitéise* agus don phróiseas pleanála teanga, dá réir.

Ós rud é go bhfuil an próiseas pleanála teanga mar chuid lárnach d'fheidhmiú na *Straitéise*, ba ghá féachadh chuige, i gcomhthéacs an chúraim atá sannta dóibh faoin bpróiseas, gur cuireadh maoiniú a dhóthain ar fáil d'Údarás na Gaeltachta agus d'Fhoras na Gaeilge araon chun a chinntiú go mbeadh sé curtha ar a gcumas tacú mar ba ghá le hullmhúchán pleananna sna

Limistéir Pleanála Teanga Gaeltachta, sna Bailte Seirbhíse Gaeltachta agus sna Líonraí Gaeilge de réir mar a bhain sé leo faoi seach thar an tréimhse.

Leagtar amach sa tábla a leanas an cionnroinnt den chiste iomlán a caitheadh go sonrach ar an bpróiseas thar an tréimhse 2014 go 2017:

-	2014	2015	2016	2017
Údarás na Gaeltachta	€200,000	€259,875	€340,125	€735,000
Foras na Gaeilge	-	-	-	€81,553
Beart agus tionscnaimh eile ar leas na Straitéise go príomha	€299,879	€286,125	€659,152	€613,000

Mar a bhaineann sé le 2018, ní miste a nótáil go bhfuil allúntas ar fiú €2.65m curtha ar fáil faoin gciste sa bhliain reatha. Ós rud é go bhfuil an próiseas ag gluaiseacht ar aghaidh i mbliana ó ullmhúchán pleananna go dtí feidhmiú pleananna ó 2018 ar aghaidh, tá an ciste iomlán curtha i dtreo an phróisis chomh maith le roinnt bearta nua faoi leith a ndéanfar a mhaoiniú ar bhonn lárnach mar thaca breise do.

Tá mé muiníneach go mbeidh ar chumas na Roinne an maoiniú cuí a chur ar fáil agus an phróiseis ag dul chun cinn.

### Film Industry

68. **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the steps she has taken to resolve the emerging difficulties within the film industry. [20136/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** The Irish film, television and animation industry is experiencing a period of sustained success and critical acclaim. Over the last number of years, Irish talent has been a consistent presence at the Academy Awards, with Nora Twomey's debut animated feature, *The Breadwinner*, leading the Irish charge at this year's ceremony alongside other nominations for Irish talent including Saoirse Ronan, Consolata Boyle, Martin McDonagh and Daniel Day-Lewis. The industry's current flourishing is the result of the Irish Film Board's years of investment in Irish creative filmmaking talent, made possible through consistent Government backing as well as Section 481, which plays a crucial role in attracting inward production to Ireland.

In partnership with the Departments of Communications, Climate Action and Environment and Business, Enterprise and Innovation, my Department commissioned an economic analysis of our screen based creative industries. The Report by consultants Olsberg SPI with Nordicity found that the Irish audiovisual industry, comprising Film, TV and animation; commercial advertising; and video games, supported 14,370 full-time equivalents jobs in 2016; with Gross Value Added amounting to €857 million and an estimated €191 million in export earnings for Ireland. The industry also provided valuable cultural exports reaching substantial global audiences and bringing benefits to other industries such as the tourism sector.

This Report will provide an input for the development of an industry-wide long term plan for Ireland as a global hub for the production of Film, TV Drama and Animation under Pillar 4 of the Creative Ireland Programme. The Plan will set out an agenda to further develop the Irish Audiovisual Industry and in that context my Department will work with the Film Board and all sectors of the industry to address any barriers to continued success. I intend to publish this economic report and associated plan shortly.

## Limistéir Pleanála Teanga

69. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Catherine Connolly** den Aire Cultúir, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta an ndéanfaidh sí soiléiriú maidir leis na limistéir Phleanála Teanga i nGaillimh agus, go háirithe, maidir le stádas na bPleananna Teanga sa Chathair agus sa Chontae; cé mhéad plean atá faofa ag an Aire agus cé mhéad airgead atá curtha ar fáil chun na pleananna seo a chur i gcrích; agus an ndéanfaidh sí ráiteas ina thaobh. [20132/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Joe McHugh):** Ar mhaithe le tacú le feidhmiú an phróisis pleanála teanga mar a leagtar amach é faoi Acht na Gaeltachta 2012, cuireann mo Roinn cistíocht bhliantúil ar fáil d'Údarás na Gaeltachta agus d'Fhorás na Gaeilge chun cuidiú le heagraíochtaí pobalbhunaithe a roghnaíonn an tÚdarás agus an Foras chun pleananna teanga a ullmhú agus a chur i bhfeidhm i leith na Limistéir Pleanála Teanga Ghaeltachta, na mBailte Seirbhíse Gaeltachta agus na Líonraí Gaeilge mar a bhaineann sé leo faoi seach.

Maidir le Cathair na Gaillimhe atá aitheanta faoin bpróiseas mar cheann den sé chinn déag de bhailte féideartha a d'fhéadfadh a bheith aitheanta in am trátha mar Bhailte Seirbhíse Gaeltachta, is í an eagraíocht Gaillimh le Gaeilge, atá freagrach go príomha as plean a ullmhú agus a fheidhmiú don chathair i gcomhar le Comhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe.

Tuigtear don Roinn go bhfuil an eagraíocht i mbun comhairle phroifisiúnta a lorg faoi láthair chun cabhrú leo i dtreo tús a bheith curtha le hullmhúchán an phlean gan mhoill.

Ina theannta sin, ar ndóigh, agus mar a bhaineann sé leis na bailte seirbhíse trí chéile, tá Údarás na Gaeltachta agus Foras na Gaeilge ag leanúint orthu chun a chinntiú go ndéantar dul chun cinn breise in ullmhú pleananna teanga sna bailte éagsúla atá faoina gcúram.

Maidir le staid reatha an phróisis i nGaeltacht na Gaillimhe trí chéile, tá an próiseas idir lámha i ngach aon cheann den 10 limistéir pleanála teanga faoi láthair. Ceadaíodh plean teanga Chois Fharraige le gairid agus, mar a bhaineann sé le Gaeltacht na Gaillimhe, tá pleananna teanga á mbreithniú ag mo Roinn faoi láthair i leith limistéir na Ceathrún Rua chomh maith leis an limistéir Dúiche Sheoigheach agus Tuar Mhic Éadaigh.

Lena chois sin táthar ag súil leis go mbeidh pleananna i leith na limistéir Ceantar na nOileán agus Conamara Láir á gcur faoi bhráid mo Roinne chun críche faofa faoin Acht go luath agus ceaptar go mbeidh pleananna i leith na limistéir faoi leith: Maigh Cuilinn; Bearna agus Cnoc na Cathrach; Oirthear Chathair na Gaillimhe; agus an tEachréidh curtha faoi mo bhráid mo Roinne an bhliain seo chugainn.

Fágann sé seo uile go bhfuiltear ag súil leis go mbeidh feidhmiú pleananna idir lámha i ngach aon cheann de na limistéir pleanála teanga i nGaeltacht na Gaillimhe faoi dheireadh na bliana seo chugainn chomh maith le dul chun cinn suntasach déanta maidir le plean teanga Chathair na Gaillimhe san achar ama céanna.

## National Monuments

70. **Deputy Marcella Corcoran Kennedy** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the details of the plans contained within the Investing in Our Culture, Language and Heritage 2018-2027 plan for caring for Ireland's national monuments, including Clonmacnoise; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [19913/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** Ireland



has thousands of unique archaeological monuments which represent over 7,000 years of settlement on this island. They are in every locality and community and provide tangible links to our ancient past, a sense of place for communities and focal points for social enjoyment and economic regeneration. There are over 1000 national monuments in my care, as Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. In recent years investment in these sites has necessarily been confined for the most part to conservation and maintenance works by the Office of Public Works which is responsible for managing them on a day- to-day basis.

To enhance the preservation and presentation of our heritage estate for the future, the Government will over the course of the National Development Plan 2018 – 2027 invest €30 million in our national monument sites. My Department will work closely with the Office of Public Works to ensure that these sites are conserved and presented to the highest quality. Where feasible, additional sites and monuments will also be acquired and public access improved. The quality of the visitor facilities will be improved throughout, including enhanced animation of the sites, improvements to interpretation facilities and upgrades to the visitor infrastructure at all of our primary national monument sites.

Through my Department's strategic partnership with Fáilte Ireland and the Office of Public we will strengthen the care of our key heritage sites across Ireland's ancient east, the wild Atlantic way and Ireland's hidden heartlands. Key projects include the planned improvement works at Brú na Bóinne, Tara, Céide Fields, Skellig Michael, Valentia Cable Station, the Rock of Cashel and other key monastic, armada and medieval sites. In the case of Clonmacnoise, the capacity of the facilities, in particular carparking, is currently being looked at by the Office of Public Works.

In addition to making our archaeological heritage more open and enjoyable to everyone, the increased funding now being made available will also directly support new employment in the heritage, conservation and archaeological sectors.

### **Commemorative Events**

71. **Deputy Aindrias Moynihan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the funding that will be provided by the State to commemorate events following the public consultation into the way in which the significant events of the 1918 to 1923 period will be appropriately remembered; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20143/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** The Government's approach to the remembrance of the significant historical events and themes of the period from 1918 to 1923 will continue to be informed by the guidance of the Expert Advisory Group on Commemorations. The Advisory Group has examined the submissions received under the public consultation process and is now considering the advice that it will provide to Government.

In 2018 my Department is providing €850,000 towards commemorative events and programmes under the Decade of Centenaries including a funding allocation of €5,000 programme to each local authority. This will support local authorities in developing commemorative initiatives to encourage people of all ages to explore the significant events and themes of 1918. Activities will be aligned to the thematic strands of the State Centenary Programme for 2018 and the guiding principles of the Second Statement of the Expert Advisory Group on Commemorations. Funding for future years will be considered in the context of the overall approach by Government to the next period as part of the normal Estimates process.

## Departmental Expenditure

72. **Deputy Mattie McGrath** asked the Taoiseach the breakdown of the training and development and incidental expenses incurred by his Department in the year ending 31 December 2017. [20261/18]

73. **Deputy Mattie McGrath** asked the Taoiseach the breakdown of the travel and subsistence expenses incurred by his Department in the year ending 31 December 2017. [20262/18]

74. **Deputy Mattie McGrath** asked the Taoiseach the breakdown of the consultancy services and value for money and policy review expenses incurred by his Department in the year ending 31 December 2017. [20263/18]

**Taoiseach (Deputy Leo Varadkar)(Deputy Leo Varadkar):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 72 to 74, inclusive, together.

A breakdown of expenditure by my Department in 2017 in the categories of training and development and incidental expenses and travel and subsistence is set out in the following tables. There was no expenditure incurred by my Department on consultancy services and value for money and policy reviews in 2017.

It should be noted that the figures provided for 2017 are based on provisional outturn and may be subject to revision, as part of the finalisation of my Department's 2017 Appropriation Account.

### Training and Development and Incidental Expenses

-	Training and Development
- Courses, conferences and seminars for Staff	€54,017.97
- Educational Assistance (refund of academic fees)	€55,018.40
Training and Development total	€109,036.37
	Official and State Entertainment
- Official Entertainment	€105,295.63
- State Entertainment	€475.00
- Official Gifts	€6,943.87
Entertainment total	€112,714.50
	Library & Information Services
- Subscriptions to Journals/ Magazines/CD Roms	€14,867.50
- Books/ Maps	€4,741.70
- Purchase of Government Publications	€124.20
- On Line Databases	€9,629.36
- News Services/Media	€1,658.83
- Research Materials and Costs	€24,323.60
- Newspapers	€71,492.95
- TV & Licenses	€2,444.98
- Transcription	€1,733.38
Library & Information Services Total	€131,016.50
	Advertising, Photography, etc.
- Advertising	€35,528.55
- Conferences and Seminars	€2,164.60

-	Training and Development
- Photography	€10,968.96
- Website	€17,576.70
- Advertising in Publications	€5,086.90
- Iris Oifigiul - Publication of Notices	€7,037.00
Advertising, Photography, etc. Total	€78,362.71
	Translations
- Translations - Irish Language	€10,375.65
- Translations - Other	€211.50
Translations Total	€10,587.15
	Administrative Expenses
- Doctors Fees, Medicine and First Aid Supplies	€2,355.48
- Professional Subscriptions	€381.18
- Off-site Storage	€6,032.95
- Couriers	€1,047.38
- Flowers	€297.50
- Refreshments (Tea/ Coffee/ Water)	€25,383.77
- Miscellaneous Expenses	€31,996.19
- Health and Safety Supplies	€2,729.02
- Administrative/Cleaning services support	€25,604.71
Administrative Expenses Total	€95,828.18
	Bank Charges & Fees
- Bank Charges	€220.00
Bank Charges & Fees Total	€220.00
	Legal and Advisory
- Legal Fees	€9,727.05
Legal & Advisory Total	€9,727.05
	Clothing and Uniforms
- Staff Uniforms	€7,038.39
- Footwear Allowance	€190.00
Clothing & Uniforms Total	€7,228.39
Total expenditure in 2017 on Training and Development and Incidental Expenses	€554,720.85

### Travel and Subsistence

-	Home Travel
- Subsistence	€35,342.08
- Hotel Costs	€7,376.59
- Taxi	€22,483.48
- Mileage	€40,819.06
- Other travel expenses - misc.	€6,166.31
Home Travel total	€112,187.52
	Foreign Travel
- Subsistence	€36,041.82

-	Home Travel
- Hotel Costs	€115,830.52
- Air Tickets	€257,006.05
- Taxi	€5,376.10
- Mileage	€5,990.84
- Ground Transport	€56,050.89
- Other travel expenses - misc.	€29,937.34
Foreign Travel total	€506,233.56
Total expenditure in 2017 on Travel and Subsistence	€618,421.08

### Capital Expenditure Programme

75. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Taoiseach the capital allocation across his Department in each of the years 2018 to 2022. [20457/18]

76. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Taoiseach his Department's capital allocation for projects under way and projects already tendered or committed to spending contractually. [20474/18]

77. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Taoiseach his Department's capital allocation in each of the years 2018 to 2022 disaggregated according to capital allocated to projects under way, projects contractually committed to and projects yet to be initiated. [20491/18]

**The Taoiseach:** I propose to take Questions Nos. 75 to 77, inclusive, together.

My Department has no capital allocation for the years 2018 to 2022.

### Commemorative Medals

78. **Deputy John Brady** asked the Taoiseach and Minister for Defence if 1916 medals will be presented to those in the fire service; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20233/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Defence (Deputy Paul Kehoe):** The 1916 Commemorative Medal was awarded to all Defence Forces personnel recorded as being in service in the course of 2016. I also sanctioned the award of a similar medal to members of Civil Defence.

Recognition of the contribution to the State by members of the Fire Service, and other emergency services, is a matter that is not within my remit as the Minister with responsibility for Defence.

### Departmental Contracts Data

79. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Taoiseach and Minister for Defence the contracts awarded by his Department or an agency under his remit to a company (details supplied) since March 2011, by year in tabular form; the cost per contract; the basis for each contract; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20313/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Defence (Deputy Paul Kehoe):** There were no contracts awarded to the company referred to by the Deputy, by my Department or by any agency under the aegis of my Department, during the period covered by the question.

### Defence Forces Personnel Data

80. **Deputy Jack Chambers** asked the Taoiseach and Minister for Defence the number of new recruits in the Defence Forces since 2011; and the number of those recruits who are no longer in the Defence Forces. [20390/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Defence (Deputy Paul Kehoe):** The following table sets out the number of general service recruits inducted for each of the years 2002 to 2017 inclusive. It does not include those in cadetships. Data collated by the military authorities does not track individual entrants but is collated in the aggregate. As set out in the table, it is not unusual to have more than 20% of any annual recruitment intake leave during induction training.

Year	Number Inducted	Discharged during Induction Training	Discharged as % of Intake
2017	615	171	28%
2016	590	126	21%
2015	307	62	21%
2014	444	106	24%
2013	394	85	23%
2012	639	111	17%
2011	513	57	11%
2010	118	2	1%
2009	-	-	-
2008	480	149	31%
2007	546	151	27%
2006	559	88	16%
2005	384	110	29%
2004	571	138	24%
2003	444	107	24%
2002	500	112	22%

### Capital Expenditure Programme

81. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Taoiseach and Minister for Defence the capital allocation across his Department in each of the years 2018 to 2022. [20447/18]

82. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Taoiseach and Minister for Defence his Department's capital allocation for projects under way and projects already tendered or committed to spending contractually. [20464/18]

83. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Taoiseach and Minister for Defence his Department's capital allocation in each of the years 2018 to 2022 disaggregated according to capital allocated to projects under way, projects contractually committed to and projects yet to be initiated. [20481/18]



**Minister of State at the Department of Defence (Deputy Paul Kehoe):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 81 to 83, inclusive, together.

The National Development Plan (NDP) sets out Departmental Capital Allocations for the period 2018 – 2022. A total of €541 million has been allocated to the Defence Vote for these years, as follows:

**Defence Capital Allocations 2018-2022**

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
€Million	77	106	113	120	125	541

This level of capital funding will allow the Defence Organisation to undertake a programme of sustained equipment replacement and infrastructural development across the Army, Air Corps and Naval Service as identified and prioritised in the Defence White Paper and ensure that the Defence Forces have the capabilities necessary to deliver on all the roles assigned by Government.

The following priority investment programmes and projects have been identified for inclusion under the Capital Allocation in the National Development Plan:

- Equipment renewal and replacement programmes including mid-life upgrade of the Army Mowag APC armoured fleet along with investment in further force protection, transport, communications and information technology, weapons and ammunition systems;

- Procurement of Light Tactical Armoured Vehicles;

- Replacement of the Air Corps Cessna Aircraft;

- CASA Maritime Patrol Aircraft Replacement Programme;

- On-going Naval vessel replacement programme, including acquisition of a multi-role vessel;

- Mid-life refit of the Naval Service vessels LÉ Niamh and LÉ Roisín;

- On-going investment in the modernisation and renewal of barrack infrastructure including accommodation, catering, workshops, secure storage and training facilities.

The following investment projects are currently underway:

- Army Mowag APC armoured fleet upgrade – Overall cost is €55m, exclusive of VAT, with €7.5m due for payment in 2018;

- Air Corps Cessna Aircraft replacement - Overall cost is €40.5m, inclusive of VAT, with €12m due for payment in 2018;

- Naval vessel replacement programme – Final payment of €3.5m (incl. VAT) due for payment in 2018 for fourth ship, to be named L.É. George Bernard Shaw;

- Virtual Desktop Architecture (VDA) project for Defence Forces - The overall cost of is €12.8m (incl. VAT) with €2.56m due for payment in 2018;

- Modernisation and renewal of barrack infrastructure - €14.2m of capital funding has been allocated in the 2018 budget for Defence Forces built infrastructure.

With regard to the modernisation and renewal of Defence Forces built infrastructure, projects underway include:

- Ordnance storage facilities in the Defence Forces Training Centre, Curragh Camp, Co. Kildare;
- Training facilities in Sarsfield Barracks, Limerick and Stephens Barracks, Kilkenny;
- Accommodation facilities in the Defence Forces Training Centre, Curragh Camp and Cathal Brugha Barracks, Dublin;
- Accommodation upgrade in Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnell, Co. Dublin;
- Catering facilities in Custume Barracks, Athlone;
- Upgrade of fuel storage safety system in the Naval Base, Haulbowline, Co Cork.

Planned projects due to be delivered under the National Development Plan but yet to commence include:

- CASA Maritime Patrol Aircraft replacement;
- Naval Service multi-role vessel acquisition;
- Mid-life refit of the Naval Service vessels LÉ Niamh and LÉ Roisín;
- Light Tactical Armoured Vehicles;
- Equipment renewal and replacement programmes along with investment in further force protection, transport, communications and information technology, weapons and ammunition systems;
- Modernisation and renewal of barrack infrastructure, across a number of military locations.

As these projects are in the planning and appraisal stages, it is not possible to provide costings until these processes are concluded.

In addition, during the lifetime of the National Development Plan, other equipment replacement and infrastructural development projects will be advanced across the Army, Air Corps and Naval Service. These projects will be implemented on the basis of identified requirements and priorities, as set out in the White Paper.

### **Consular Services Provision**

84. **Deputy Tony McLoughlin** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the way in which an Irish citizen can apply to the Irish Embassy in the United States of America for a guided tour of the White House, Washington DC in September 2018; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20251/18]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Simon Coveney):** Irish citizens who are visiting Washington, D.C., and who would like to visit the White House should contact the Embassy of Ireland in Washington, D.C., at least 21 days before the date of their arrival, supplying their full names (as they appear on their passports) and country of citizenship for each person requesting a tour. The maximum number of visitors that can be accommodated

in a visit application is 5.

Please note that White House tours are increasingly difficult to secure. Tours are not automatically possible and there is no guarantee that the White House will facilitate a request from the Embassy. Availability changes daily and tours can be suspended for long periods of time, especially during holiday periods. Tours are not available from Saturday to Monday.

Tours of the White House that are available to Irish citizens are accompanied tours, i.e. the visitor must be accompanied by the Ambassador or the Deputy Head of Mission. Unfortunately, due to the extremely busy schedules of both, they cannot make themselves available for all applications for accompanied tours.

Irish visitors who would like to get other perspectives on political life in Washington, D.C., may also wish to arrange a tour of Capitol Hill or other attractions.

The White House Visitor Center, located at 1450 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, offers visitors a window into the US President's iconic home. The visitor center is open from 7:30 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. daily (except January 1, Thanksgiving, and December 25). Admission is free. Visitors can explore an interactive touchscreen tour of the White House, view over 90 artefacts from the White House collection, shop at the White House Historical Association retail store, and view the 14 minute film, "White House: Reflections From Within".

The US Capitol building is open to the public for guided tours but advance reservation is required. More information is available on the Capitol Visitor Center website.

Advance reservation is also required for tours of the Pentagon. More information is available on the Pentagon website.

All of this information can be found on the Irish Embassy's website: [www.dfa.ie/irish-embassy/usa/our-services/assistance-and-advice/visiting-washington-dc/](http://www.dfa.ie/irish-embassy/usa/our-services/assistance-and-advice/visiting-washington-dc/)

### **British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference**

85. **Deputy Mary Lou McDonald** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade if he has sought a meeting of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference under the Good Friday Agreement. [19725/18]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Simon Coveney):** The Government has consistently affirmed our unwavering commitment to the Good Friday Agreement and determination, as co-guarantor of the Agreement, to secure the effective operation of all of its institutions. To this end, over the course of many months, we have been working tirelessly in partnership with the British Government to support and facilitate the parties in their efforts to form a Northern Ireland Executive.

The devolved power-sharing institutions are central to the Good Friday Agreement and are the best means for achieving accountable, representative decision-making for all the people of Northern Ireland.

Unfortunately to date, it has not proved possible to reach an agreement on the formation of an Executive, despite intensive engagement. In light of this, the Government has been working with the British Government to consider means by which we can support the political process, in accordance with the Good Friday Agreement, in the period ahead.

The Taoiseach has spoken with Prime Minister May and emphasised the Government's full

commitment to the Good Friday Agreement, and our continuing determination to secure the effective operation of all of its institutions.

I am in very regular contact with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland as we seek a way beyond the current impasse. Most recently, I have met Secretary of State Bradley on 10 April, 16 April, and 3 May, 2018. We also spoke by phone on 27 April 2018.

As part of these discussions, I have indicated to Secretary of State Bradley that it would be appropriate to convene the British Irish Intergovernmental Conference in order for both Governments to formally engage through the structures of the Good Friday Agreement on next steps.

The British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference is an important institution of the Good Friday Agreement which brings together the British and Irish Governments under Strand Three of the Agreement on matters of mutual interest within the competence of both Governments. It does not involve any derogation from the sovereignty of either Government.

### **Capital Expenditure Programme**

86. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade the capital allocation across his Department in each of the years, 2018 to 2022. [20451/18]

87. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade his Department's capital allocation for projects underway and projects tendered or committed to spending contractually. [20468/18]

88. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade his Department's capital allocation in each of the years 2018 to 2022 disaggregated according to capital allocated to projects underway, projects contractually committed to and projects yet to be initiated. [20485/18]

**Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Simon Coveney):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 86 to 88, inclusive, together.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has a capital allocation in the 2018 Revised Estimates of €13 million across its two Votes (Vote 27 - International Co-operation and Vote 28 - Foreign Affairs and Trade).

Under the National Development Plan 2018 - 2027, the Department will have capital allocations, across its two Votes, as follows:

2019	-	€17 million
2020	-	€13 million
2021	-	€13 million
2022	-	€14 million

The Department's priorities for 2018 include the ongoing implementation of the passport reform programme, as its online services are further expanded beyond the online adult passport renewal service launched last year; continued investment in the State's global property network including the commencement of the development of a new Embassy/Ireland House facility in Tokyo; other Embassy projects, ongoing maintenance, security improvements, health and safe-

ty improvements, etc.; and the maintenance and enhancement of the Department's ICT global communications network and new ICT system enhancements.

At this stage, the Department is not yet in a position to provide information by particular project for each of the years 2019-2022, but, as set out in the National Development Plan 2018-2027, the Department's Strategic Capital Investment Priorities for the period 2018-2022 will be as follows:

Further announcements as part of the Doubling Our Global Footprint Initiative;

The Passport Reform Programme;

Investment in ICT infrastructure, and

Investment in the State's Global Property Portfolio, including the development of Ireland Houses with the State Agencies and the relevant Embassy in strategic locations.

Decisions on future allocations by project will be consistent with value for money principles, will provide clear benefits for the State and will depend on a range of factors, including staff, office and accommodation needs.

*Question No. 87 answered with Question No. 86.*

*Question No. 88 answered with Question No. 86.*

### **Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman Data**

89. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Finance further to Parliamentary Question No. 82 of 1 May 2018, the number of cases referred to the Central Bank by the FSO-FSPO by year and area, that is, investment products, insurance or banking; the overall nature of the original complaint in each case; the grounds on which the FSO-FSPO deemed it necessary to refer each case to the Central Bank; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20256/18]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Paschal Donohoe):** As I previously stated in Parliamentary Question No. 82 on 1 May 2018 the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman is independent in the performance of his statutory functions. I have no role in the day to day workings of the office.

The Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman (FSPO) was established on 01 January 2018 under the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman Act 2017. Section 18 of the Act sets out how the Ombudsman shall co-operate with the regulatory authorities with a view to ensuring that this Act operates in a way that contributes to promoting the best interests of consumers and actual or potential beneficiaries of financial or pension services and to the efficient and effective handling of complaints.

The Act provides that the Ombudsman may make recommendations to the Central Bank in relation to measures that the Bank might take in order to effectively deal with persistent patterns of complaints. A similar provision existed in the legislation which underpinned the FSPO's precursor body, the Financial Services Ombudsman (FSO), and the FSO and the Central Bank agreed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which sets out the terms under which both parties give effect to these provisions. The MoU has not yet been updated to reflect the establishment of the FSPO on 1 January 2018, however, the original MoU continues to operate and is available on the FSPO website.



The Ombudsman has informed me that while the MoU provides for regular and routine information sharing, it also provides for specific information sharing whereby the FSPO will provide the Central Bank with detailed and specific information relating to a complaint (or complaints) for its general consideration in particular instances.

The following table outlines the details as requested by the Deputy of all matters referred by the Financial Services Ombudsman to the Central Bank of Ireland for each of the years 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017:

Year:	2017 (5 Cases)
Sector:	Insurance
Reason for Referral:	The Ombudsman provided the Central Bank with a copy of its finding in relation to a particular complaint. The Ombudsman dealt with the complaint but referred a broader issue raised by the Complainant which alleged that insurance providers are refusing to quote young drivers with minor accidents.
Sector:	Banking
Reason for Referral:	The Ombudsman provided the Central Bank with a copy of its finding in relation to a particular complaint, and raised a concern regarding a general consent on a loan application to allow a lender to visit or telephone any member of a customer's family, if the lender cannot contact customer.
Sector:	Banking
Reason for Referral:	The Ombudsman provided the Central Bank with a copy of its finding in relation to a particular complaint, and raised a concern regarding the operation of bank accounts due to sanctions in other jurisdictions.
Sector:	Insurance
Reason for Referral:	The Ombudsman provided the Central Bank with a copy of its finding in relation to a particular complaint, and raised a concern regarding charges imposed by the Provider on a life policy in circumstances where there was a lack of evidence of a contractual basis upon which the Provider has calculated and applied charges to the Complainant's policy.
Sector:	Banking
Reason for Referral:	The Ombudsman referred a matter to the Central Bank for its consideration arising out of concerns regarding information given by financial service providers to consumers about variable rates on personal credit agreements, in particular the failure of providers to sufficiently alert customers of the possibility that the period of the credit agreement may increase, the number of instalments may increase or the total amount repayable may increase.

Year:	2016 (4 Cases)
Sector:	Banking
Reason for Referral:	The Ombudsman provided the Central Bank with a copy of its finding in relation to a particular complaint, and raised a concern regarding the failure by a Financial Service Provider to comply with the European Communities (Payment Services) Regulations 2009 in particular the failure to adhere to the notification period to introduce of fees on accounts.
Sector:	Banking
Reason for Referral:	The Ombudsman provided the Central Bank with a copy of its finding in relation to a particular complaint, and raised a concern regarding general procedures of a financial services provider whereby access to online facilities is denied to certain customers.
Sector:	Insurance
Reason for Referral:	The Ombudsman provided the Central Bank with a copy of its finding in relation to a particular complaint, and raised a concern regarding the offering of services in promotional material and policy documentation which the financial services provider cannot provide.

Year:	2016 (4 Cases)
Sector:	Banking
Reason for Referral:	The Ombudsman provided the Central Bank with a copy of its finding in relation to a particular complaint, and raised a concern regarding general procedures in relation to failure to provide the full loan amount, in circumstances where the new loan funds were withheld by the FSP in order to repay an older loan.

Year:	2015 (7 Cases)
Sector:	Investment
Reason for Referral:	The Ombudsman referred a matter to the Central Bank for its consideration arising out of concerns regarding the actions of a financial service provider, and its failure to engage with specified consumers.
Sector:	Unregulated
Reason for Referral:	The Ombudsman referred a matter to the Central Bank for its consideration arising out of concerns regarding the carrying out of regulated activities related to debt management without the authorisation necessary from the Central Bank to do so.
Sector:	Banking
Reason for Referral:	The Ombudsman provided the Central Bank with a copy of its finding in relation to a particular complaint, and raised a concern regarding the roll-over of loans and the adherence to Section 99 of the Consumer Credit Act, 1995 and where the loans were lawfully refinanced.
Sector:	Investment
Reason for Referral:	The Ombudsman provided the Central Bank with a copy of its finding in relation to a particular complaint, and raised concerns regarding alleged double charging of fees in an investment policy. The financial service provider reported it to the Central Bank in accordance with the Provider's regulatory responsibilities.
Sector:	Insurance
Reason for Referral:	The Ombudsman provided the Central Bank with a copy of its finding in relation to a particular complaint, and raised concerns regarding general procedures and clarity in relation to No Claim Discount on a home insurance policy.
Sector:	Unregulated
Reason for Referral:	The Ombudsman provided the Central Bank with a copy of its finding in relation to a particular complaint, and raised concerns regarding the carrying out of regulated activities related to debt management without the authorisation necessary from the Central Bank to do so, and where an enforcement order had previously been imposed in relation to same.
Sector:	Banking
Reason for Referral:	The Ombudsman provided the Central Bank with a copy of its finding in relation to a particular complaint, and raised concerns regarding the financial service provider's failure to comply with European Communities (Payment Service) Regulation 2009 in particular the placing of a "hold" on funds in advance of effecting a direct debit.

Year:	2014 (4 Cases)
Sector:	Insurance
Reason for Referral:	The Ombudsman provided the Central Bank with a copy of a letter from a financial service provider to a consumer regarding the sale of card protection policies. The Ombudsman noted that no such complaints had been received by the office in relation to this matter at that time.
Sector:	Banking

Year:	2014 (4 Cases)
Reason for Referral:	The Ombudsman provided the Central Bank with a copy of its finding in relation to a particular complaint, and raised concerns regarding general procedures in loan applications, in particular the lack of verification practices to the identity of the applicant.
Sector:	Investment
Reason for Referral:	The Ombudsman provided the Central Bank with a copy of its finding in relation to a particular complaint, and raised concerns regarding the failure of the financial service provider to issue annual statements on an investment. The Provider had informed the Financial Services Ombudsman that this issue was a wider issue where a series of known defects resulted in statements not being issued on an annual basis.
Sector:	Insurance and Banking
Reason for Referral:	A meeting was held to discuss: the sale of Card Protection Policies; portability of mortgages; and a recent High Court appeal regarding the application of standard variable rates.

### Consultancy Contracts Data

90. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Finance the contracts awarded by his Department or an agency under his remit to a company (details supplied) since March 2011, by year in tabular form; the cost per contract; the basis for each contract; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20316/18]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Paschal Donohoe):** I can advise the Deputy that there were no contracts awarded by my Department to the firm ‘Capita’ since March 2011.

In relation to the seventeen Bodies under the aegis of my Department, I am informed that since March 2011, thirteen have not awarded contracts to a company named ‘Capita’ since March 2011. It was not possible for four of the bodies to provide the requested information in the time available and therefore I will make arrangements to provide a response to the Deputy in line with Standing Orders.

### Approved Housing Bodies

91. **Deputy Eoin Ó Broin** asked the Minister for Finance if his Department has engaged consultants, other outside bodies or persons to conduct research, provide advice or assistance on the issue of the recent EUROSTAT designation of approved housing bodies; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20342/18]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Paschal Donohoe):** Since the decision by the Central Statistics Office to reclassify 15 Approved Housing Bodies as part of the local government sector, i.e. within general government, my officials have engaged with these bodies in order to obtain the required inputs to compile the fiscal forecasts for the period 2018 - 2021. These figures are reflected in the Stability Programme Update 2018.

Following the publication of the Stability Programme Update 2018, senior officials from my Department met with members of the Housing Alliance to discuss the fiscal implications of the reclassification.

In response to your question neither I nor my Department have engaged consultants, other outside bodies or persons to conduct research, provide advice or assistance on the issue of the recent Eurostat designation of AHBs.

## **Mortgage Interest Relief Application**

92. **Deputy Thomas Byrne** asked the Minister for Finance his plans to offer relief to home owners that took out mortgages in recent years and now face potential interest rate increases. [20376/18]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Paschal Donohoe):** At present, there are no plans to provide specific additional income tax relief for mortgage payments, as the Government's priority is on reducing the income tax burden for low to middle income earners, while limiting the benefit for high earners and keeping the tax base broad.

As indicated in the last two Budgets, Mortgage Interest Relief is being phased out. The residual availability of the relief will taper out over the next three years before ceasing at the end of 2020. These developments reflect commitments contained in the Programme for a Partnership Government and the policy framework contained in the confidence and supply arrangement negotiated by Government.

My Department published guidelines for the evaluation of potential tax expenditures in October 2014 ([http://budget.gov.ie/Budgets/2015/Documents/Tax\\_Expenditures\\_Oct14.pdf](http://budget.gov.ie/Budgets/2015/Documents/Tax_Expenditures_Oct14.pdf)). Drawing on economic evidence, these made clear that it is important that any policy proposal which involves tax expenditures should only occur in limited circumstances where there are demonstrable market failures and where a tax-based incentive is more efficient than a direct expenditure intervention.

A view that causes concern is that mortgage interest relief can effectively become priced-in to the purchase price of the property. It is therefore not considered efficient to allocate further funds solely to minimise mortgage interest payments. Instead, my focus is on a more general reduction of income tax across all income earners, with a particular focus on those on low to middle incomes as already indicated.

## **Capital Expenditure Programme**

93. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Finance the capital allocation across his Department in each of the years 2018 to 2022. [20450/18]

94. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Finance his Department's capital allocation for projects underway and projects already tendered or committed to spending contractually. [20467/18]

95. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Finance his Department's capital allocation in each of the years 2018 to 2022 disaggregated according to capital allocated to projects underway, projects contractually committed to and projects yet to be initiated. [20484/18]

**Minister for Finance (Deputy Paschal Donohoe):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 93 to 95, inclusive, together.

My Department's Capital Allocation provides for the routine acquisition of IT equipment and systems and certain premises expenses relating to the buildings it occupies. Aside from these types of expenditure my Department does not have any long or medium term Capital Projects.

For 2018 the Department's allocation is approximately €1.7 million. €1.5 million is allocated to Office Premises, and €0.2m is allocated for IT Services.

OPW manage the tender process and the contractual arrangements in relation to expenses relating to the premises the Department occupies.

At present the Department has not made allocations beyond 2018 although some of the work currently in progress may not be complete by the end of the year. We will be setting our 2019 allocation during the Estimate's process.

If the Deputy is referring to the Mid-Term Review of the Capital Plan, the Department of Finance Vote Group has been allocated €91 million in capital expenditure over 2018-2021. An indicative capital envelope of €100 million is provided for 2022-2027.

The vast bulk of this capital funding is for the Office of the Revenue Commissioners. This is to enable the Office of the Revenue Commissioners to deliver further IT Development (PAYE Modernisation). The project represents the most significant reform of the administration of the PAYE system in over fifty years. The objective of the project is that employers, employees and Revenue will all have access to the most accurate and up-to-date information available relating to pay, tax, PRSI and USC deductions. This will ensure that the right amount is collected at the right time from employees, and that employers pay their correct liabilities when required.

### **National Monuments**

96. **Deputy Fergus O'Dowd** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the long-term plans for the historic St. Laurence's Gate in the centre of Drogheda; if the plan will include public access to the Gate; if risk assessments have been carried out on the effects of such access; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20245/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Kevin Boxer Moran):** The issue of the future of the St. Laurence's Gate National Monument is under consideration by the Office of Public Works (OPW) and the Local Authority. This consideration includes the question of facilitating public access and the significant Health & Safety issues this creates are being assessed as part of the analysis. In the shorter term however, the issue of necessary structural works needs to be fully addressed before any general public entry is feasible.

### **Public Sector Pensions**

97. **Deputy Jack Chambers** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform further to Parliamentary Question No. 194 of 27 February 2018, the status of pension increases which were due to be applied shortly including arrears due to the start of the year; when this will occur; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20257/18]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe):** As I informed the Deputy in my previous answer on 27 February 2018, my Department issued a circular in January of this year authorising and giving guidance in relation to the application to qualifying pensions of pay increases under the Public Service Pay and Pensions Act 2017. Responsibility for implementing these increases lies with the various public service pension/payroll providers. I understand that work is underway to apply the 1 January 2018 pay increase to those qualifying pensions in payment that have not yet benefitted from that increase, and that this will include the calculation and payment of arrears backdated to the start of the year.



## Community Employment Schemes Supervisors

98. **Deputy Michael Collins** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if a date has been set for a meeting of the high level forum on community employment supervisor pensions; if his attention has been drawn to the anger and frustration of community employment supervisors and assistant supervisors; his views on whether their contribution to improving the life chances of scheme participants and to their overall local communities is not being properly recognised at the end of their career in spite of a Labour Court ruling in their favour; his further views on whether the Government may be undermining the Labour Court by ignoring its recommendation; and the steps he will take to bring a resolution to the matter. [20264/18]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe):** I would refer the Deputy to my response to PQ 54985/17 of 16 January 2018 and PQ 13684/18 of 27 March 2018.

## Public Procurement Regulations

99. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the process of establishing a framework under which service providers provide a range of third party investigations and recipient service to public bodies seeking to meet their obligations under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20283/18]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe):** Procurement is a key element of the Government's Reform agenda. The Office of Government Procurement (OGP) was established to drive the reform agenda, adopt a strategic approach to public procurement, leverage the State's spending power and deliver savings for the State.

Framework agreements are one of a number of ways in which the OGP engages with the market to achieve value for money in the delivery of much-needed public goods and services. Framework agreements are established through competitive procurement processes and are agreements with suppliers or service providers which set out terms and conditions under which specific contracts can be made during the term of the agreement.

There is ongoing engagement between the OGP and our public sector clients so that the necessary contracts and frameworks are put in place to meet their requirements.

The OGP conducted a tender process to establish a Framework Agreement for Receipt and Investigation of Protected Disclosures. This framework includes service providers that can provide third party investigative and recipient services to public bodies seeking to meet their obligations under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014. The Framework Agreement was established in April this year and is comprised of three separate lots:

Lot 1 : Full Investigative Services into an alleged wrong-doing purported to be disclosed under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 including the review of such investigations;

Lot 2 : Full Investigative Services of allegations of penalisation or adverse treatment as a result of having made a disclosure of a wrongdoing purported to be made pursuant to the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 including the review of such investigations; and

Lot 3 : Provision of a third party Confidential Recipient service pursuant to section 6(2) of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014.

**Caiteachas Ranna**

100. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Pearse Doherty** den Aire Caiteachais Phoiblí agus Athchóirithe ós rud é, de réir an Achta um Chranncuir Náisiúnta, 1986 go mbíonn sciar de bhrabús an chrannchuir le caitheamh ar an nGaeilge agus ó díoladh ceadúnas an Chrannchuir Náisiúnta in 2013 an féidir leis an Aire a chur in iúl cé mhéad maoiniú a cuireadh ar fáil go bliantúil do Rialtas na hÉireann; agus an féidir leis an Aire a chur in iúl cé mhéad den mhaoiniú sin a cuireadh ar fáil go bliantúil don Ghaeilge agus cé na tionscadail a fuair an maoiniú sin. [20396/18]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe):** One of the objectives relating to the sale of the National Lottery licence for a 20 year period was to generate significant up-front proceeds for the State. Proceeds of €405m from the sale were used to fund a range of expenditure projects and served to reduce the need for any further tax increases at that time.

The allocation of funding from subheads which are part-funded from the National Lottery is the responsibility of a number of Government Departments and Agencies. These Departments and Agencies are listed each year in Appendix 1 of the Revised Estimates for Public Services (REV).

The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht publish on their Departmental website each year, information in respect of expenditure which was part-funded by the national lottery. Please see the relevant link attached. Subheads A9, B3 and C4 are described in the REV as 'part-funded by the national lottery'. The information in respect of C4 relates directly to the Irish language.

<https://www.chg.gov.ie/about/finance-evaluation/national-lottery-funding/>

The specific link to the 2014 publication is as follows:

[https://www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2015/07/National\\_Lottery\\_Funding\\_2014.pdf](https://www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2015/07/National_Lottery_Funding_2014.pdf)

**Roads Maintenance Funding**

101. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform if specific funding will be allocated to Cavan County Council in 2018 in respect of the essential repair of roads damaged by flooding; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20416/18]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe):** As recently outlined by the Minister for Transport, Tourism (PQ 17344/18) the improvement and maintenance of regional and local roads is the statutory responsibility of local authorities, in accordance with the provisions of Section 13 of the Roads Act 1993. Works on those roads are funded from the Council's own resources supplemented by State road grants. The initial selection and prioritisation of works to be funded is also a matter for the local authority.

The 2018 regional and local road allocations (total €417m) were announced by the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport earlier this year and all grant funding available has now been allocated.

It is a matter for each Council to determine its priorities and decide its work programme on that basis, taking available grant funding and its own resources into account.

## Capital Expenditure Programme

102. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform the capital allocation across his Department in each of the years 2018 to 2022. [20455/18]

103. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform his Department's capital allocation for projects under way and projects already tendered or committed to spending contractually. [20472/18]

104. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform his Department's capital allocation in each of the years 2018 to 2022 disaggregated according to capital allocated to projects under way, projects contractually committed to and projects yet to be initiated. [20489/18]

**Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (Deputy Paschal Donohoe):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 102 to 104, inclusive, together.

The purpose of capital investment undertaken by my Department and the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) is to deliver greater effectiveness and efficiency across the Civil and Public Service. The nature of many of the reform initiatives set out in ambitious reform plans, such as Our Public Service 2020 and the Public Service ICT Strategy, is that up-front investment is sometimes required to deliver service improvements and greater consolidation and efficiency across the Civil and Public Service in the medium and long term. Therefore, this can involve my Department taking on additional costs, including capital costs, in the short-term.

The Department's capital allocation for the years 2018 to 2022 is set out in the following table:

Subhead and Vote	2018 - €m	2019 0 - €m	2020 - €m	2021 - €m	2022 - €m	Total - €m
B.6 OGCIO	3	5	5	5	5	23
B.10 CS Learning and Development/Other.	2	-	-	-	-	2
DPER Vote 11 (Total)	5	5	5	5	5	25
OGP Vote 39	1	1	1	1	1	5
Overall Departmental Total	6	6	6	6	6	30

The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO), which is also part of my Department, invests and develops IT infrastructure on behalf of my Department, the Department of Finance, the National Shared Services Office and the OGP. However, its broader role is to leverage ICT to gain efficiencies and to improve the effectiveness of service delivery across the Civil and Public Service.

The OGCIO takes the lead on driving forward the implementation of the Public Service ICT Strategy, working with Departments and agencies across the Public Service. Capital investment in the period will be allocated to projects that support the five strategic themes of the strategy which are; Build to Share, Digital First, Data as an Enabler, Improve Governance, and Increase Capability. For instance, under the Build to Share pillar of the Strategy, the OGCIO continues to enhance the Government Network that has been in existence for many years. As

a result of this investment, the Network will operate at higher speeds, providing high capacity services to the wider Public Service. The enhanced network will support agencies in the roll-out of new applications, new ways of working and engaging with the citizen.

The OGP continues to invest in its IT systems to deliver on its mandate to drive procurement savings to the State. For example, the OGP is continuing to invest in the eTenders platform to support national and EU procurement requirements. A CRM / Workflow Management System is also being implemented to support OGP's Customer Service function and sourcing activities of the OGP and its sector partners.

### **Social Media in Education**

105. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his policy on the use of social media by primary schools; the steps he is taking to ensure that children whose parents do not wish their child to feature in the school's social media posts are not excluded from school activities; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [2023/18]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** The use of social media by schools is a matter for the board of management of each individual school. My Department provides information to schools on the safe and ethical use of the internet generally and has a broad suite of policies to support the safe and appropriate use of digital technologies in schools. Schools are advised on the following matters; the development and implementation of an Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP) governing the use of internet in schools which can include reference to social media; the promotion or awareness regarding online safety; and the implementation of a content filtering/monitoring system.

A school's policy in relation to the use of social media however should allow for parents to choose the context in which their child is to feature in the school's social media posts without the child being excluded from school activities. Where parents have a concern in relation to a school's social media policy and participation in school activities, they should raise the matter with the board of management of the school concerned.

### **Schools Facilities**

106. **Deputy Thomas Byrne** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if there is a mechanism for the funding of a small theatre style room in a national school which would be used by the school community for drama, music and other performances and also by the local community. [2024/18]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** I wish to advise the Deputy that my Department's current priority is the provision of essential classroom accommodation in areas where significant demographic need has been established to ensure that each child will have access to a physical school place.

Funding is not available for the purposes referred to by the Deputy. However in situations where a school has a GP room or access to a local community hall, activities of the nature described by the Deputy could be undertaken in these premises.

### **Institutes of Technology**

107. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the reason an early parchment cannot be provided to a person (details supplied) in County Donegal for employment purposes by the relevant institute of higher education; if his attention has been drawn to the implications such a situation is having on final year students when trying to secure job opportunities from employers that require the document prior to making a formal job offer; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20247/18]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** As the Deputy will be aware, Institutes of Technology are autonomous institutions within the meaning of the Institutes of Technology Acts 1992 to 2006. The management of their academic affairs, including any issues relating to the making or certification of awards, is a matter for the institutions concerned and I, as Minister, do not have any function in the matter.

The position with the institute of technology in question is that Degree Award parchments are issued at a formal Conferring of Awards Ceremony, once results have been formally ratified by their Academic Council, and following a recommendation from the relevant Board of Examiners. I understand that the institution does not issue parchments in advance.

This year, the end of year meetings of the Institute's Boards of Examiners will be held on 7-8 June, and examination results will be published on 12 June. After this date, students who have successfully completed their programme of study will be issued with their Transcript of Results and their Diploma Supplement, and will be conferred with their award in October 2018.

In addition, and in advance of the end of year examinations, the institute's Exams Office can provide students with letters for prospective employers confirming their registration status, including ECTS credits completed to date.

### **Schools Building Projects Status**

108. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the status of a request for a school extension (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20248/18]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** The major building project for the school referred to by the Deputy is at an early stage of architectural planning - Stage 1. A revised Stage 1 submission, including an up to date cost plan, was requested from the Design Team following an increase in the schedule of accommodation to cater for up to 1200 pupils.

Upon submission, presentation and review of the Stage 1 report, and subject to no issues arising, the project should then be authorised to progress to Stage 2a - Developed Design.

### **Schools Building Projects Status**

109. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the status of a new school (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20249/18]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** The Deputy will be aware that a building project for the school to which he refers is included in my Department's Capital Programme.

My Department is currently finalising the development of the project brief with the aim of progressing the project into architectural planning at an early stage. In that regard, my Depart-



ment will also be in direct contact with the school authority shortly regarding its project.

### **Schools Building Projects Status**

110. **Deputy Sean Sherlock** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the status of the provision of a new school (details supplied) in County Cork. [20250/18]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** I am pleased to advise that architectural planning has commenced for the school referred to by the Deputy, for delivery under the Department's Design and Build Programme. Site surveys have commenced in advance of preparing the Planning Application which will be the next key milestone in the progression of the project.

### **Schools Amalgamation**

111. **Deputy Fergus O'Dowd** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if a reply will issue to correspondence on the amalgamation of schools (details supplied); if a meeting will be arranged with his departmental officials in order to progress concerns; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20255/18]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** The Department agreed to the proposed amalgamation of Scoil Bhride Girls and Scoil Phadraig Naofa and also the re-organisation of Presentation Primary School and St. Joseph's CBS from the start of the school year 2018/19. The proposal was agreed subject to all 5 primary school including Scoil Oilibheir Naofa agreeing a Common Application and Enrolment Policy and having a commitment to grow naturally. The Patron also agreed to ensure that all schools will not act outside the remit of the Common Application and Enrolment Policy and on this basis, schools will not be allowed to develop at the expense of other schools.

My Department has, for the first time, introduced an objective, statistics based model for deciding which schools merit inclusion in the DEIS Programme, so that all stakeholders can have confidence that we are targeting extra resources at those schools with the highest concentrated levels of disadvantage. My Department will be in touch with the schools concerned shortly regarding DEIS status.

The criteria used for the allocation of teaching posts is published annually on the Department website. The key factor for determining the level of staffing resources provided at individual school level is the staffing schedule for the relevant school year and pupil enrolments on the previous 30 September.

The criteria for the appointment of an administrative deputy principal to a school, which are enrolment related, are set out in Appendix B of Circular, 0010/2018. There is no scope to deviate from these arrangements.

The staffing schedule operates in a clear and transparent manner and treats all similar types of schools equally irrespective of location.

The general approach taken in cases of amalgamation is that the existing staff of the pre-amalgamation schools can remain in the newly amalgamated school. Where this results in the newly amalgamated school having more staff than that warranted by the staffing schedule, a concessionary allocation is given to the school to allow all of the teachers remain in place. The concessionary post is only retained until such time as one of the existing cohort of teachers



leaves the newly amalgamated school and, as such, is not a permanent allocation but is a temporary measure to assist in the amalgamation process.

### **School Accommodation**

112. **Deputy Gerry Adams** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of schools in County Louth which have prefabs on site. [20277/18]

113. **Deputy Gerry Adams** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of schools in County Louth which have more than one prefab. [20278/18]

114. **Deputy Gerry Adams** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the location of schools in County Louth which utilise prefabs on their site. [20279/18]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 112 to 114, inclusive, together.

I wish to advise the Deputy that my Department does not hold details relating to the information requested.

As the Deputy will be aware, it is my intention to replace all purchased temporary accommodation with permanent accommodation, where the need is established, over the lifetime of my Department's Capital Programme (2016 to 2021). To enable this development, my Department will be carrying out an assessment of the number of prefabs being used in schools to deliver the curriculum. This will also determine whether or not individual prefabs need to be replaced in the context of the long-term accommodation needs of each individual school. When completed, this assessment will quantify the number of prefabs to be replaced.

It is intended that this assessment when finalised will enable the replacement of such prefabs to commence in 2019. A funding provision of €180 million is being made available from 2019 for this initiative in the programme.

### **School Furniture Provision**

115. **Deputy Gerry Adams** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the supports available to national schools to purchase essential equipment such as dining tables and chairs. [20280/18]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** Primary schools do not have canteen facilities so the issue of providing dining tables and chairs does not arise. Otherwise, my Department's Loose Furniture & Equipment Scheme is the mechanism for all schools - primary and post-primary - to apply for replacement furniture for teaching spaces and other spaces and to fund the purchase of individual items of furniture and equipment for special needs pupils. Funding for furniture for new schools and extension projects is automatically provided as part of the project. In addition, primary school may use their minor works grant to purchase particular furniture if they consider this a priority for their schools.

### **School Accommodation Provision**

116. **Deputy Kathleen Funchion** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the status of

an application by a school (details supplied) for a third junior infant class for September 2018; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20281/18]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** My Department has no record of receiving an application from the school referred to by the Deputy. Should an application be received it will be considered and the school authority informed of the outcome.

### **School Accommodation Provision**

117. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the status of an application by a school (details supplied) for additional accommodation; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20307/18]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** I can confirm to the Deputy that my Department is in receipt of a further appeal from the school in respect of an application for additional accommodation.

My Department has been in contact with the school authority on the matter and expects to be in a position to revert to the school shortly.

### **Departmental Contracts Data**

118. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the contracts awarded by his Department or an agency under his remit to a company (details supplied) since March 2011, by year in tabular form; the cost per contract; the basis for each contract; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20314/18]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** Details, as requested, in relation to contracts awarded by my Department and aegis bodies are currently being compiled and this information will be forwarded to the Deputy as soon as possible.

### **Site Acquisitions**

119. **Deputy John Curran** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the schedule regarding the delivery of a new secondary school in the Citywest and Saggart areas; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20324/18]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** As the Deputy is aware, I recently announced plans for the establishment of 42 new schools over the next four years (2019 to 2022), including a new 1,000 pupil post-primary school to be established in 2020 to serve the Tallaght and Newcastle-Rathcoole school planning areas as a regional solution. This announcement follows nationwide demographic exercises carried out by my Department into the future need for primary and post-primary schools across the country and the 4-year horizon will enable increased lead-in times for planning and delivery of the necessary infrastructure.

Following on from the announcement, the locations for all of the schools, including the school referred to by the Deputy, will be determined as part of the site acquisition process.

### **Site Acquisitions**

120. **Deputy John Curran** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the site location of the new secondary school announced recently for the Citywest and Saggart areas; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20325/18]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** As the Deputy is aware, I recently announced the opening of 42 new schools over the next 4 years. This announcement followed nationwide demographic exercises carried out by my Department into the current and future need for primary and post-primary school places across the country. The school to which the Deputy refers was part of that announcement.

In line with the policy on the use of state assets (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Circulars 11/15 and 17/16), my Department will be seeking to maximise the use of sites already in my ownership and of available properties in the ownership of other State bodies, where these are considered suitable. In addition as part of my Department's ongoing engagement with Local Authorities in respect of statutory planning processes and under the MoU on school site acquisitions, my Department will be examining all potential suitable site options, including appropriately zoned sites, to serve the relevant area. Taking into account all of the above, a decision will then be made as part of the site acquisition process in relation to an appropriate site for the school to which the Deputy refers and will be confirmed at a later date.

### **School Accommodation Provision**

121. **Deputy Kathleen Funchion** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the status of a building application by a school (details supplies); the reason the school principal is receiving contradictory answers when contacting his Department for information; and when the school can expect a response from his Department. [20344/18]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** I can confirm that my Department is in receipt of an application for additional accommodation from the school referred to by the Deputy.

I understand the application has been considered and a decision is due to issue to the school authority in the matter in the coming days.

### **Apprenticeship Programmes**

122. **Deputy Darragh O'Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his plans to review the decision not to expand the shared apprenticeship scheme for the construction sector; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20367/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Education and Skills (Deputy John Halligan):** Registrations on craft apprenticeships have grown strongly in recent years following a very significant collapse in the number of apprenticeship registrations between 2008-2011. SOLAS, in partnership with Construction Industry Federation (CIF) and Waterford Wexford Education and Training Board (WWETB), operated a pilot initiative in the last year to test the viability of a shared apprenticeship scheme. Following analysis of the pilot outcomes and in consultation with both the CIF and WWETB, I understand that SOLAS decided not to operationalise the pilot initiative more widely. In particular, it was found that the pilot did not attract employers in sufficient numbers to suggest that the scheme had the potential to have a significant impact on apprenticeship recruitment. However, I understand from SOLAS that they are currently in discussions with representatives from the construction industry to assess how the scheme could

be made more viable.

### **SOLAS Training and Education Programmes**

123. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of cases in which the cost of contracted training procured by SOLAS has increased post the framework agreement; the number of cases in which it did not increase beyond the framework agreement in each of the past ten years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20401/18]

124. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the value of contracted training procured by SOLAS; the numbers in training in these courses in each of the past ten years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20402/18]

125. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his views on whether there was a great deal of confusion and inconsistency in instructions given to some applicants to tenders for SOLAS training courses regarding the use of subcontractors; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20403/18]

126. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the percentage of points awarded on the basis of price for tenders for contracted training at SOLAS; if this was always the case; the reason this percentage was chosen; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20404/18]

127. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his views on whether the scoring matrix for the tenders for contracted training at SOLAS is weighted in a way that means the cheapest tender counts for too little in the system; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20405/18]

128. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the number of companies that have received a contract for training at SOLAS in each of the past ten years across each education and training board and by education and training board; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20406/18]

129. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the cost of each of the top ten most costly SOLAS courses provided by each education and training board in each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20407/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Education and Skills (Deputy John Halligan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 123 to 129, inclusive, together.

The establishment of the Education and Training Boards (ETBs), the dissolution of FÁS and the establishment of SOLAS in 2013 has led to major changes in the co-ordination, funding and delivery of further education and training provision. This includes changes in the operation of contracted training where ETBs engage the services of third party providers to deliver some of their education and training provision. These services were formerly contracted by Training Centres under the remit of FÁS.

In March 2017, on behalf of the contracting authorities, consisting of 15 ETBs, the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) invited expressions of interest under the restricted procedure, from suitably qualified service providers for the provision of contracted training services for which it was proposed to establish multi supplier frameworks. Each ETB is a contracting authority in respect of the services it engages. SOLAS does not act as a contracting authority but assisted with the co-ordination of contracting arrangements and engagement with the OGP.

The competition was initiated in consideration of the completion of the term of the previous contracting arrangements.

Conducted by the OGP on behalf of the contracting authorities, the competition was run in accordance with the European Communities (Award of Public Authorities' Contracts) Regulations 2016 (as amended). The competition is complete and each contracting authority is at varying stages of engagement with framework contractors.

In light of the above, I have asked SOLAS to contact the Deputy directly to clarify the information sought, to confirm what is available and to make arrangements to furnish it directly.

### **Schools Building Projects Status**

130. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the status of the building of a new school (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20408/18]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** I wish to advise the Deputy that officials from my Department have been working closely with officials from the relevant Local Authority under the Memorandum of Understanding for the acquisition of school sites in order to identify and procure a suitable site for the school to which he refers.

A comprehensive technical assessment of a significant number of identified site options has been undertaken by my Department with the assistance of the Local Authority. This assessment was complex and thorough and, as a result, took a considerable length of time. However, a preferred site location has been identified and engagement with the relevant landowner is now commencing.

I can assure the Deputy that all parties are working to advance the site acquisition process as expeditiously as possible.

### **Summer Works Scheme Applications**

131. **Deputy Tony McLoughlin** asked the Minister for Education and Skills if an application for an upgrade to a home economics room by a school (details supplied) has been approved in view of the condition of its current room; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20418/18]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** I can confirm to the Deputy that the school in question applied for funding under the Summer Works Scheme, under Category 9 - Curricular Requirement Works. The Summer Works Scheme (SWS) is designed to allow schools to carry out small and medium sized building works that will improve and upgrade existing school buildings.

The Summer Works Scheme (SWS) is a multi-annual Scheme. Over 1,650 schools, nearly 50% of schools, applied for inclusion under the current round of the scheme which reflects a very high demand.

Almost €80 million has been approved under the current round of the Scheme, in respect of 635 school projects, 464 primary and 171 post-primary schools, for Gas, electrical upgrades, mechanical, sanitation and roof improvement works. Details of the successful school applicants, are published on the Department's website [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie).

In relation to the Summer Works Scheme 2018, over €25 million will be spent on summer works projects in 2018. This expenditure will enable the remaining approved improvement works for 178 schools nationwide to be completed. These works will be carried out by the schools themselves on a devolved basis mainly over the summer months, so the disruption to students, teachers and other school staff will be kept to a minimum.

Furthermore, the Department intends to engage with the relevant education partners in relation to giving schools a better lead-in period for planning and delivering projects under the summer works scheme from 2019 onwards. While the Summer Works Scheme is hugely successful in enabling small scale refurbishment works to be done on a devolved basis, the Department considers that the operation of the scheme could be improved by providing a better lead-in period for schools rather than in Quarter 2 as in previous years. This will also help ensure that works done under the Summer Works Scheme fit better with any wider refurbishment/energy retrofit plans that may be done at schools under the increased funding provided in the National Development Plan. The engagement with education partners will commence shortly and will assist in developing a better timeline for the planning and delivery of summer works projects for 2019 onwards.

### **Departmental Budgets**

132. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills the capital allocation across his Department in each of the years 2018 to 2022. [20448/18]

133. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his Department's capital allocation for projects under way and projects already tendered or committed to spending contractually. [20465/18]

134. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Education and Skills his Department's capital allocation in each of the years 2018 to 2022 disaggregated according to capital allocated to projects under way, projects contractually committed to and projects yet to be initiated. [20482/18]

**Minister for Education and Skills (Deputy Richard Bruton):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 132 to 134, inclusive, together.

My Department's capital allocation for the years 2018 to 2022 is as follows:

2018 - €745m

2019 - €941m

2020 - €942m

2021 - €1,006m

2022 - €1,100m

The capital funding available to my Department for the years 2018 to 2021 has been allocated across the various sectors as set out in the table.

The National Development Plan signalled a capital allocation of €1.1 billion for the Department of Education and Skills in 2022. However, this total has not yet been allocated across individual capital subheads.



Typically, expenditure on large-scale projects and the devolved projects under the Additional Accommodation Scheme accounts for up to 80% of the capital allocation available to the school sector annually.

The Department's website includes a list of all large-scale projects being delivered under the school building programme and the current status of each project from project brief to construction stages. Projects are listed in county order and the list will be updated on a monthly basis with the next update to be done by 31 May 2018.

The Department's website also includes a list of all projects being delivered on a devolved basis under the Additional Accommodation Scheme. Projects are listed in county order and the list will be updated on a weekly basis.

Capital funding in the Higher Education sector will increase significantly from 2019 onwards and consideration of projects for delivery within the sector is now underway. Among the projects being funded in 2018 are the Confucius project in UCD and works on the DCU St Patricks Campus.

Likewise, capital funding for the Further Education sector also increases from 2019 onwards and projects for delivery have yet to be confirmed.

Public Private Partnership (PPP) commitments, including Unitary Charge payments, arise over the period 2018-22 in relation to nine existing PPP contracts. These contracts are as follows: Pilot Schools, Schools Bundles 1-5, National Maritime College of Ireland, Cork School of Music and DIT Grangegorman. As outlined in the attached table, the total allocation for education PPPs over the period 2018-2021 is currently over €440m.

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS

### CAPITAL PROVISION 2018-2021

SECTOR	2018 (€m)	2019 (€m)	2020 (€m)	2021 (€m)
Primary/Post-Primary	539.6	622	592	617
Higher Education	30	90	109	138
Research Activities	40.6	47.6	47.6	47.6
PPPs	93.23	112	119	120
ICT (Schools)	30	50	50	49
Further Education	6	13	18	28
Other Programmes	5.92	6.4	6.4	6.4
TOTAL	745.35	941	942	1006

## Property Services Regulation

135. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if specific action can be taken in the case of a property (details supplied) in which management companies have failed to represent the interests of the residents and tenants in multi-unit developments and in which there is clear evidence of an unwillingness to acknowledge the position and grievances as set out by the residents and tenants; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20493/18]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan):** The Deputy will appreciate that I am not in a position in my capacity as Minister for Justice and Equality to provide legal advice or to refer to a specific case of this kind in response to a parliamentary question.

By way of general information, the Multi-Unit Developments Act 2011 was enacted with the primary purposes of reforming the law relating to the ownership and management of common areas of multi-unit developments and facilitating the fair, efficient and effective management of owners' management companies (OMCs). These are companies registered under the Companies Acts, the members of which are the owners of residential units within the development, which are established for the purposes of ownership and management of such common areas.

Section 24 of the Act contains provisions for the resolution of disputes relating to multi-unit developments. It provides that a person, including any member of an OMC, may apply to the Circuit Court for an Order to enforce any rights conferred or obligations imposed by the Act. The Court, if satisfied that a right has been infringed or an obligation has not been discharged, may make such remedial order as it deems appropriate in the circumstances with a view to ensuring the effective enforcement of the right or the effective discharge of the obligation. The Act also contains provisions which encourage the resolution of disputes that may arise between parties by means of mediation rather than recourse to court proceedings.

### Departmental Staff Data

136. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the details of staff in his Department including executive agencies by grade and location in counties Clare, Kerry and Cork; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20232/18]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan):** I am informed that the information requested by the Deputy, including in relation to all agencies under the aegis of my Department, is set out in the table.

Location	Office/Body	Grade	Number
Cork	Courts Service	County Registrar	1
		Principal Officer	1
		Assistant Principal Officer	4
		Higher Executive Officer	17
		Executive Officer	20
		Clerical Officer	35
		Court Crier	1
Cork	Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission	Assistant Principal Officer (Senior Investigations Officer)	1
		Higher Executive Officer (Investigations Officer)	4
		Executive Officer (Investigations Officer)	1
Cork	An Garda Síochána	Assistant Commissioner	1
		Chief Superintendent	3
		Superintendent	14
		Inspector	19
		Sergeant	182
		Garda	1,073
Cork	Garda Civilian	Assistant Principal Officer	1
		Higher Executive Officer	2

Location	Office/Body	Grade	Number
		Executive Officer	25
		Clerical Officer	103
Cork	Legal Aid Board	Clerical Officer	18
		Managing Solicitor Grade I	2
		Managing Solicitor Grade II	4
		Solicitor Grade III	8
		Legal Clerk	3
		Mediator	4
Cork	Department of Justice and Equality	Executive Officer	1
		Clerical Officer	4
		Senior Probation Officer	5
		Probation Officer	29
		Community Service Supervisor	4
Cork	Irish Prisons Service	Governor - Grade II	1
		Assistant Governor	1
		Chief Officer 1	1
		Chief Officer 2	2
		Industrial Manager	1
		Assistant Chief Officer	18
		Prison Officer	110
		Industrial Supervisor	2
		Work Training Officer	26
		Prison Higher Executive Officer	1
		Prison Clerical Officer	4
		Trades Officer	4
		Nurse Officer	10
		Medical Orderly	1
Kerry	Courts Service	County Registrar	1
		Assistant Principal Officer	1
		Higher Executive Officer	1
		Executive Officer	6
		Clerical Officer	8
		Court Messenger	1
Kerry	An Garda Síochána	Chief Superintendent	1
		Superintendent	3
		Inspector	6
		Sergeant	44
		Garda	265
Kerry	Garda Civilian	Executive Officer	6
		Clerical Officer	30
Kerry	Legal Aid Board	Principal Officer	1
		Assistant Principal Officer	3
		Higher Executive Officer	7

Location	Office/Body	Grade	Number
		Executive Officer	11
		Clerical Officer	27
		Service Officer	2
		Managing Solicitor Grade I	1
		Solicitor Grade III	3
		Legal Clerk	1
		Mediator	1
Kerry	Department of Justice and Equality	Principal Officer	1
		Assistant Principal Officer	4
		Higher Executive Officer	11
		Executive Officer	21
		Clerical Officer	62
		Service Officer	4
		Accountant	2
		Senior Probation Officer	1
		Probation Officer	3
Clare	Courts Service	County Registrar	1
		Assistant Principal Officer	1
		Executive Officer	6
		Clerical Officer	5
		Court Messenger	1
Clare	An Garda Síochána	Chief Superintendent	1
		Superintendent	2
		Inspector	5
		Sergeant	44
		Garda	257
Clare	Garda Civilian	Executive Officer	4
		Clerical Officer	27
Clare	Legal Aid Board	Clerical Officer	3
		Managing Solicitor Grade II	1
		Solicitor Grade III	2
		Legal Clerk	1

### Courts Service Properties

137. **Deputy Michael Harty** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the cost of the recent refurbishments to Waterford Courthouse; the amount paid to the owners (details supplied) of the location for the temporary relocation of the Courts Service there; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20235/18]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan):** As the Deputy is aware, under the provisions of the Courts Service Act 1998 management of the courts, including the provision of accommodation for court sittings, is the responsibility of the Courts Service which is independent in exercising its functions.

However, in order to be of assistance to the Deputy, I have had enquiries made and the Courts Service has advised that the capital cost of the construction and refurbishment works at Waterford Courthouse are estimated at €25.9 million. An estimated €1.14 million was also spent on furniture, fittings and equipment. These works were carried out as part of a Public Private Partnership contract and, as such, payment will be made by means of an annual unitary charge payable for a 25 year contract term.

The Courts Service has further advised that this unitary charge covers not only the construction costs but also the cost of maintaining the building to a high standard and a wide range of facilities management services being delivered on site for the 25 year contract term. In addition, Courts Service ICT and court technology, which is not part of the Public Private Partnership contract, was installed at a cost of €327,000.

The Courts Service has informed me that while the Courthouse on Catherine Street was being refurbished court sittings and the Court Office relocated to temporary leased accommodation at Grace Dieu for the period from 18 May 2015 to 18 April 2018. A total of €1,383,186 was paid, which includes €515,625 in rent with the balance being adaptation/fit out costs and the cost of reversing some of the aforementioned adaptations as per planning requirements.

### **Immigration Policy**

138. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the status on the civilianisation of immigration control in Dublin Airport; the progress that has been made for civilianising the other ports of entry including Shannon and Cork airports and Dublin Port; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20259/18]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan):** The civilianisation of immigration checks at Dublin Airport is part of a wider transformation programme relating to the transfer of certain largely administrative immigration functions from An Garda Síochána to the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS), including some frontline immigration controls and the registration of non-nationals.

The civilianisation of all frontline immigration checks at Dublin Airport was completed on 2 October 2017. These checks are now undertaken by uniformed civilian staff from INIS. This has released Gardaí previously carrying out these tasks to core policing duties. An Garda Síochána will continue to carry out investigative and detention functions at Dublin Airport and an appropriate number of Gardaí will be retained there for this purpose.

A number of administrative functions that remain with An Garda Síochána at Dublin Airport are due to be transferred in 2018, principally the initial interview of persons seeking international protection presenting at the airport.

In relation to further civilianisation at other ports of entry, any developments in relation to these ports will take into account a number of factors including passenger numbers, frequency of flights or sailings, the potential, if any, for redeployment of Garda resources having regard to the need for a proper balance between civilian and Garda staff to protect our borders.

### **Garda Operations**

139. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if there has been a

recent audit of Garda property seized in the course of arrests or investigation; his views on the security of such seizures; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20275/18]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan):** The Deputy will appreciate that the manner in which property is seized by Members of An Garda Síochána during the course of their official duties is an operational issue for the Commissioner, and his management team, and I have no role in such matters.

This notwithstanding I have requested a report from the Garda authorities on this issue and I will contact the Deputy again when the report is to hand.

### **Garda Operations**

140. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the protocol regarding the way in which money and drugs seized in investigations are handled, stored and returned to the person from whom they were seized in the event of an unsuccessful prosecution. [20276/18]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan):** I have raised the matter referred to by the Deputy with the Garda Authorities and requested a report on the issue. I will reply to the Deputy when the report is to hand.

### **Garda National Immigration Bureau**

141. **Deputy Joe Carey** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality his plans to civilianise immigration registration offices nationally following the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service takeover of Garda National Immigration Bureau registration in Dublin; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20303/18]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan):** I am advised by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of my Department that a project to investigate options for the civilianisation of the immigration registration function outside of Dublin commenced this year. This follows on from the successful civilianisation of the Dublin Registration Office and on going work to streamline processes, including the introduction of online appointments systems and the integration of other work streams such as re-entry visa processes.

As part of this wider project, when options are developed for extension to regional offices, it is planned to commence by way of a pilot project later this year. The pilot will inform the plans to civilianise the function nationally.

### **Departmental Contracts Data**

142. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the contracts awarded by his Department or any agency under his remit to a company (details supplied) since March 2011, by year in tabular form; the cost per contract; the basis for each contract; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20318/18]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan):** I wish to confirm to the



Deputy that the information sought cannot be provided in the time allowed. As soon as the information has been collated I will write to the Deputy on the matter.

### **Legislative Measures**

143. **Deputy John Curran** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the steps he plans to take to reform legislation to protect front-line gardaí in view of an assault on an unarmed front-line garda in Dublin recently; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20330/18]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan):** There is specific legislation in place to deal with assaults on emergency workers in front-line positions. The Criminal Justice (Public Order) Act 1994, as amended by the Criminal Justice Act 2006, provides explicit statutory protection for what are termed “peace officers”, which include members of the Garda Síochána, prison officers, members of the fire brigade, ambulance personnel and members of the Defence Forces. The Act also covers those working in medical services in hospitals, including doctors, nurses, psychiatrists and others involved in the provision of treatment and care. Section 19 of the 1994 Act provides that any person who assaults or threatens to assault any of these front-line workers is guilty of an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of up to €5,000 or a term of imprisonment of up to 12 months or both, or on conviction on indictment to a fine or imprisonment for a term of up to 7 years or both. The maximum sentence was increased from 5 years to 7 years under the 2006 Act.

It is also an offence under the 1994 Act, as amended, to resist, wilfully obstruct or impede a peace officer, or medical staff in a hospital, in the course of carrying out their work. The penalty on summary conviction for such an offence is a fine of up to €2,500 or imprisonment for a term of up to 6 months or both.

In addition, in the case of assault causing serious harm, an offender can be prosecuted under the Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act 1997 which deals comprehensively with a wide range of assault provisions, the more serious of which carry heavy penalties. That Act provides for penalties of up to 5 years in prison for an offence of assault causing harm and for a penalty of life imprisonment for an offence of causing serious harm. This general law relating to assault has application to all citizens, including front-line emergency workers.

In conclusion, the law already recognises the need to protect members of the emergency services carrying out their duties and provides strong penalties where offences against front-line workers are committed. While there are currently no proposals for further legislation in this regard, the situation is kept under review.

### **Immigration Status**

144. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the status of a stamp 4 application in the case of a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20337/18]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan):** I am informed by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) of my Department that it has received a request for permission to remain in the State in respect of the person mentioned by the Deputy.

As the Deputy may be aware this case was among a large number of cases held by my Department pending the outcome of the Supreme Court judgment in respect of Luximon and

Balchand which were finalised on 24 April 2018. INIS advise that it may take some time to assess the above mentioned applications and ask that the persons concerned bear with them whilst undertaking this task.

The consideration of the person's application has not yet been completed and, if further documentation or clarification of any matter related to the application is required from the person concerned, INIS will write to them requesting same.

Queries in relation to the status of individual immigration cases may be made directly to the INIS of my Department by e-mail using the Oireachtas Mail facility which has been specifically established for this purpose. This service enables up to date information on such cases to be obtained without the need to seek information by way of the Parliamentary Questions process. The Deputy may consider using the e-mail service except in cases where the response from the INIS is, in the Deputy's view, inadequate or too long awaited.

### **Immigration Controls**

145. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the basis on which a person (details supplied) is being held in Dublin Airport; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20339/18]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan):** It would not be appropriate for me to go into the details of the case referred to by the Deputy. I can say however, that the person concerned was refused permission to enter the State on 2 May 2018 and left the State on the same day. He is not the subject of an Irish Deportation Order.

The following matters pertain in all cases where a person is refused permission to enter the State.

- There are in total twelve (12) grounds on which an immigration officer may refuse to give a permission to enter the State and these are set out at Section 4 (3) of the Immigration Act 2004 (as amended by the International protection Act 2015). While a person may be refused permission to enter the State based on a number of grounds, such refusal need only be based on any one of those grounds. Immigration officers are required to provide a written notice to the person refused entry that sets out the reasons for the decision. In all cases, removals from the State are conducted in accordance with the law. Translation facilities are available where necessary.

- An Immigration Officer before confirming a decision to refuse permission will consult with his or her Supervisor.

- Removals are essentially operational matters for the Garda National Immigration Bureau who work closely with civilian immigration officers on these matters.

- Section 5 of the Immigration Act, 2003 (as amended by the International protection Act, 2015), contains the main provisions dealing with the removal from the State of persons refused leave to land and specifies that a person to whom this section applies may be arrested by an immigration officer or a member of the Garda Síochána and detained in a prescribed place of detention for the purpose of facilitating their removal from the State, which must be as soon as is practicable.

- It is the practice to remove persons from the State on the next available flight or ship.

It should be noted that should any person who has been refused leave to land in the State

seek entry to the State at a future point, their application will be assessed on its own merits taking all relevant information into consideration at that time. Their prior immigration history is a matter of record but does not preclude them from seeking permission to enter the State in the future.

### **Criminal Prosecutions**

146. **Deputy Eoin Ó Broin** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality if guidelines are in place with respect to prosecutions in court here for overseas offences; the type of official from the overseas jurisdiction that must testify that the offences are offences in their jurisdictions; the guidelines in this regard; and if none exist, when such guidelines will be put in place. [20399/18]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan):** In any prosecution for an offence committed abroad, where the State has extra-territorial jurisdiction, it is a matter for the prosecution, as in any criminal trial, to adduce evidence proving the elements of the offence. The form of proof of offences abroad could vary from certificate evidence to personal testimony according to the circumstances of a trial, and I am not aware of any general guidelines in relation to such proofs.

Provision is made in law in some circumstances for such certificate evidence, and I will certainly keep under review the case for further such provision.

### **Garda Divisional Headquarters**

147. **Deputy Noel Grealish** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality when the new Garda divisional headquarters for County Galway is scheduled to open; the units that will operate out of this building; if there will be a public office, public hours at this facility; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20441/18]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan):** The Deputy will appreciate that the programme of replacement and refurbishment of Garda accommodation is progressed by the Garda authorities working in close cooperation with the Office of Public Works (OPW), which has responsibility for the provision and maintenance of Garda accommodation. As Minister, I have no direct role in these matters.

I understand from Garda authorities that the construction of the new Regional and Divisional Headquarters for Galway commenced in late 2015 and is currently being progressed through the final phase of construction by the OPW and the contractor.

I am informed by the Garda authorities that the facilities currently being developed at the new Garda station for Galway will cater for the full range of operational requirements for a District, Division and Regional Headquarter facility and will provide An Garda Síochána with:

- improved office and incident management facilities;
- appropriate facilities for meeting members of the public, including facilities to support victims of crime and to provide universal access;

- appropriate facilities for custody management which enhances the ability to provide safe and secure detention;
- enhanced training facilities for members;
- stores for Property and Exhibit Management, to support the property management system of An Garda Síochána and ensure that property and exhibits may be safely and securely stored; and
- suitable welfare facilities for Garda staff.

I am further informed that there is a public office in the building with suitable ancillary spaces for engaging with members of the public.

Finally, I understand from Garda authorities that, subject to all outstanding works being completed on schedule, the building could be operational in Quarter 3 of 2018. It is anticipated that the station will be open on a 24-hour basis.

### Departmental Contracts Data

148. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality the capital allocation across his Department in each of the years 2018 to 2022. [20454/18]

149. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality his Department's capital allocation for projects underway and projects already tendered or committed to spending contractually. [20471/18]

150. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality his Department's capital allocation in each of the years 2018 to 2022 disaggregated according to capital allocated to projects underway, projects contractually committed to and projects yet to be initiated. [20488/18]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 148 to 150, inclusive, together.

The capital allocation for the Justice Vote Group over the period 2018 to 2022, as published in the recent National Development Plan is as follows:

Year	Allocation € million
2018	145
2019	241
2020	230
2021	208
2022	216
Total	1,040

The allocation of the capital budget across the Vote Group for 2018 is set out as follows and for the most part relates to projects underway and in respect of which contractual commitments arise.

Garda Vote	€61.440 million
Prisons Vote	€24.330 million

Courts Vote	€49.017 million
Justice and Equality Vote	€9.420 million
Irish Human Rights and	€0.100 million
Equality Commission	€144.307 million*

This excludes €17.8 million in unspent capital from 2017, carried over to 2018 under the capital carryover provisions.

For subsequent years, the precise breakdown of the budget across the votes and various projects will be dependent on the outcome of procurement processes and the timing of expenditure will be impacted by more detailed planning for specific projects. In broad terms the funding will mainly be allocated to the following areas where projects are at various stages of planning and procurement.

- Construction of the new Forensic Science Laboratory;
- Garda Síochána Building and Refurbishment Programme including the replacement of the Harcourt Street Complex;
- Garda ICT Programme including completion of the implementation of Schengen Information system,
- Continuing Investment in the Garda Fleet;
- Prisons, Courts and Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service ICT investment;
- Prison Building Programme including the redevelopment of Limerick Prison;
- New or refurbished courthouses in a number of regional cities and county towns.

### **Garda Operations**

151. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Justice and Equality further to Parliamentary Question No. 189 of 1 May 2018, if he will direct officials in his Department who are engaged with the cross-agency group to meet with representatives of organisations (details supplied) in order that they may contribute their local expertise to finding a solution to the issue. [20508/18]

**Minister for Justice and Equality (Deputy Charles Flanagan):** As the Deputy will be aware, officials in my Department intend to consult with local authorities in the context of the positive engagement fostered by local authorities with local communities, examples of which include community and youth-centred projects. The experiences of local authorities involved in these and other projects will be very informative to my Department in terms of assessing the contribution that such approaches can make to reducing the misuse of these vehicles.

I am particularly interested in the benefits to be gained from the experiences of initiatives such as those mentioned in the details supplied alongside the Deputy's question, which involve direct engagement between local authorities, An Garda Síochána and local communities. My officials will engage with such organisations, either through the relevant local authority or directly, in order to learn from their experiences and to utilise this knowledge in developing the approach to be taken in tackling this serious issue.

## IDA Ireland Site Visits

152. **Deputy Fergus O'Dowd** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation the number of industrial visits organised by the Industrial Development Agency and Enterprise Ireland, respectively in the past three years by location in counties Louth, Meath, Monaghan and Cavan; the number of visits organised to the towns of Drogheda and Dundalk by potential investor name and business type; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20228/18]

**Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** Data on IDA Ireland site visits is collated on a county-by-county basis only. Information on the number of site visits to specific locations in individual counties is therefore unavailable. IDA Ireland does not also release details of the specific itineraries of potential investors on grounds of client confidentiality and commercial sensitivity. Enterprise Ireland does not conduct site visits.

The table sets out details on the number of IDA Ireland site visits to counties Louth, Meath, Monaghan and Cavan from 2015 to Q1 2018.

County	2015	2016	2017	Q1 2018
Louth	20	24	22	6
Cavan	0	2	2	0
Meath	7	8	3	1
Monaghan	2	2	1	0

## Work Permits Appeals

153. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation when an appeal in respect of a work permit in the name of a person (details supplied) will be concluded; if the matter can be concluded at an early date with particular reference to the skills required by the company in question; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20274/18]

**Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** The Employment Permits Section of my Department inform me that following the submission and consideration of additional information at review stage a decision has been made to award a General Employment Permit to the person concerned and the permit issued on 4th May 2018.

## Departmental Contracts

154. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation the contracts awarded by her Department or an agency under her remit to a company (details supplied) since March 2011, by year in tabular form; the cost per contract; the basis for each contract; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20310/18]

**Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** In the time available, it has not been possible to supply the information requested. My Department will supply the information requested once it has been collated.

## Film Industry



155. **Deputy Peadar Tóibín** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation the commercial rationale for the sale and sale price of a studio (details supplied); and her views on whether the State's financial interests were protected. [20346/18]

**Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** Ardmore Studios Limited has been sold to Olcott Entertainment Limited. The Ardmore site is currently zoned for Film Industry use only, and this protection is due to run for at least 5 more years under the Bray Municipal District Local Area plan. The site cannot be used for non-Film Industry development without the agreement of Wicklow County Council to alter the current zoning restriction.

In relation to the sale price, the commercial rationale and other specific financial details, I am unable to reveal what are confidential details of Enterprise Ireland's minority shareholding disposal transaction in what is a privately held company. This applies to the Ardmore transaction as it would to any other individual investment or share disposal of Enterprise Ireland where it is a minority shareholder in a privately held company.

What I can however confirm is that Enterprise Ireland negotiated the sale of its shareholding with the benefit of comprehensive due diligence undertaken by independent consultants and is satisfied that it realised full market value, and on a par with the other majority shareholder parties.

The Government had committed that the company would be sold as a going concern and that is what has happened while realising full commercial value for the shareholders selling the company, including Enterprise Ireland.

Investment is required in the Ardmore studio's facilities to secure its long term commercial future and the Olcott Entertainment deal provides the potential to breathe new life into the company at a time when the market for film production in Ireland is again showing good growth potential.

I understand that Olcott plans to develop and expand the Ardmore Studio offering, and other related entertainment projects, and to retain the current experienced Ardmore management and staff.

The promoters of Olcott Entertainment have a strong track record in the film production industry. This acquisition will ensure Ardmore Studios continues to be a world class film studio. It can also strengthen the potential of Ireland as a location for film production and take advantage of new opportunities in emerging areas including on-demand TV, content and gaming production.

Overall, I am confident that the sale will not only continue to ensure high quality production of current projects, but will also provide continued investment in the studio, and employment opportunities for the skilled workers in the area.

### **Noise Pollution**

156. **Deputy Seán Haughey** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation if she is satisfied that there are adequate measures in place to control noise levels in concert halls and cinemas; if these measures are being enforced by local authorities; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20349/18]

**Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** It

is my understanding that enforcement measures by the Local Authorities to ensure adequate measures are in place to control noise levels in concert halls and cinemas in relation to noise pollution and to protect the general public is a matter for my colleague the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment.

Section 107 of the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992 provides local authorities with powers to require measures to be taken to prevent or limit noise from commercial and industrial premises within their functional areas. A notice can be served by a Local Authority on any person in charge of any premises, processes or works, other than an activity controlled by the Environmental Protection Agency. In addition, separate event licensing regulations exist which are also a matter for the Local Authorities.

The remit of my Department in connection with concert halls and cinemas is limited to their status as places of employment and the measures that must be taken by employers in the entertainment industry to protect employees from the harmful effects of loud music.

In February 2008, the Control of Noise at Work Part 5 (Chapter 1) of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 came into force for the music and entertainment sector in Ireland. The regulations mean that employers have a legal duty to protect their staff from the potential harmful effects of loud music. The regulations apply to any workplace where there is live or recorded music.

The regulations state that any employer in this sector must:

- Make a determination and carry out an assessment of risks of exposure of employees to noise at their work
- Give particular attention when carrying out this assessment to the effects of exposure on employees whose safety or health is at particular risk from such exposure
- Ensure the noise is either eliminated at source or reduced to a minimum
- Take account of other methods of work which eliminate or reduce exposure to noise in the choice of work equipment and in the design or layout of places of work, by noise reduction measures and by work organisation
- Prevent exposure above 85dB(A)
- Provide personal protective equipment if this level is exceeded
- Provide employees with information, training and relating to risks resulting from exposure to noise
- Provide health surveillance including audiometric and hearing checks to employees exposed to noise at work

The Health and Safety Authority has also produced information sheets and guidelines for the entertainment sector at the following links.

[http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications\\_and\\_Forms/Publications/Information\\_Sheets/Noise\\_in\\_Entertainment\\_2012.pdf](http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications_and_Forms/Publications/Information_Sheets/Noise_in_Entertainment_2012.pdf)

[http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications\\_and\\_Forms/Publications/Occupational\\_Health/The\\_Noise\\_of\\_Music.html](http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications_and_Forms/Publications/Occupational_Health/The_Noise_of_Music.html)

### Capital Expenditure Programme

157. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation the capital allocation across her Department in each of the years 2018 to 2022. [20443/18]

158. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation her Department's capital allocation for projects under way and projects already tendered or committed to spending contractually. [20460/18]

159. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation her Department's capital allocation in each of the years 2018 to 2022 disaggregated according to capital allocated to projects under way, projects contractually committed to and projects yet to be initiated. [20477/18]

**Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation (Deputy Heather Humphreys):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 157 to 159, inclusive, together.

The 2018 Revised Estimates Volume published by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform provided for capital expenditure funding of €555 million for use by my Department 2018. The breakdown of my Department's 2018 Capital allocation, across the various programme areas, is set out in the following Table:

-	2018
Science Foundation Ireland	€166.75m
IDA Ireland	€132m
Enterprise Ireland – Subhead A7	€63m
Enterprise Ireland – Subhead B4 (R&D)	€122m
Local Enterprise Offices	€22.5m
Memberships of International Research Organisations (eg ESA & others)	€20.25m
Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions	€14.3m
InterTrade Ireland	€5.69m
Interreg	€3.00m
Tyndall National Institute	€4.50m
National Standards Authority of Ireland	€0.50m
Credit Guarantee Scheme	€0.50m
Total	€555m

The Deputy will be aware that the recently published National Development Plan (NDP) sets out a high-level financial and budgetary framework, which includes indicative Exchequer allocations, for each Ministerial Vote Group, over a five-year period from 2018 to 2022. The indicative allocations for my Department are set out in the following table:

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
€555m	€620m	€630m	€640m	€715m

The precise budgetary Ministerial capital ceilings for the years 2019 to 2022 will be determined as part of the relevant annual Estimates processes.

The Deputy will be aware that the NDP, which is a ten year plan out to 2027, also set out the investment priorities necessary to achieve the National Strategic Outcome 5: A Strong Economy, supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills. I and my Department are working to

accelerate implementation of the key initiatives for which I have lead responsibility including:

- In early April I launched the second phase of the €60m Regional Enterprise Development Fund. This is part of a rolling programme of competitive calls over the coming years, and builds on the €31m of awards I announced in December 2017;

- I am currently developing the scheme for the Disruptive Technologies Fund will be rolled out later this year and I look forward to announcing the first awards in 2019;

- My Department is currently completing a review of the Seed and Venture Capital Scheme 2013-2018 and I will then bring forward proposals for a further scheme in 2019;

- IDA Ireland is continuing to invest in property solutions to attract investments into the regions;

- The number of world class Science Foundation Ireland Research Centres will increase further this year with the establishment of the Future Milk Centre;

- Additional funding is being provided in 2018 and beyond to increase the number of PhD qualified researchers from higher education sector;

- With the aid of funding from my Department and the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine and support of the SBCI and EIB, I and Ministers Creed and Donohoe announced a new €300 million Brexit working capital loan fund for businesses with less than 500 employees at the end of March. My Department is also working with colleagues in the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine, SBCI and EIB on developing a long-term loan scheme for businesses affected by Brexit.

While the NDP is at a very early stage of its existence, I am determined to maximise the potential impacts of the funding being provided to my Department in the first five years of the Plan as set out above so as to ensure sustainable growth and quality employment for all.

## **HSE Governance**

160. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Health when his attention was drawn to a request to appoint the director general of the HSE to the board of a private company; and if he expressed a view on that appointment. [20507/18]

214. **Deputy Róisín Shortall** asked the Minister for Health the rationale for allowing the director general of the HSE to be appointed to the board of a private company; the date on which that request was made to him; the date on which he granted the request; the manner in which the request was made to him; the steps he has taken to ascertain if a conflict of interest may arise out of the appointment; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20506/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 160 and 214 together.

In May 2017, Mr. Tony O'Brien sought my consent within the terms of his contract of employment as Director General of the HSE to accept an appointment as a non-Executive Director of a commercial business. The Director General advised that the business was based outside the State, concerned with research and development and was not engaged in business with the HSE. He advised that the functions would be performed in his own time without detriment to his work as Director General. He indicated that normal directors' fees would be payable. He also advised that all necessary taxation and Standards in Public Office declarations would be made.

Approval was conveyed in principle on 6th June on the basis that the business was based outside the State and is neither competitive with or engaging in business with the HSE and that the functions would be performed on his own time and without detriment to his work as DG of the HSE.

Mr. O'Brien was asked to provide further details of the company, the estimated time commitment and fee arrangement to the Secretary General of the Department of Health in order that the matter could be finalised.

On 7 December, Mr. O'Brien advised that the company in question is Evofem Biosciences Inc. based in San Diego, California which focuses on women's healthcare. Its research and development particularly covers areas of unmet medical need in contraception, sexually transmitted infection and for the prevention of recurrence of bacterial vaginosis.

On 20 December 2017, the Secretary General, with my consent, confirmed approval to Mr. O'Brien taking up the appointment subject to confirmation of details on remuneration and time commitment, and subject to the proviso that I, as Minister, reserve the right to review consent should a conflict of interest arise in the future or should there be any negative impact on Mr. O'Brien's work as Director General.

On 25 January, 2018 Mr. O'Brien confirmed that he had been formally appointed to the Board of Evofem Biosciences Inc. on a non-executive basis. Mr. O'Brien also confirmed that Directors' fees payable to him amount to US\$ 65,000 per annum exclusive of stock participation options.

Mr. O'Brien has advised that he envisaged that his time commitment would amount to 5 hours per month and that his attendance at Board meetings would be linked to periods of annual leave. Mr. O'Brien also confirmed that the company has no products which have FDA approval and therefore no products on the Irish market.

Mr. O'Brien has informed me that he is taking a leave of absence from his approved external non-executive board position with Evofem Biosciences Inc. until July.

### **Hospital Waiting Lists**

161. **Deputy Clare Daly** asked the Minister for Health the reason a person (details supplied) has been waiting since January 2018 for results of eye tests; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20209/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to manage and deliver, or arrange to be delivered on its behalf, health and personal social services. Section 6 of the HSE Governance Act 2013 bars the Minister for Health from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual.

The National Waiting List Management Policy, a standardised approach to managing scheduled care treatment for in-patient, day case and planned procedures, January 2014, has been developed to ensure that all administrative, managerial and clinical staff follow an agreed national minimum standard for the management and administration of waiting lists for scheduled care. This policy, which has been adopted by the HSE, sets out the processes that hospitals are to implement to manage waiting lists.

In relation to the particular query raised, as this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to

respond to the Deputy directly.

### **Hospital Appointments Status**

162. **Deputy James Lawless** asked the Minister for Health if a date for a surgery for a person (details supplied) will be expedited; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20231/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to manage and deliver, or arrange to be delivered on its behalf, health and personal social services. Section 6 of the HSE Governance Act 2013 bars the Minister for Health from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual.

The National Waiting List Management Policy, a standardised approach to managing scheduled care treatment for in-patient, day case and planned procedures, January 2014, has been developed to ensure that all administrative, managerial and clinical staff follow an agreed national minimum standard for the management and administration of waiting lists for scheduled care. This policy, which has been adopted by the HSE, sets out the processes that hospitals are to implement to manage waiting lists.

In relation to the particular query raised, as this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to the Deputy directly.

### **Hospital Appointments Status**

163. **Deputy Niamh Smyth** asked the Minister for Health if an appointment will be scheduled for a person (details supplied); the timeline for same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20238/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to manage and deliver, or arrange to be delivered on its behalf, health and personal social services. Section 6 of the HSE Governance Act 2013 bars the Minister for Health from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual.

The National Waiting List Management Policy, a standardised approach to managing scheduled care treatment for in-patient, day case and planned procedures, January 2014, has been developed to ensure that all administrative, managerial and clinical staff follow an agreed national minimum standard for the management and administration of waiting lists for scheduled care. This policy, which has been adopted by the HSE, sets out the processes that hospitals are to implement to manage waiting lists.

In relation to the particular query raised, as this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to the Deputy directly.

### **Hospital Appointments Status**

164. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Health when a person (details supplied) in County Donegal will be referred to St. James's Hospital, Dublin 8; and if he will make



a statement on the matter. [20239/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to manage and deliver, or arrange to be delivered on its behalf, health and personal social services. Section 6 of the HSE Governance Act 2013 bars the Minister for Health from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual.

The National Waiting List Management Policy, a standardised approach to managing scheduled care treatment for in-patient, day case and planned procedures, January 2014, has been developed to ensure that all administrative, managerial and clinical staff follow an agreed national minimum standard for the management and administration of waiting lists for scheduled care. This policy, which has been adopted by the HSE, sets out the processes that hospitals are to implement to manage waiting lists.

In relation to the particular query raised, as this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to the Deputy directly.

### **Medical Card Eligibility**

165. **Deputy Willie O’Dea** asked the Minister for Health his plans to raise the income limit for a medical card for persons over 70 years of age to €1,000 per week for a married couple in view of the fact that the limit for a single person is €500 per week; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20243/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** Under the Health (Alteration of Criteria for Eligibility) (No. 2) Act 2013, when a person attains the age of 70, the medical card income limits are €500 gross income per week for a single person and €900 gross income per week for a couple.

Persons aged 70 or older, who are assessed as ineligible under the gross income thresholds, may also have their eligibility assessed under the means-test medical card scheme if they so wish, for example in the event that they face particularly high expenses, e.g. nursing home or medication costs. This scheme is open to all persons, irrespective of their age and assessment is based on net income and assessable outgoing expenses. The general scheme, although having lower income thresholds, provides for income disregards and relevant outgoings to be taken into account in the assessment process.

Furthermore, persons, including those aged over 70 years, may be deemed eligible for a medical card on a discretionary basis, if they are judged to face undue hardship in arranging GP services as a result of medical or social circumstances. In addition, from August 2015, all persons aged 70 or older qualify for a GP Visit Card, regardless of income.

There are no proposals at present to amend the current limits for the granting of eligibility for medical cards for persons aged 70 and over. However, it should be noted that the gross income limits are reviewed annually and considered in the context of the budget.

### **Health Services Provision**

166. **Deputy Gerry Adams** asked the Minister for Health the estimated cost to provide annual rheumatology assessment for children with Down’s syndrome. [20244/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** As this is a service matter, I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond to you directly as soon as possible.

### **Cancer Screening Programmes**

167. **Deputy Joan Collins** asked the Minister for Health if contracts were renewed annually with a company (details supplied) from 2008; if he will provide the quality assurance certificate, that is, the screening process and laboratory performance expectation with each contract; and if he will provide the same information on the clinical pathology laboratory and other laboratories here or overseas for the years they had a contract to analyse Irish smear tests. [20258/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** Since 2008, CervicalCheck has undertaken tendering processes to award contracts for cytology testing of cervical smear tests. Such tendering processes have been undertaken biannually.

Yesterday I established a Scoping Inquiry, led by Dr Gabriel Scally, in relation to issues that have arisen at CervicalCheck. The broad Terms of Reference of the Scoping Inquiry include a range of issues pertaining to the cytology laboratory services contracted by CervicalCheck.

### **Hospital Appointments Status**

168. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health the status of a hospital appointment for a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20266/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to manage and deliver, or arrange to be delivered on its behalf, health and personal social services. Section 6 of the HSE Governance Act 2013 bars the Minister for Health from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual.

The National Waiting List Management Policy, a standardised approach to managing scheduled care treatment for in-patient, day case and planned procedures, January 2014, has been developed to ensure that all administrative, managerial and clinical staff follow an agreed national minimum standard for the management and administration of waiting lists for scheduled care. This policy, which has been adopted by the HSE, sets out the processes that hospitals are to implement to manage waiting lists.

In relation to the particular query raised, as this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to the Deputy directly.

### **Services for People with Disabilities**

169. **Deputy Niamh Smyth** asked the Minister for Health the status of a residential place for person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20268/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Finian McGrath):** The Government is committed to providing services and supports for people with disabilities which will empower them to live independent lives, provide greater independence in accessing the services they choose and enhance their ability to tailor the supports required to meet their needs and

plan their lives. This commitment is outlined in the Programme for Partnership Government, which is guided by two principles: equality of opportunity and improving the quality of life for people with disabilities.

As the Deputy's question relates service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy.

### **Home Help Service Eligibility**

170. **Deputy Peter Burke** asked the Minister for Health if additional home help hours for a person (details supplied) who has maximum dependency and was approved for an additional 17 hours in September 2017 will be expedited in order that they can be discharged from hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20271/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Finian McGrath):** As the Deputy's question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

### **Child and Adult Mental Health Services Staff**

171. **Deputy Alan Farrell** asked the Minister for Health to outline the action he is taking to ensure there is adequate staffing in CAMHS teams nationwide; his plans to provide additional resources for CAMHS services to ensure each person who requires support from CAHMS services receives support; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20273/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Jim Daly):** As this is a service matter I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly to the Deputy as soon as possible.

### **State Claims Agency**

172. **Deputy Sean Sherlock** asked the Minister for Health to set down the number of non-disclosure agreements the HSE has entered into since 2016; the general health topic of the contract; the geographical area of the person involved; and if he was informed of each contract agreed. [20286/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** The State Claims Agency has advised that it settles very few claims on behalf of the HSE which are subject to a confidentiality agreement with the exception of cases settled through mediation. Part of the process of mediation is that parties are bound by a strict confidentiality provision contained in the mediation agreement. In the very rare case that the Agency agrees a confidentiality proviso, it is usually because of some extremely sensitive, controversial or disputed element of a claim which may be requested by either party.

The Agency does not formally record, on its IT system, the fact that any individual settlement is bound by a confidentiality clause. Therefore, this information is not readily available to my Department.

### **HSE Staff Data**

173. **Deputy Sean Sherlock** asked the Minister for Health to set down the number of managers operating in the HSE; and the geographical location, departments in charge of, general salary scales and appointment date of each. [20287/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** I have asked the HSE to respond to you directly on this matter.

### **Medical Aids and Appliances Applications Data**

174. **Deputy Sean Sherlock** asked the Minister for Health to set out the number of children under 15 years of age awaiting medical equipment in County Cork; the length of time they are waiting; the nature of the equipment being requested; and the cost of each piece of equipment. [20288/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** As this is a service matter it has been referred to the HSE for direct reply to the Deputy.

### **Disability Support Services Provision**

175. **Deputy Fergus O'Dowd** asked the Minister for Health if a reply will issue with regard to issues raised in correspondence from an organisation (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20296/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Finian McGrath):** The Government is committed to providing services and supports for people with disabilities which will empower them to live independent lives, provide greater independence in accessing the services they choose, and enhance their ability to tailor the supports required to meet their needs and plan their lives. This commitment is outlined in the Programme for Partnership Government, which is guided by two principles: equality of opportunity and improving the quality of life for people with disabilities.

As the Deputy's question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy.

[<a href="/debates%20authoring/webattachments.nsf/0/2C1BA920BB176F64802582260039B38C/\$File/PQ%204106\_18.docx?openelement">Table 1 for PQ 175</a>].

[<a href="/debates%20authoring/webattachments.nsf/0/2C1BA920BB176F64802582260039B38C/\$File/PQ%204106\_18.docx?openelement">Table 2 PQ 175</a>].

### **Organ Donation**

176. **Deputy Fiona O'Loughlin** asked the Minister for Health to outline his plans to introduce the opt-out process for organ donation; the process involved in the implementation of same; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20299/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** The Government approved the preparation of a General Scheme and Heads of a Human Tissue Bill last year. The proposed legislation will include provisions for a soft opt-out organ donation system and the establishment of an Organ Donor Register to record the decision of individuals to opt-out of organ donation.

If an individual registers their wish to opt-out of organ donation, the family will not be approached to discuss organ donation following their death. If an individual is not on the register it will be presumed that she/he had no objection to donating their organs. However, it is proposed that the next-of-kin will always be consulted prior to removing any organ. If the next-of-kin objects to the organ donation, the donation will not proceed.

Work on drafting the General Scheme is progressing and it is proposed to seek Government approval to publish the General Scheme shortly.

### **Disability Services Provision**

177. **Deputy Fiona O'Loughlin** asked the Minister for Health if the HSE is publishing a social care operational plan in 2018; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20300/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Finian McGrath):** The Government is committed to providing services and supports for people with disabilities which will empower them to live independent lives, provide greater independence in accessing the services they choose, and enhance their ability to tailor the supports required to meet their needs and plan their lives. This commitment is outlined in the Programme for Partnership Government, which is guided by two principles: equality of opportunity and improving the quality of life for people with disabilities.

As the Deputy's question relates to a service issue, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy.

### **Cancer Screening Programmes**

178. **Deputy Joan Collins** asked the Minister for Health to set out the number of times cervical screening programmes were reviewed since 2008; and his views on whether it is best practice to continually review performance to demonstrate an ability to reflect on current practice and improve patient care. [20302/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** Performance of the cervical screening programme is monitored and reviewed on a on-going basis. Each year approximately 250,000 women have a cervical cancer screening and uptake rates reached the target of 80% in 2017. Over 50,000 pre-cancerous changes have been identified and treated arising from CervicalCheck. Incidence of cervical cancer has fallen by 7% annually since 2010.

Meanwhile, I have established a Scoping Inquiry with broad Terms of Reference, led by Dr Gabriel Scally, in relation to issues that have arisen at CervicalCheck.

### **Nursing Homes Support Scheme Eligibility**

179. **Deputy Michael McGrath** asked the Minister for Health if a person is allowed a deduction from their income for rental payments they are making or certain loan repayments in the context of the financial assessment under the nursing home support scheme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20308/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Jim Daly):** The Nursing Homes Support Scheme (NHSS) is a system of financial support for those in need of long-term nursing

home care. Participants contribute to the cost of their care according to their income and assets while the State pays the balance of the cost. The Scheme aims to ensure that long-term nursing home care is accessible and affordable for everyone and that people are cared for in the most appropriate settings.

Participants in the Scheme contribute up to 80% of their assessable income and a maximum of 7.5% per annum of the value of assets held. In the case of a couple, the applicant's means are assessed as 50% of the couple's combined income and assets. The first €36,000 of an individual's assets, or €72,000 in the case of a couple, is not counted at all in the financial assessment. The capital value of an individual's principal private residence is only included in the financial assessment for the first three years of their time in care. This is known as the three year cap.

Under the primary legislation an NHSS applicant may apply for certain items of expenditure to be taken into account and netted off against their means prior to the calculation of their contribution. These items are referred to as allowable deductions. An applicant can apply for the following to be deducted:

- Interest on loans for the purchase, repair or improvement of the applicant's principal primary residence; and
- Rent paid on the principal residence of the applicant only so long as the person's partner, or a child under the age of 21 years of the person or the person's partner resides in the principal residence.

### **Departmental Contracts**

180. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Health the contracts awarded by his Department or an agency under his remit to a company (details supplied) since March 2011, by year, in tabular form; the cost per contract; the basis for each contract; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20317/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** Records indicate that one payment was made to the company in question in June 2017 following a procurement exercise, in respect of an one year contract for maintenance and licensing in respect of Sophos Anti Virus protection in the amount of €40,811.40.

I have asked the HSE to reply directly to the Deputy regarding any contracts held with the company. Details for other bodies under the aegis of the Department are operational matters for the bodies concerned and the Deputy should contact the relevant Director/CEO/Registrar directly.

### **General Practitioner Services Provision**

181. **Deputy John Curran** asked the Minister for Health his plans to increase the number of general practitioners in communities; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20326/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** The Government is committed to delivering more non-acute care within the primary care sector, so that better care closer to home can be provided for communities around the country.

GPs play an important role in the primary care system. The number of GPs on the specialist register continues to increase – up from 2,270 in 2010 to 3,661 as of 1st May 2018 and there are



now 2,491 GPs contracted by the HSE under the GMS scheme compared to 2,098 in 2008. It should be noted that as of 1st March there were only 23 GMS panels that do not have a permanent GP in place – a vacancy rate of less than 1%.

The Government is committed to increasing GP capacity to ensure that patients across the country continue to have access to GP services and that general practice is sustainable in all areas into the future. Efforts undertaken in recent years to increase the number of practising GPs include changes to the entry provisions to the GMS scheme to accommodate more flexible/shared GMS/GP contracts, and to the retirement provisions for GPs under the GMS scheme, allowing GPs to hold GMS contracts until their 72nd birthday, as well as the introduction of an enhanced supports package for rural GP practices.

In addition, the Government has also taken steps to expand GP training. In 2009, there were 120 GP training places and this year we expect to fill 194 places, an increase of over 60% in this nine year period. The Programme for Government commits to further increasing this number to 259 places annually in future years.

The Government is also committed to engaging with GP representatives on the development of a package of measures and reforms to modernise the current GMS contract. Our goal is to develop a contractual framework that has a population health focus, providing in particular for health promotion, disease prevention and for the structured care of chronic conditions. This will enable general practitioners to better meet the needs of patients and will also promote general practice as a viable and rewarding career for both existing doctors and future medical graduates.

### **Community Care**

182. **Deputy John Curran** asked the Minister for Health the number of patients per general practitioner in each CHO area; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20327/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** As this question relates to a service matter, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive for direct reply to the Deputy.

### **Housing Provision**

183. **Deputy John Curran** asked the Minister for Health the stage at which his Department and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government are in relation to providing a new supported model of housing for elderly persons; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20328/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Jim Daly):** Both the Department of Health and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government are working together in finalising a high-level policy statement that will provide a framework by which Government can facilitate and promote a variety of housing options, including supported housing (i.e. housing with care), for older people.

In tandem with this the Department and the HSE are participating in a demonstrator project in partnership with Department of Housing, Dublin City Council, the HSE and the Irish Council for Social Housing. A site in Inchicore has been identified for development of a Housing with Support model under Rebuilding Ireland which will deliver 52 homes and is due for completion

in 2020. This is a collaborative project and it is intended to set a new standard for the future of housing provision for older people and to act as an exemplar for others to follow. The project has been approved for funding of almost €15m under the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government's Capital Assistance Scheme with a contribution of €450,000 from the Health Service Executive towards additional communal facilities for the residents.

The project is aimed at offering older people who do not require nursing home care the benefits of living in their own homes, connected to their own communities, with support and care provided in a cost-effective way. It is envisaged that this demonstration project will be adapted and replicated in other areas.

In addition, I as Minister of State with responsibility for older people, together with my colleague the Minister of State with responsibility for housing Damien English, intend to hold an expert conference on housing for older people in Autumn this year.

### **Medicinal Products Supply**

184. **Deputy Ruth Coppinger** asked the Minister for Health if the resources for the administration of the Ocrelizumab drug to persons (details supplied) with multiple sclerosis will be provided; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20333/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** As this is a service matter, I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond to you directly, as soon as possible.

### **Nursing Homes Support Scheme**

185. **Deputy Michael Collins** asked the Minister for Health when the changes to the fair deal scheme will be introduced that will allow the scheme to be backdated three years for nursing home residents that pass on their farms and businesses to relatives. [20353/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Jim Daly):** My Department has been advancing work on this matter and having regard for this complex issue and for the sensitivities of the Scheme I requested legal advice from the office of the Attorney General regarding potential changes to the legislation that will address this matter.

The Department has received this advice and is exploring the policy and legislative changes necessary and any potential impacts as a result of amending the Scheme. A Memo for Government on this issue will be brought forward shortly and subject to Government approval and the drafting process, I then hope to bring forward these legislative proposals thereafter.

### **Occupational Therapy Data**

186. **Deputy Imelda Munster** asked the Minister for Health the average wait time, the longest wait time and the number of persons on the waiting list for adult occupational therapy assessments in each primary care unit in tabular form. [20355/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** As this question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply.

### **Occupational Therapy Data**

187. **Deputy Imelda Munster** asked the Minister for Health the number of occupational therapists working in each primary care unit; and if the positions are full-time or part-time. [20356/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** As this question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply.

### **Medical Aids and Appliances Provision**

188. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Health his plans to extend the Free-Style Libre sensor for diabetics to persons over 21 years of age; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20357/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** Under the Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Act 2013, the HSE has statutory responsibility for the administration of the community drug schemes; therefore, the matter has been referred to the HSE for attention and direct reply to the Deputy.

### **Child and Adult Mental Health Services Data**

189. **Deputy Stephen S. Donnelly** asked the Minister for Health the number of children aged 0 to 18 years of age on waiting lists for an assessment with their local child and adolescent mental health team; the length of time they have been waiting by community health care organisation area; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20358/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Jim Daly):** As this is a service matter I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly to the Deputy as soon as possible.

### **Child and Adult Mental Health Services Data**

190. **Deputy Stephen S. Donnelly** asked the Minister for Health the number of children aged 0 to 18 years of age on waiting lists for treatment with their local child and adolescent mental health team; the length of time they have been waiting by community health care organisation area; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20359/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Jim Daly):** As this is a service matter I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly to the Deputy as soon as possible.

### **Child and Adult Mental Health Services Data**

191. **Deputy Stephen S. Donnelly** asked the Minister for Health the number of children aged 0 to 18 years of age on waiting lists for a speech and language assessment; the length of time they have been waiting by HSE community health care organisation area; and if he will

make a statement on the matter. [20360/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Finian McGrath):** The Government is committed to providing services and supports for people with disabilities which will empower them to live independent lives, provide greater independence in accessing the services they choose, and enhance their ability to tailor the supports required to meet their needs and plan their lives. This commitment is outlined in the Programme for Partnership Government, which is guided by two principles: equality of opportunity and improving the quality of life for people with disabilities.

As the Deputy's question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy.

### **Child and Adult Mental Health Services Data**

192. **Deputy Stephen S. Donnelly** asked the Minister for Health the number of children aged 0 to 18 years of age on waiting lists for speech and language treatment; the length of time they have been waiting by HSE community health care organisation area; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20361/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Finian McGrath):** The Government is committed to providing services and supports for people with disabilities which will empower them to live independent lives, provide greater independence in accessing the services they choose, and enhance their ability to tailor the supports required to meet their needs and plan their lives. This commitment is outlined in the Programme for Partnership Government, which is guided by two principles: equality of opportunity and improving the quality of life for people with disabilities.

As the Deputy's question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy.

### **Child and Adult Mental Health Services Data**

193. **Deputy Stephen S. Donnelly** asked the Minister for Health the number of children aged 0 to 18 years of age on waiting lists for an initial assessment of need from early intervention teams; the length of time they have been waiting by HSE community health care organisation area; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20362/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Finian McGrath):** The Government is committed to providing services and supports for people with disabilities which will empower them to live independent lives, provide greater independence in accessing the services they choose, and enhance their ability to tailor the supports required to meet their needs and plan their lives. This commitment is outlined in the Programme for Partnership Government, which is guided by two principles: equality of opportunity and improving the quality of life for people with disabilities.

As the Deputy's question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply to the Deputy.

## **Health Services**

194. **Deputy Thomas P. Broughan** asked the Minister for Health the details of the meetings he has with representatives from a group (details supplied) in relation to services in Fingal; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20363/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Finian McGrath):** I met with this group on a couple of occasions since being appointed Minister. I visited with the group in Portrane on 29 June 2017. At the last meeting I had with the group on 1 February 2018, I asked the HSE official who attended the meeting to meet regularly with the group and address any concerns with them.

I understand from communications my office has had with the HSE, that these meetings are ongoing and are proving to be very worthwhile.

### **State Claims Agency Data**

195. **Deputy Louise O'Reilly** asked the Minister for Health if he will provide a list of all cases of misdiagnosis by the HSE in which the victim of the misdiagnosis has taken a case against the HSE and which the State Claims Agency manages; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20364/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** The management of clinical negligence claims arising from the diagnosis, treatment and care of patients in public healthcare enterprises is delegated to the State Claims Agency which has a statutory mandate to investigate and manage these cases to completion.

My officials have clarified with the Deputy that her question relates to claims in the past 10 years. They have also been informed by the State Claims Agency that this information is not readily available and that a large analytical exercise will be required in order to extract the data sought. It will be provided to the Deputy as soon as possible.

### **Home Care Packages Data**

196. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for Health the funding in place to offer public patients a home care package in each of the catchment areas in County Kildare; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20371/18]

197. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for Health the number of patients discharged from hospitals with a pending application for home care packages; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20372/18]

198. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for Health the number of patients refused a home care package based on a lack of funding; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20373/18]

199. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for Health the amount of funding allocated for the provision of home care packages in County Kildare in each of the years 2014 to 2017 and to date in 2018; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20374/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Jim Daly):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 196 to 199, inclusive, together.

As these are service matters I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly

to the Deputy as soon as possible.

### **Home Care Packages**

200. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for Health if his attention has been drawn to the fact that a person (details supplied) was discharged from hospital with a pending application for a home care package made in January 2018 and has been advised that no funding is available for any person in County Kildare; the way in which this person is supposed to manage their care; the reason there was no funding available in January 2018 or to date; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20375/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Jim Daly):** As this is a service matter I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly to the Deputy as soon as possible.

### **Hospital Appointments Status**

201. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health the status of a hospital appointment for a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20377/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to manage and deliver, or arrange to be delivered on its behalf, health and personal social services. Section 6 of the HSE Governance Act 2013 bars the Minister for Health from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual.

The National Waiting List Management Policy, a standardised approach to managing scheduled care treatment for in-patient, day case and planned procedures, January 2014, has been developed to ensure that all administrative, managerial and clinical staff follow an agreed national minimum standard for the management and administration of waiting lists for scheduled care. This policy, which has been adopted by the HSE, sets out the processes that hospitals are to implement to manage waiting lists.

In relation to the particular query raised, as this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to the Deputy directly.

### **Medical Card Applications**

202. **Deputy Bobby Aylward** asked the Minister for Health if a medical card will be expedited for a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20378/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** As this is a service matter, I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond to the Deputy directly.

### **Health Services Provision**

203. **Deputy Louise O'Reilly** asked the Minister for Health the way in which the health services measure the number of children here affected by foetal alcohol spectrum disorder; the



resources allocated to the health services to support these children and their families; and if the resources and supports are in line with best international practice. [20379/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** As this question relates to service matters, I have arranged for the question to be referred to the Health Service Executive (HSE) for direct reply.

### **Hospital Appointments Status**

204. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Health if a hospital appointment for a person (details supplied) can be expedited. [20381/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to manage and deliver, or arrange to be delivered on its behalf, health and personal social services. Section 6 of the HSE Governance Act 2013 bars the Minister for Health from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual.

The National Waiting List Management Policy, a standardised approach to managing scheduled care treatment for in-patient, day case and planned procedures, January 2014, has been developed to ensure that all administrative, managerial and clinical staff follow an agreed national minimum standard for the management and administration of waiting lists for scheduled care. This policy, which has been adopted by the HSE, sets out the processes that hospitals are to implement to manage waiting lists.

In relation to the particular query raised, as this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to the Deputy directly.

### **Mental Health Services Provision**

205. **Deputy Maureen O’Sullivan** asked the Minister for Health if there is a facility for adults to have an assessment for ADHD through the HSE. [20389/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Jim Daly):** As this is a service matter I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly to the Deputy as soon as possible.

### **Hospital Appointments Status**

206. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Health the status of a hospital appointment for a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20391/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** Under the Health Act 2004, the Health Service Executive (HSE) is required to manage and deliver, or arrange to be delivered on its behalf, health and personal social services. Section 6 of the HSE Governance Act 2013 bars the Minister for Health from directing the HSE to provide a treatment or a personal service to any individual or to confer eligibility on any individual.

The National Waiting List Management Policy, a standardised approach to managing sched-

uled care treatment for in-patient, day case and planned procedures, January 2014, has been developed to ensure that all administrative, managerial and clinical staff follow an agreed national minimum standard for the management and administration of waiting lists for scheduled care. This policy, which has been adopted by the HSE, sets out the processes that hospitals are to implement to manage waiting lists.

In relation to the particular query raised, as this is a service matter, I have asked the HSE to respond to the Deputy directly.

### **Hospital Services**

207. **Deputy Martin Ferris** asked the Minister for Health the number of echocardiograms carried out in the six months previous to a second echocardiogram scanner being introduced at University Hospital Kerry per week on average; the average per week for the six months following the introduction of the second echocardiogram scanner; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20392/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** As this is a service matter, I have asked the Health Service Executive (HSE) to respond to you directly as soon as possible.

### **Mental Health Services Data**

208. **Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan** asked the Minister for Health the number of psychiatrists working at St. Vincent's, Fairview, Dublin 3; the number of patients seeing a psychiatrist; the extent of the waiting list to see a psychiatrist; and when assigned a psychiatrist, if the patient sees the same psychiatrist consistently. [20394/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Health (Deputy Jim Daly):** As this is a service matter I have asked the Health Service Executive to respond directly to the Deputy as soon as possible.

### **Health Services Provision**

209. **Deputy Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire** asked the Minister for Health his plans to ensure persons that suffer Ehlers-Danlos syndrome have adequate treatments here; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20420/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** As this is a service matter, it has been referred to the Health Service Executive for attention and direct reply to the Deputy.

### **Medicinal Products Reimbursement**

210. **Deputy James Browne** asked the Minister for Health the status of the review of Translarna's reimbursement; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20439/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** The Health Service Executive has statutory responsibility for decisions on pricing and reimbursement of medicines under the community drug schemes, in accordance with the Health (Pricing and Supply of Medical Goods) Act 2013.

The Act specifies the criteria to be applied in the making of reimbursement decisions which include the clinical and cost effectiveness of the product, the opportunity cost and the impact on resources that are available to the HSE.

In July 2017, the HSE informed my Department that, following an intensive process, the HSE decided not to reimburse Ataluren (Translarna) for the treatment of Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. The HSE in deciding not to reimburse Translarna did not consider the evidence for its clinical benefit to be sufficiently strong, in the context of the proposed cost and budget impact.

The HSE informed the applicant company of this decision, in keeping with the requirements of the 2013 Act. The applicant has appealed the HSE's decision to the High Court, which is part of the statutory process under Section 27 of the 2013 Act.

A meeting took place on the 11 December 2017 with 2 representative from Muscular Dystrophy Ireland, Dr O'Rourke and HSE and Departmental officials.

Following on from this meeting, the HSE advised the applicant that it is willing to complete a timely review of any new application. It would be open to the company to make revised proposals in relation to pricing or access in this context.

The HSE has notified the company that is ready and willing to review any new application irrespective of the ongoing court proceedings.

### Capital Expenditure Programme

211. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Health the capital allocation across his Department in each of the years 2018 to 2022 [20452/18]

212. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Health his Department's capital allocation for projects underway and projects already tendered or committed to spending contractually [20469/18]

213. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Health his Department's capital allocation in each of the years 2018 to 2022, disaggregated according to capital allocated to projects underway and projects contractually committed to and projects yet to be initiated [20486/18]

**Minister for Health (Deputy Simon Harris):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 211 to 213, inclusive, together.

The capital funding for Health in the ten years of the National Development Plan 2018 to 2027 is €10.9 billion which provides the capital investment for a solid, ambitious plan which will improve our health services.

The National Development Plan outlines capital funding for the Health sector for the next five years.

National Development Plan	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Health Sector	€493m	€667m	€724m	€780m	€825m

The major priority Government projects currently in development comprise:

- the National Forensic Mental Health Services Hospital at Portrane,

- the new Children's Hospital along with the Paediatric Outpatient and Urgent Care Centres at Connolly and Tallaght Hospitals,
- the redevelopment of the National Rehabilitation Hospital Phase I
- the National Plan for Radiation Oncology at Cork University Hospital and University Hospital Galway,
- the Primary Care Centre Infrastructure Programme,
- the relocation of the National Maternity Hospital to the St Vincent's University Hospital campus,
- the long-term residential accommodation programmes for older people (Community Nursing Home Programme) and persons with a disability to address regulatory standards for accommodation.

Health capital projects and programmes currently underway will continue and these major priority projects will require the bulk of the notified capital allocation over the initial period of the Plan, 2018-2022.

It is important to recognise that this is a long-term plan, which will roll out over ten years and includes provision for a large number of developments across the country.

As is to be expected with a ten-year plan, many other proposals are at an early stage and, as with all capital development proposals, will require further appraisal, planning, design and tender before a firm timeline or funding required can be established.

The Health Service Executive's Capital Plan for 2018-2022 is currently the subject of discussions with the Department.

*Question No. 214 answered with Question No. 160.*

### **Rural Development Programme**

215. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if a representative of an organisation (details supplied) will be included on the EU monitoring committee for the Rural Development Programme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20229/18]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** The Monitoring Committee for Ireland's Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014–2020 was set up in accordance with Article 47 of (EU) Regulation 1303/2015, which requires that it be in place within three months of the Commission decision to adopt the new RDP. The Monitoring Committee was therefore formed in July 2015, following a comprehensive selection process. The aim of that process was to ensure that the relevant public authorities, economic and social partners and civil society were involved in the implementation and monitoring of the Irish RDP through active participation in the Committee.

While I am satisfied that the Committee is successfully carrying out its function with the present composition of the Committee, the question of extending the representation to the organisation in question is a live issue. I have met with representatives of the organisation and they subsequently provided detailed additional information, which is being considered by officials in my Department.

## Farmers Charter Review

216. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if a representative of an organisation (details supplied) will be included on the charter of rights committee; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20230/18]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** The current Farmers' Charter of Rights has been in place since 2015. The Farmers' Charter of Rights Monitoring Committee monitors agreed targets and standards. This Monitoring Committee is comprised of representatives of farming organisations, staff of my Department and an independent chair. While my Department is satisfied that the committee is successfully carrying out its function with the present composition of the Committee, the question of extending the representation on the Committee is a live issue.

I have met with representatives of the organisation in question and they subsequently provided detailed additional information which is being considered by officials in my Department.

## Knowledge Transfer Programme

217. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if a person (details supplied) will be authorised to administer a knowledge transfer programme; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20236/18]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** Knowledge Transfer is one of a suite of measures included under the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 and involves the formation of knowledge transfer groups across the beef, dairy, equine, sheep, tillage and poultry sectors. Department-approved agricultural consultants acting as Knowledge Transfer Facilitators administer groups operating over a three-year period.

The governing EU regulations for the KT Programme provide that the knowledge transfer provider is the beneficiary of the support and thus the terms and conditions of the programme provide that only in exceptional circumstances a group may be allowed to transfer to an alternative approved Knowledge Transfer Facilitator.

The request for this KT Sheep group has been reviewed and accepted. It is expected that the requested transfer of facilitator will be completed shortly, following the standard verification of eligibility requirements.

## Agriculture Scheme Appeals

218. **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the reason for the delay in giving full effect to the decision of the Agriculture Appeals Office on an appeal lodged by a farmer (details supplied) in County Galway on 7 March 2018; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20254/18]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** My Department notes the decision of the Agriculture Appeals Office in this case and is working now to give full effect to the appeal outcome.

## Basic Payment Scheme Appeals

219. **Deputy Kevin O’Keeffe** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if an appeal submitted to his Department by a person (details supplied) in County Cork will be reconsidered. [20260/18]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** The person named was allocated 28.63 entitlements under the 2015 Basic Payment Scheme. For the 2016 Scheme Year, the person named submitted two Transfer of Entitlements applications to my Department to transfer 21.98 entitlements by way of gift to a third party and to lease 6.25 entitlements to a third party for a seven year period.

As the person named did not submit a 2016 or 2017 Basic Payment application to utilise the remaining 0.40 entitlements, these entitlements remained unused during this two year usage period and have been permanently moved to the National Reserve.

My Department received an appeal for the person named in relation to the removal of these 0.40 unused entitlements to the National Reserve.

Following a thorough re- examination of the circumstances of the case, my Department issued the person named with a letter on 27 April 2018 notifying the person named that their appeal was unsuccessful. This letter provided the option to further appeal to their case to the Independent Agriculture Appeals Office if dissatisfied with my Department’s decision.

### **Young Farmers Scheme**

220. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine when a payment will issue to a person (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20265/18]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** The application submitted under the Young Farmers Scheme by the person named was selected for an on-the-spot check in line with the EU Regulatory requirements for managing and monitoring schemes administered by my Department under the Common Agricultural Policy. The on-the-spot check has been completed and the required checks to determine eligibility under the scheme are being finalised. It is expected that this process will be completed very shortly.

### **Departmental Contracts Data**

221. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the contracts awarded by his Department or an agency under his remit to a company (details supplied) since March 2011, by year in tabular form; the cost per contract; the basis for each contract; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20309/18]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** Since March 2011 Capita (formerly Southwestern Services) have held a number of contracts with this Department that were awarded following public procurement competitions.

The services supplied by the company in relation to bovine animals relate to the registration of bovine births, issue of bovine passports, and processing of farm to farm movements and death notifications. These services were previously the subject of two separate contracts but were combined in the tender of 10 July 2013.

Capita secured contracts also for the provision of a service for the handling, processing,



verification and recording of pig movement notifications during the period in question.

The information in the Table below provides details of the contracts with my Department since March 2011.

As regards the State Bodies under the aegis of my Department, the information requested is an operational matter for the State Bodies themselves. I have referred the Deputy's question to the Agencies and have requested that a response should issue within 10 days.

**Contracts awarded by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine to Capita since March 2011:**

Contract Basis	Start date	End date	Payments per contract-€
<b>Bovine:</b>			
Service for the processing of bovine farm to farm movements and death notifications	05/07/2010	31/08/14	3,339,388
Service for the provision of a bovine animal birth registration and passport issue system	01/01/2011	31/08/14	18,066,929
Service for the registration of bovine births, the issuing of bovine passports and the handling & processing of notifications in relation to farm-to-farm bovine movements and on-farm bovine deaths	01/09/2014	31/08/2018	16,982,780(to date)
<b>Porcine:</b>			
Service for the handling, processing, verification and recording of pig movement notifications during the period in question.	01/03/2011	29/02/2012	81,225
Service for the handling, processing, verification and recording of pig movement notifications during the period in question.	01/03/2012	28/02/2104	308,392
Service for the handling, processing, verification and recording of pig movement notifications during the period in question.	01/03/2014	29/02/2016	305,908
Service for the handling, processing, verification and recording of pig movement notifications during the period in question.	01/03/2016	28/02/2018	342,892
Service for the handling, processing, verification and recording of pig movement notifications during the period in question.	01/03/2018	Initial period of 2 years with possible extensions up to 29/02/2022	24,514 (to date)

## **Harbours and Piers Development**

222. **Deputy Martin Kenny** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the details of the commitment to develop Greencastle Harbour, County Donegal, as outlined in Project Ireland 2040; if this commitment involves the completion of the breakwater beside the harbour; when all of these development works will commence; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20351/18]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** Greencastle Harbour is owned by Donegal County Council and responsibility for its maintenance and development rests with that Local Authority in the first instance and its parent Department, the Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government thereafter.

My Department owns, operates and maintains six designated State-owned Fishery Harbour Centres, located at Castletownbere, Dingle, Dunmore East, Howth, Killybegs and Ros An Mhíl under statute. In addition, my Department also has responsibility for the upkeep and maintenance of North Harbour at Cape Clear, as well as the maintenance of a small number of specific piers, lights and beacons throughout Ireland, in accordance with the 1902 ex-congested Districts Board piers, lights and Beacons Act.

As indicated, my legislative remit does not extend to Greencastle Harbour, and given that the ownership of, and overall responsibility for Greencastle Harbour rests with the County Council, it is the Council who will decide if it wishes to carry out any further development, repair or maintenance of the Greencastle Harbour.

When Donegal County Council decide on the exact programme of works they wish to carry out and the costing and timescale for those works and notify their full intentions in this respect, the matter can be considered further in the context of Government priorities.

My Department does provide limited funding to assist coastal Local Authorities in carrying out small scale projects for the development and repair of Local Authority owned piers, harbours and slipways under the annual Fishery Harbour and Coastal Infrastructure Development Programme, subject to available Exchequer funding and overall national priorities.

Donegal County Council successfully secured the maximum funding allocation allowable of €112,500 under the 2017 Programme for development works at Greencastle Harbour however no application for funding was made to my Department under the 2018 Programme. Any applications submitted by Donegal County Council in relation to Greencastle Harbour in the future will be given due consideration in the context of the criteria set out, available Exchequer funding and overall national priorities.

## **Pigmeat Sector**

223. **Deputy Martin Kenny** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if his attention has been drawn to hardship amongst pig farmers with small to medium sized piggeries due to low prices; and the measures he plans to introduce to assist them through this crisis. [20352/18]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** Price volatility has been a significant challenge for the pig meat sector and developments over the last few years emphasising the cyclical nature of prices in the sector. Current prices stand at €139.54/100 kg which is 15% below prices at the same time in 2017 (an exceptional year for pig prices) but

remain above the price at the same stage in 2016.

My Department and I have made a substantial effort to encourage market diversification. The importance of this is illustrated by the significant expansion in Ireland's pig meat exports to East Asia and to China in particular. The ongoing uncertainty surrounding Brexit lends an even greater importance to expansion of access to international markets.

In June of 2017 I visited Mexico, the fourth largest importer of chilled and frozen pork in the world. With Mexican demand continuing to grow I have made access to that market a top priority. I also travelled to Japan and the Republic of Korea last autumn to promote the development of further opportunities for Irish producers in these markets as I want to continue the diversification of markets to which Ireland has access. Exports to Japan more than doubled to €22m in 2017, putting it in second place in international markets. We can also expect that the new free trade agreement with Japan (JEEPA) will further enhance trade opportunities. Growth in the Philippines was also strong, up 54%, making it the third-largest international market for Irish pigmeat exports. China is now the largest third country market with exports of €102m last year. I will lead a trade mission to China this month visiting Beijing and Shanghai. This visit will include events, in association with Bord Bia, to promote Irish pork to further develop export opportunities.

With Irish production up 1.2% in 2017 and export value increasing by 8% to €790 million, I will continue to work closely with the sector and, by focusing on insight-led growth strategies, take advantage of opportunities for Irish pig meat exporters on international markets.

### Capital Expenditure Programme

224. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine the capital allocation across his Department in each of the years 2018 to 2022. [20442/18]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** The information requested by the Deputy is set out in the following table:

Capital Allocation Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine 2018 – 2022.

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
€272 million	€255 million	€258 million	€265 million	€275 million

The 2018 amount includes €23.8 million carried over from 2017.

### Capital Expenditure Programme

225. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine his Department's capital allocation for projects under way and projects already tendered or committed to spending contractually. [20459/18]

226. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine his Department's capital allocation in each of the years 2018 to 2022 disaggregated according to capital allocated to projects underway, projects contractually committed to and projects yet to be initiated. [20476/18]

**Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Deputy Michael Creed):** I propose to

take Questions Nos. 225 and 226 together.

It is my intention to provide a composite reply in relation to PQ 20459/18 and 20476/18.

Due to the volume of the information requested by the Deputy, it was not possible to provide a comprehensive response in the required time. I will forward reply to the Deputy as soon as the information requested is available.

### **Waste Management**

227. **Deputy Seán Haughey** asked the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment if the price-monitoring group is monitoring recent price increases by waste management companies in the Dublin area, having regard to the movement towards a pay-by-weight system; if adequate notice of these new charges was given to householders by a company (details supplied) in particular; if standing charges will be phased out completely; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20272/18]

**Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment (Deputy Denis Naughten):** I established a Household Waste Collection Price Monitoring Group (PMG) last year to monitor the rates charged by household waste collectors during the phasing out of flat rate fees. The PMG has met each month since September 2017 and has considered seven months of pricing data trends. The PMG has indicated that, in the vast majority of cases to date, prices have remained stable. The Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC) is also currently conducting a separate study on the operation of the household waste collection market which it will complete in 2018.

The results from the PMG in conjunction with the study being undertaken by the CCPC will provide an evidence base for future policy decisions in relation to the household waste market.

The charges applied by waste management companies (including standing or service charges) are matters for those companies and their customers, subject to compliance with all applicable environmental and other relevant legislation, including contract and consumer legislation.

Issues concerning the amendment of consumer contracts do not fall within my remit as Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment. Consumer protection queries should be directed to the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC).

However, in line with the commitments set out in *A Resource Opportunity - Waste Management Policy in Ireland*, published in 2012, and in the interest of encouraging further waste prevention and greater recycling, flat-rate fees for kerbside household waste collection are being phased out over the period autumn 2017 to autumn 2018, as customers' contracts come up for renewal. The necessary regulatory steps have been put in place in terms of requiring household waste collectors to phase out flat rate fees.

It is worth noting that this measure is not 'new' for about half of kerbside household waste customers, who are already on an incentivised usage pricing plan, i.e., a plan which contains a per-lift or a weight-related fee.

As announced in mid-2017, mandatory per-kilogramme 'pay by weight' charging is not being introduced. Allowing for a range of charging options, which encourage householders to reduce and separate their waste, provides flexibility to waste collectors to develop various service-price offerings that suit different household circumstances.

## Telecommunications Services Provision

228. **Deputy Fiona O'Loughlin** asked the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment the way in which the implementation of recommendations from the mobile telephone and broadband task force report is assisting persons in County Kildare who experience poor mobile telephone and broadband coverage; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20297/18]

**Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment (Deputy Denis Naughten):** I recognise the frustration felt by Irish consumers where telecommunications networks are not always delivering the services people expect. Accordingly, I specifically included in the Programme for Government a commitment to a Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce. The Taskforce worked with key stakeholders to produce a report in December 2016, available on my Department's website, which contained 40 actions to alleviate some of the deficits. The Implementation Group which I co-chair with Minister of State Kyne is overseeing implementation of the actions and comprises all key stakeholders responsible for delivery. This includes ComReg, which attends as both an action owner, and in an observer capacity in its role as the independent Regulator.

Minister of State Kyne and I published the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce Implementation Review 2017 on 21 February 2018, which comprehensively outlines the progress made in 2017 on the actions identified by the Taskforce. Of the 40 actions, 29 have been completed, with work on the remaining 11 carrying into the 2018 Work Programme. Following close engagement with stakeholders at the National Stakeholder Forum, an additional 23 new measures have been identified for delivery in 2018, that will lead to improvements for consumers across Ireland.

In terms of addressing mobile coverage blackspots, various initiatives are under way:

- My Department and the Department of Rural and Community Development have worked to achieve a greater consensus around site selection for telecoms infrastructure and therefore improve mobile phone coverage.

- Both Departments also worked with a pilot group of local authorities to identify the issues associated with mapping local blackspots. This pilot exercise has been completed, with all local authorities having been asked to map local blackspots and identify infrastructure that could potentially be used to provide additional coverage on an economic basis. This exercise is ongoing and has been included in the 2018 Taskforce Work Programme. It is planned to have dedicated Geographic Information System (GIS) resources in place to support this.

- Under Action 40 of the 2016 Report, a review was conducted to identify recommendations to address blackspots. This work is continuing in 2018 under a focus group to inform future policy development and initiatives, in providing guidance with respect to specific categories of locations where high quality mobile phone coverage should be made available as a priority, taking account of customer expectations.

- ComReg is also delivering a composite national coverage map, which will, in tandem with its work on handset testing and activities to raise consumer awareness, allow people across Ireland to optimise the services available to them.

All of these initiatives should assist in enhancing the quality of mobile phone and data services, particularly in rural areas.

In tandem with the work of the Taskforce, the release by ComReg of the 3.6GHz radio spec-



trum band, which has been identified at EU level as a primary band suitable for the introduction of 5G, will also contribute to addressing increasing mobile data demands and improve mobile coverage. Mobile operators' commercial investment has also resulted in improved services, following ComReg's 2012 multi-band spectrum auction. At least one operator now has in excess of 90% 4G population coverage.

In terms of tackling broadband deficiencies, the Government's National Broadband Plan (NBP) aims to ensure high speed broadband access (minimum 30 megabits per second) to all premises in Ireland, regardless of location. The NBP has been a catalyst in encouraging investment by the telecoms sector so that today almost 7 out of 10 of the 2.3 million premises in Ireland have access to high speed broadband. Since this Government has come into office almost 400,000 additional premises have access to high speed broadband. This will increase to nearly 8 out of 10 premises by the end of this year and by 2020, 9 out of 10 premises will have access to a high speed broadband connection. This is being achieved via a combination of commercial investment and a State-led intervention. The procurement process is now in the final stages.

Providing telecommunications services, including mobile phone services, is a matter for the relevant service providers operating in a fully liberalised market regulated by the Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg), as independent Regulator. I do not have statutory authority to require commercial companies to roll out services and make specific investments in particular locations. The ComReg consumer helpline is accessible at [consumerline@com-reg.ie](mailto:consumerline@com-reg.ie) and I would urge consumers who feel they have not received an appropriate response from service providers to make contact with the Regulator.

A national list of Broadband Officers can be found at the below link.

<http://www.ruralireland.ie/policies/national-broadband-plan/>

### **Departmental Contracts Data**

229. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment the contracts awarded by his Department or an agency under his remit to a company (details supplied) since March 2011, by year, in tabular form; the cost per contract; the basis for each contract; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20312/18]

**Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment (Deputy Denis Naughten):** The company referred to in the Question was awarded a 10-year contract in December 2013 to develop, implement, maintain and promote the use of the National Postcode System "Eircode". The payment to the company for establishing, operating and maintaining the National Postcode System (NPS) is expected to be €38m (VAT inclusive) over the life of the 10-year licence.

Information in respect of bodies and agencies under the aegis of my Department is a day-to-day matter for those organisations, and my Department does not have the information sought by the Deputy. I will, however, request the relevant agencies and bodies under the aegis of my Department to respond directly to the Deputy on the matter.

### **Climate Change Policy**

230. **Deputy John Curran** asked the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment the way in which he plans to address the expensive compliance costs on account



of missing climate change and renewable energy targets; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20320/18]

232. **Deputy John Curran** asked the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment the estimated amount the State will have to pay due to missing climate change and renewable energy targets; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20322/18]

**Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment (Deputy Denis Naughten):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 230 and 232 together.

I refer to the reply to Parliamentary Question No. 32 of 25 April 2018. The position is unchanged.

### **Climate Change Policy**

231. **Deputy John Curran** asked the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment the way in which he plans to improve Ireland's track record and become a world leader on climate change in emissions reduction and renewable energy targets; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20321/18]

**Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment (Deputy Denis Naughten):** I refer to the reply to Parliamentary Question No. 24 of 25 April 2018. The position is unchanged.

*Question No. 232 answered with Question No. 230.*

### **Renewable Energy Generation Targets**

233. **Deputy John Curran** asked the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment if Ireland is close to meeting its 16% of final energy consumption in electricity, transport and heat from renewable sources by 2020; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20323/18]

**Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment (Deputy Denis Naughten):** The 2009 EU Renewable Energy Directive sets Ireland a legally binding target of meeting 16% of our energy requirements from renewable sources by 2020. Ireland is committed to achieving this target through meeting 40% of electricity demand, 12% of heat and 10% of transport from renewable sources of energy, with the latter target also being legally binding.

The most recent annual data from the SEAI indicates that 27.2% of electricity, 6.8% of heat and 5.0% of transport energy requirements were met from renewable sources at end 2016. Overall, SEAI analysis shows that 9.5% of Ireland's energy requirements in 2016 were met from renewable sources. The SEAI projects that Ireland will achieve between 13.2% and 15.4% of its 16% renewable energy target by 2020, indicating that Ireland should be between 82% and 96% of its target.

Ireland has made considerable progress in the decarbonisation of our electricity sector in recent years. Provisional figures from the SEAI indicate that over 30% of our electricity demand was met from renewable sources in 2017. This progress, while welcome, will need to accelerate in pace in the coming years.

The Government has adopted a range of policy measures and schemes to incentivise the use

of renewable energy. The primary support mechanism in the electricity sector is the Renewable Energy Feed-In-Tariff (REFIT) schemes, which support the development of a range of renewable electricity technologies including hydro, biomass combustion, biomass combined heat and power, landfill gas and onshore wind.

While the focus of my Department remains firmly on meeting our 2020 renewable target and on implementation of renewable energy measures, including the new Renewable Electricity Support Scheme and the Support Scheme for Renewal Heat, contingency planning has commenced to explore the potential extent, mechanisms and costs of addressing our targets within the framework of the 2009 Directive.

### **Noise Pollution**

234. **Deputy Seán Haughey** asked the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment if he is satisfied there are adequate measures in place to control noise levels in concert halls and cinemas; if these measures are being enforced by local authorities; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20350/18]

**Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment (Deputy Denis Naughten):** Whenever a person considers a noise to be so loud, so continuous, so repeated, of such duration or pitch or occurring at such times that it gives reasonable cause for annoyance, he or she can initiate action to deal with it, for example, by engaging with the individual or entity causing the noise to come to some mutually acceptable understanding, or by contacting their local authority. Local authorities may initiate proceedings on grounds of noise nuisance under section 107 of the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992.

Furthermore, section 108 of that Act also provides for any person, or group of persons, to seek an order in the District Court to have noise giving reasonable cause for annoyance abated. The task of the District Court is to hear both sides of the case. The procedures involved have been simplified to allow action to be taken without legal representation. A Guide to the Noise Regulations has been prepared by my Department and is available online at:

<https://www.dccae.gov.ie/documents/A%20Guide%20to%20the%20Noise%20Regulations.pdf>

Additionally, local authorities have developed a 'National Protocol for Dealing with Noise Complaints' as a cooperative project between my Department, Local Authorities and the Environmental Protection Agency. The Protocol provides guidance to Local Authorities, given existing legislation, as to what is considered best practice for dealing with noise complaints. The protocol can be accessed at:

<http://www.dccae.gov.ie/en-ie/environment/topics/noise-pollution/typical-noise-pollution/Pages/default.aspx>

Furthermore, section 12 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 places an obligation on every employer to manage and conduct his or her undertaking in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that in the course of the work being carried on, individuals at the place of work (not being his or her employees) are not exposed to risks to their safety, health or welfare.

### **National Broadband Plan**

235. **Deputy Brendan Smith** asked the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment his plans to introduce a universal service obligation in respect of the provision of broadband throughout the country; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20440/18]

**Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment (Deputy Denis Naughten):** The current EU and national regulatory framework for telecommunications allows for the application of a Universal Service Obligation (USO) and relates solely to voice telephony and Functional Internet Access (28.8 kilobits per second) and is provided for under EU regulatory framework governing telecoms. This Framework has ensured that householders can get an affordable fixed voice service and functional internet access regardless of where they are located. There is no USO for high speed broadband provision or mobile voice services in Ireland and the Framework does not provide for it. In September 2016, the European Commission published an ambitious proposal for the regulation of the European telecoms sector, which aims to incentivise and encourage increased investment in high speed broadband networks. I have raised the issue of a USO for high speed broadband at EU level, seeking inclusion of a specific provision in the new framework that would allow Member States to apply a USO for high speed broadband, where such networks are available. Negotiations on the initiative are continuing at EU level.

The Government's National Broadband Plan (NBP) aims to deliver high speed broadband to every premises in the country, through a State led intervention in areas where such networks are not available. The winning bidder in the procurement process will be required to build out a wholesale, open access, high speed broadband network. Under a 25 year contract with the Department, they will be required to connect all premises within the Intervention area with a high speed connection (minimum 30 megabits per second download and 6 megabits per second upload).

The NBP will deliver the network that will be required to connect all premises. While USO alone could not be expected to deliver new high speed broadband networks of this scale, I am of the view that where high speed broadband networks are available, USO could provide a very useful tool to ensure that all premises within a network area can get a reliable, quality connection. This is particularly relevant in cities and towns where commercial operators have already deployed high speed networks, but for technical or other reasons some premises still may not be able to obtain services.

My Department is also in discussion with the Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) as to whether a USO may be a viable instrument in instances where a high speed network is available, but individual premises cannot access such services at an affordable price.

### **Capital Expenditure Programme**

236. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment the capital allocation across his Department in each of the years 2018 to 2022. [20445/18]

237. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment his Department's capital allocation for projects underway and projects already tendered or committed to spending contractually. [20462/18]

238. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment his Department's capital allocation in each of the years 2018 to 2022 disaggregated according to capital allocated to projects underway, projects contractually committed

to and projects yet to be initiated. [20479/18]

**Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment (Deputy Denis Naughten):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 236 to 238, inclusive, together.

My Department will oversee significant capital investment amounting to almost €1.5 billion over the period 2018 to 2022. Annual capital ceilings in respect of this five year period were published in the National Development Plan, as follows: 2018 - €209 million; 2019 - €256 million; 2020 - €297 million; 2021 - €317 million and 2022 - €400 million.

Key capital programmes and schemes being progressed by my Department this year include:

Programme/Scheme	2018 Capital allocation € million
National Broadband Plan	15.0
Energy Efficiency Schemes - Residential	79.0
Energy Efficiency Schemes - Public Sector/Commercial	22.4
Deep Retrofit Pilot	5.0
Support Scheme for Renewable Heat	6.0
Electric Vehicles Grant Scheme	9.0
Energy Research	8.3
Geoscience Initiatives	11.7
Landfill Remediation	11.0
Trading Online Voucher Scheme	3.0
National Digital Research Centre	3.5

The 2018 capital allocation also includes operational capital for my Department and a number of its agencies, including TG4, Inland Fisheries Ireland and the Environment Protection Agency.

Detailed programme allocations for each of the years 2019 to 2022 will be agreed as part of the annual Estimates process and published in the Revised Estimates Volume, subsequent to each Budget Day.

During the period to 2022, my Department and its agencies will play a lead role in the delivery of a number of the strategic investment priorities identified in the National Development Plan.

Delivery of the new high speed broadband network under the National Broadband Plan, which is currently in the final stages of procurement, will ensure that the opportunities presented by the digital transformation are available to every citizen, company and community in Ireland.

An ambitious programme of climate action measures, including energy-related investments by commercial State companies, will position Ireland on a sustainable trajectory to achieve a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy and society. The Energy Efficiency Programme, funded by my Department and delivered by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, will be significantly expanded to accelerate the contribution of the built environment to the collective effort to reduce emissions. Schemes targeted at energy efficiency upgrades will include deep retrofitting of housing, commercial and public building stock.

Other key energy measures include the rollout of a new Support Scheme for Renewable Heat and an expansion of the Electric Vehicle Grant Scheme, aimed at promoting the electrification

of heat and transport. There will also be increased funding for energy research programmes to accelerate diversification away from fossil fuels to green energy.

Investments will also be focussed on supporting the transition to a circular and resource efficient economy and protecting our environment, while ensuring the sustainable management of our natural resources.

### **Roads Maintenance Funding**

239. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the requests received by his Department from a county council (details supplied) for funding due to extreme weather events; the funding sought and the works proposed; when the application was submitted; the decision made on the request; the funding allocation made in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20221/18]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross):** The improvement and maintenance of regional and local roads is the statutory responsibility of local authorities, in accordance with the provisions of Section 13 of the Roads Act 1993. Works on those roads are funded from the Council's own resources supplemented by State road grants. The selection, prioritisation and implementation of works, including works relating to the impact of severe weather, is also a matter for the local authority.

During the winter of 2013/2014 storms caused significant damage to infrastructure, including roads. The then Department of Environment, Community and Local Government collated data in respect of the damage and cost estimates in respect of roads repair, coastal protection repair, clean-up, piers and harbours etc. The return from Mayo County Council estimated the cost of the damage to roads at €1.62 million.

Following on from a Government decision to make additional funding available to assist local authorities in dealing with the damage, funding of €1.62 million was allocated to Mayo County Council in specific severe weather funding and this funding was drawn down over 2014 and 2015. A further request for additional funding to address storm damage to Achill roads was received in October 2015. The Council was advised that all available grant funding had been allocated but that the Department would review the position at end year. Overall the Council drew down severe weather funding of €1,225,890 in 2014 and €437,596 in 2015.

Following severe flooding over the winter of 2015/2016 which resulted in significant damage to roads, the Government also decided to allocate additional funding to local authorities based on initial estimates of the cost of repairs. The Department sought further submissions from local authorities before allocating the severe weather funding. In total the Department received funding applications totalling €209 million, far exceeding the funding available. Following the review of the submissions, funding was allocated to each of the local authorities affected by the severe weather in line with the additional funding made available by Government and an amount which had been set aside from the general regional and local road grant allocation. In the case of Mayo, the Council applied for €7.6 million and was paid €5.5 million.

No severe weather funding was allocated to Mayo County Council in 2017 or to date in 2018.

### **Ferry Services**



240. **Deputy Tony McLoughlin** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport if he will investigate with the Marine Survey Office, MSO, if a legal disclaimer system would suffice until such a time as funding can be identified to provide improved landing facilities at a location (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20224/18]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross):** As the Deputy is aware from my replies to recent parliamentary questions and the topical issue debate last week, the Marine Survey Office carried out an assessment of the landing point at Inishmurray Island in 2008. The “recognised landing point” on the island was deemed wholly unsuitable for landing passengers safely. As a consequence, no passenger licences have been issued which include Inishmurray on their plying limits.

The MSO is a safety regulator. Passenger safety is my first priority here. Once an appropriate landing facility is provided, officials of the Marine Survey office will assess it and any passenger vessel proposing to use the facility with a view to granting the appropriate licence.

### **Road Network**

241. **Deputy Dara Calleary** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport his plans to review the national secondary classification of a road (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20253/18]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross):** As Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, I have responsibility for the classification of roads as either National or Regional under the Roads Act, 1993. I am empowered under Section 10 of the 1993 Act to classify any public road as a national or regional road and periodic reviews are undertaken in that regard. A public road, other than one classified by me as a national road or a regional road, is a local road. Road classification needs to follow appropriate and logical criteria and have regard to existing legislative provisions. Careful consideration of such proposals is, therefore, required.

Should Mayo County Council wish to raise road reclassification issues relating to a particular road, it can do so by writing to the Roads Division of my Department enclosing the following information:

- Road number and name of road or section of road in question including relevant townlands/junctions.
- Reason for reclassification request.
- Map(s) indicating current road classification.
- Map(s) indicating requested road classification.

Any such matters so raised can be considered as part of a wider road classification process.

### **Sports Capital Programme**

242. **Deputy Fiona O'Loughlin** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport when the next round of sports capital grants will open for sports organisations; if changes will be made to the scheme in 2018; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20298/18]



**Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Brendan Griffin):** The 2017 round of the Sports Capital Programme attracted a record 2,320 applications. In November and December last, Minister Ross and I announced €60 million in allocations to a record 1,800 projects under the 2017 round. A review of the 2017 round of the programme has now been finalised and published on my Department's website, [www.dttas.ie](http://www.dttas.ie). This review highlights aspects of the 2017 round of the SCP that worked well but also suggests some further improvements which are being considered prior to the next round of the programme opening for applications. An announcement in relation to the timing of the next round is expected in the coming weeks.

### **Sports Capital Programme Eligibility**

243. **Deputy Mattie McGrath** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport his plans to revise the conditions of the sports capital programme for clubs that may not own their own property in order that they can apply for grant aid that may give them the opportunity to purchase and further develop their facilities; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20305/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Brendan Griffin):** The Sports Capital Programme (SCP) is the primary vehicle for Government support for the development of sports and physical recreation facilities and the purchase of non-personal sports equipment. The full terms and conditions of the most recent round of the SCP are published on my Department's website ([www.dttas.ie](http://www.dttas.ie)). The purchase of lands and buildings has always been outside the terms and conditions of the SCP.

Where the applicant does not own land or have a long lease, a smaller capital grant (€25,000 in the case of the 2017 round of the SCP) can still be applied for. In these cases the property owner must fill out a template confirming continued access to property for a minimum of five years. It is also open for any club or organisation to apply for funding for sports equipment up to the maximum level of grant (under the 2017 round of the SCP this equated to €150,000 for local projects and €200,000 for regional projects) even if the applicant does not have title to the property in question. In these cases the owner of the land is simply required to confirm that he/she has no intention of taking the facility away from the applicant for a minimum of five years.

A review of the 2017 round of the SCP has also been published on the Department's website. This review highlights aspects of the 2017 round of the SCP that worked well but also suggests some further improvements. These and any other required amendments to the terms and conditions of the SCP will be fully considered prior to the announcement of the next round. An announcement in relation to the timing of this next round is expected in the coming weeks.

### **Departmental Contracts Data**

244. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the contracts awarded by his Department or an agency under his remit to a company (details supplied) since March 2011, by year in tabular form; the cost per contract; the basis for each contract; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20319/18]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross):** The information requested by the Deputy is available on my Department's website at the following link: <http://www.dttas.ie/corporate/english/expenditure-external-services>.

The information is updated twice yearly. The first six months of 2018 will be published later in the year.

My Department does not hold the information requested for the Agencies by the Deputy. However I have forwarded your request to all Agencies under the remit of my Department for direct reply to you. If you do not hear within ten working days please contact my private office.

### **Road Safety Strategy**

245. **Deputy John Curran** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport when he plans to select a preferred approach to regulate and legislate if necessary the use of rickshaws for public hire in view of the fact that the NTA conducted a public consultation and published a report with recommendations in 2017; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20331/18]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross):** As the Deputy is aware, my Department has been considering a range of options for regulating rickshaws from the perspectives of proportionality, public safety and enforcement, as well as regarding the question of costs and benefits.

I intend to select a preferred approach before the end of this Dáil term, with any corresponding legislative provisions to be developed thereafter.

### **Departmental Expenditure**

246. **Deputy Eamon Ryan** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport his Department's specific financial codes which are used to monitor expenditure under the heading of land transport. [20341/18]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross):** The Public Spending Code is the set of rules and procedures that apply to ensure that these standards are upheld across the Irish public service. The Code brings together in one place all of the elements of the value-for-money framework that has been in force up to now, updated and reformed in some respects. The Code is maintained under the management of the Central Expenditure Evaluation Unit of the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform as a resource for the entire Irish public service. See [www.publicspendingcode.per.gov.ie](http://www.publicspendingcode.per.gov.ie).

Circular 13/2014 outlines public financial management principles, procedures and additional reporting requirements for the management of grant funding from public money as well as the reclassification of grants and grants in aid. The overall principle is transparency and accountability in the management of public money, in line with economy, efficiency and effectiveness. See <http://circulars.gov.ie/pdf/circular/per/2014/13.pdf>.

All State bodies under the aegis of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport are obliged to act under the Code of Practice for Governance of State Bodies 2016. As part of that there are a number of financial requirements set out and outcome and output metrics for the State bodies involved. As well as deadlines for financial and annual reports, the State bodies are overseen by a Shareholder Expectation letter for commercial State bodies and a Performance Delivery Agreement and Oversight Agreement for non-commercial State bodies.

All State bodies under the aegis of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport are also obliged to treat public funds with care, and to ensure that the best possible value for money is obtained whenever public money is being spent or invested.

## Public Transport

247. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport his views on plans to create a unified and identical livery for all buses in receipt of a PSO payment; the potential impacts that this would have on brand recognition; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20400/18]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross):** The National Transport Authority (NTA) has statutory responsibility under section 5 of the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008 to secure the development and implementation of a single public transport brand. I have therefore forwarded the Deputy's question to the NTA for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a response within ten working days.

## Road Projects

248. **Deputy Michael Moynihan** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the funding available to assist farms with the cost of installing a road underpass; his views on the safety implications of farms not being able to afford these works; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20417/18]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross):** As Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, I have responsibility for overall policy and funding in relation to the national roads programme. The planning, design and implementation of individual national road projects is a matter for Transport Infrastructure Ireland under the Roads Acts 1993 to 2007 in conjunction with the local authority concerned.

Noting the above position, I have referred the Deputy's question to TII for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you don't receive a reply within 10 working days.

As regards regional and local roads, these roads are the statutory responsibility of each local authority. My Department does not operate a grant programme for the provision of road underpasses.

## Capital Expenditure Programme

249. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport the capital allocation across his Department in each of the years 2018 to 2022. [20458/18]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross):** The Capital Allocation for the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport for the years 2018 to 2022 can be found in the recently published National Development Plan 2018-2027, available at <http://www.gov.ie/en/project-ireland-2040/>.

### Capital Allocation

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000
1,327	1,643	2,058	2,526	2,405

## Capital Expenditure Programme

250. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport his Department's capital allocation for projects under way and projects already tendered or committed to spending contractually. [20475/18]

251. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport his Department's capital allocation in each of the years 2018 to 2022 disaggregated according to capital allocated to projects under way, projects contractually committed to and projects yet to be initiated. [20492/18]

**Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport (Deputy Shane Ross):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 250 and 251 together.

The Capital Allocation for the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport for the years 2018 to 2022 can be found in the recently published National Development Plan 2018-2027, available at <http://www.gov.ie/en/project-ireland-2040/>. The table contains the total Capital allocation for my Department.

### Capital Allocation

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000	€'000
1,327	1,643	2,058	2,526	2,405

The Deputy has requested the capital allocated to projects under way, projects contractually committed to and projects yet to be initiated. A detailed note of these projects is included for the Deputy's information while information on projects which fall under the remit of agencies has been requested and replies will issue to the Deputy in due course.

### Reply by Programme

#### Programme A – Civil Aviation

The capital allocation in 2018 for grant support towards safety and security projects at the regional airports under the Regional Airports Programme is €3.85 million.

Applications for grant support under the Programme are invited on an annual basis and these applications are assessed by my Department, in conjunction with the IAA, against the criteria set out in the Programme.

My Department is currently finalising its consideration of this year's applications from the airports and I expect to be in a position to make an announcement in this regard shortly.

#### Programme B- Public Transport

Budget 2018 provided a four-year enhanced capital envelope for public transport of over €2.7 billion to 2021 including funding of over €400 million for investment in public transport in 2018. This increased funding will allow rollout of a number of key programmes to address congestion and emerging capacity constraints on our public transport system across our cities. It includes:

- investment of more than €750m for the BusConnects programme - a transformative investment to enhance and expand the bus network, improving bus access through and around the Capital, and including designated segregated cycle lanes.

- over €110 million for new urban cycling and walking routes in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA), and in Galway, Limerick, Cork and Waterford Cities areas, which will provide additional sustainable travel options to complement increased capacity and faster, higher quality public transport in our main cities.
- over €220 million capital investment in additional heavy rail infrastructure between now and 2021. This will deliver: the City Centre Re-signalling Project to improve speeds on mainline rail; a new rail Central Traffic Control Centre; progress on the DART Expansion Programme to include increase rail fleet and further progress on electrification of both the Northern rail line to Balbriggan and the Maynooth line.
- funding of almost €460 million investment in light rail for additional Luas capacity - with additional trams and longer trams across the Luas network - and to progress the Metro Link, with construction work starting on the project in 2021, and passenger services commencing in 2027.
- investment in maintenance and safety projects to maintain safety and service levels in railway operations of our national railway system.
- multi-annual funding of almost €30 million over the next four years to continue the programme of retro-fitting older, existing public transport facilities to improve their accessibility features. This effectively triples the previously planned investment amount.
- funding in the region of €130 million over the next four years for traffic management, bus priority and other smarter travel projects in our cities.
- €35 million to back new ideas that will help decarbonise the transport sector, including pilot initiatives for low emission technologies.

This is complemented by the investing of €15 million in lower energy lighting on national roads.

The recently published National Development Plan (NDP), which will run from 2018 to 2027, builds on this enhanced 4-year capital allocation and will enable extensive investment across Ireland's transport sector, supporting the overall development of an integrated and sustainable national public transport system.

It is worth noting that as part of the annual Estimates process, the multi-annual capital allocations for Government Departments under the NDP will be reviewed and extended annually on a rolling basis to cover the coming 5-year period. This will provide Government with an annual opportunity to review the allocations in light of any implementation issues arising and/or new priorities which may emerge as the NDP is implemented.

The NDP also commits to a full mid-term review of the Plan in 2022, to allow Government

to take stock of progress in terms of delivery of the planned projects and programmes, and to allow Government to review and reaffirm its investment priorities. It is envisaged that the review will be carried out in order to prepare and publish a new updated 10-year plan for public capital investment in 2023, covering the period 2023 to 2032.

As Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, I have responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport. The National Transport Authority (NTA) and Irish Rail have responsibility for the development and implementation of public transport infrastructure projects and therefore I have referred the Deputy's question to both organisations for further information on the issues raised.

### **Programme B. Roads**

The improvement and maintenance of regional and local roads is the statutory responsibility of the relevant local authority in accordance with the provisions of Section 13 of the Roads Act 1993. Works on those roads are funded from the Council's own resources supplemented by State road grants. Each local authority is the contracting authority for the purpose of implementation of regional and local road improvement projects.

My Department is committed to providing grant funding to 13 projects at present under the capital investment plan. The current status of each of these projects is set out in the table below. As regards grant expenditure to date for these projects, this information is included in the Regional and Local Roads Payment and Allocations Booklets which are available in the Oireachtas library.

Capital Plan Regional and Local Road Projects	DTTaS Grant - €m	Current Status
Dingle Relief Road - Phase 4	4	At construction
Bettystown to Laytown Link Road	5	At planning stage
Adamstown & Nangor Road Upgrade	18	At Construction
Sallins By-Pass / Osberstown	57	At Construction
Shannon Crossing Bridge at Killylloe	16	At land acquisition stage
Athy Southern Distributor Road	34	Land acquisition and advance works
Portlaoise Southern Relief Road	7	At tender stage
Sligo Eastern Garavogue Link Road	18	Land acquisition and advance works
Sligo Western Distributor road	11	Land Acquisition and advance works
Tralee Northern Relief Road	11	Detailed Appraisal
R498 Latteragh Realignment	15	At planning stage
Killaloe Bypass/R494 Upgrade	34	At land acquisition stage
Coonagh to Knockalisheen	42	At land acquisition and advance works

In relation to the national road projects, as Minister for Transport, Tourism & Sport, I have responsibility for overall policy and funding in relation to the national roads programme. The planning, design and implementation of individual road projects is a matter for Transport Infrastructure Ireland under the Roads Acts 1993-2015 in conjunction with the local authorities



concerned.

Within its capital budget, the assessment and prioritisation of individual projects is a matter in the first instance for TII in accordance with Section 19 of the Roads Act. I have, therefore referred the Deputy's Question to TII for direct reply. Please advise my private office if you do not receive a reply within 10 working days.

### **Programme D. Sports and Recreation Services**

We do have commitments in relation to some large individual projects such as Parc Ui Chaoimh, Kerry Sports Academy at IT Tralee and swimming pool projects like Castlebar. Our existing capital envelopes cover all such commitments.

The two projects below are currently underway at the National Sports Campus.

- Worked on the development of Phase 2 of the National Indoor Arena is underway and is due for completion in mid-2019
- Work on new office accommodation for Sport Ireland and a National Governing Body of sport is underway with completion expected in mid-2018.

### **Departmental Contracts Data**

252. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the contracts awarded by her Department or an agency under her remit to a company (details supplied) since March 2011, by year in tabular form; the cost per contract; the basis for each contract; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20311/18]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Katherine Zappone):** My Department has utilised internal audit services provided by this company during a period when this Department was unable to recruit a Head of Internal Audit and then supported the service subsequently. A contract was signed for their services on 20 October 2014 for a 12 month period with the option of an extension of a further 12 months, which was availed of. Payments were made into 2017 as audits by the company were completed. There are no outstanding commitments.

From August 2012 until October 2014 the services of the company were used under a shared contract between the Departments of Transport, Tourism and Sport, Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Children and Youth Affairs for the Provision of Internal Audit Services.

From January 2017, following on from a tender process, my Department awarded the contract for internal audit services to another company.

Payments for the services were:

Year	€
2013	23,802.75
2014	10,086.75
2015	112,687.61
2016	43,727.25
2017	12,177.75
Total	202,482.11

In relation to the bodies under the aegis of my Department, the Adoption Authority has confirmed they have had no contracts with this company during this period.

Tusla, the Oberstown Children's Detention Centre and the Ombudsman for Children have been requested to respond directly to the Deputy on this issue.

### **Child Care Services**

**253. Deputy Bobby Aylward** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs if the possibility of increasing wages paid to child care practitioners to reflect the qualifications they must possess to work within the industry will be investigated; the position regarding the reduction of childcare fees for working parents; her views on whether the significant expenses associated with childcare are effectively a deterrent to first time parents that genuinely want to work; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20340/18]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Katherine Zappone):** I wish to acknowledge the critical role played by staff working in the childcare sector in delivering high quality childcare services. They deserve to be recognised, valued and respected for this. My Department does, however, acknowledge that pay and conditions are major issues facing the sector. My Department is engaging with the early years sector to explore how this can be addressed.

In relation to pay and conditions for the Early Years sector, it must be noted that my Department is not the employer of childcare workers. However, in terms of improving pay and conditions I have engaged directly with the sector, and have suggested that one approach the sector could consider is applying for a Sectoral Employment Order (SEO) through the Labour Court, seeking a recommendation in relation to pay for the whole early years' sector.

Under a SEO process, organisations substantially representative of employers and employees come together to agree a way forward and submissions are sought from key stakeholders. My Department would not be a party to the SEO process, however, as a significant funder, and with policy responsibility for quality, my Department would be well placed to make a submission to the Court once it publishes its notice in relation to the matter of the application for a SEO for the sector. I have indicated on many occasions that I will be very supportive of any reasonable measures aimed at improving pay and conditions of the Early Years sector. While my Department does not have direct control over the matter, it will continue to support any appropriate initiatives in this area.

In the last budget I also secured a 7% increase in capitation for the ECCE scheme, the first such rise in many years. It is my hope that this increase in funding will be reflected in pay within the sector.

The Programme for Government has committed to carrying out an independent review of the cost of providing quality childcare. This review is examining the costs faced by childcare providers in delivering quality childcare, including a survey of childcare providers. Following completion- the review is intended to be used to strengthen the evidence base underpinning future policy development and investment in early years. As such, it will feed into future policy development, including in relation to levels of payments to services.

### **Youth Services Funding**

254. **Deputy Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs her plans to allocate additional resources to Cork city and county, specifically LGBT youth supports. [20419/18]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Katherine Zappone):** I am pleased to confirm that an extra €1.5m has been allocated in current funding to support the provision of youth services in 2018. This will bring the total current youth funding available to my Department to €58.9m. The additional funding is being used for programmes that target disadvantaged young people. Funding to staff-led youth services has generally been targeted at areas of disadvantage and not in proportion to the youth population of a county.

As the Deputy may be aware my Department is managing the most significant reform of youth services ever undertaken. This will provide an opportunity to identify need and to focus funding on young people most in need of intervention.

Last year each of the sixteen Education and Training Boards, including Cork ETB, was invited to nominate locations within their catchment areas for the establishment of new services and to nominate a project or service to be considered for augmentation. In total twenty-eight applications for new services were received. Subsequently I approved the establishment of nine new targeted youth services across the country and the expansion of a further seven to respond to new demand and needs of young people which included new services in Mitchelstown and Carrigaline and an augmented service in Middleton.

Future development and investment in youth services will be informed by the mapping exercise completed last year which mapped youth service provision across the State. This mapping will assist the Department and the relevant ETB in developing a detailed social demographic profile in terms of both population numbers and deprivation levels. My Department is committed to working with Cork ETB to identify need and explore ways to address this need where it emerges.

The Programme for Government (2016) gives a commitment to develop a Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) Youth Strategy. This is a key commitment for my Department in the Programme for Government and also makes a contribution towards the Government's broader commitment to continue to strive for full inclusion of LGBT people in Ireland. The development of this Strategy will be led by my Department. The final Strategy is scheduled for publication in the end of Quarter 2 2018.

### **Capital Expenditure Programme**

255. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs the capital allocation across her Department in each of the years 2018 to 2022. [20444/18]

256. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs her Department's capital allocation for projects underway and projects already tendered or committed to spending contractually. [20461/18]

257. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs her Department's capital allocation in each of the years 2018 to 2022 disaggregated according to capital allocated to projects underway, projects contractually committed to and projects yet to be initiated. [20478/18]

**Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (Deputy Katherine Zappone):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 255 to 257, inclusive, together.

The National Development Plan sets out the Government's capital investment priorities that will underpin the new National Planning Framework. My Department has been allocated €156 million in capital expenditure over the period 2018-2022 under the Plan as set out in the following table:

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Capital Allocations (€ million)	28	32	31	32	33

The €28 million allocation for 2018 is being deployed to support the following:

- €6.860 million towards the Early Years and School Age Capital Grants Scheme to facilitate expanding and improving early years and school age facilities by childcare providers.

- €3 million towards the Youth Capital Funding Scheme to support targeted staff-led youth projects across the country and a Capital Grant Scheme for Play and Recreation to support new and existing play and recreation amenities for children and young people.

- €13.940 million for Tusla to meet existing contractual commitments such as the completion of the roll-out of the National Child Care Information System and to commence new projects including the roll-out of the first phase of the agency's ICT strategy, commence refurbishment of front-line services facilities and staff accommodation and a programme of minor capital works.

- €4.2 million for a range of remedial and improvements works at the Oberstown Children Detention Campus.

It is not possible at this time to identify specific projects that will be funded under the Plan from 2019 to 2022 but I can confirm the resources will support continued investment in the following areas:

- Childcare, to ensure quality and supply of sufficient childcare places.
- Youth services that support and target disadvantaged young people and improve their employability.
- Tusla, through the continued development of ICT and standards of accommodation, and
- Oberstown Children Detention Campus through the provision of safe and secure places.

In addition to this, the Plan also contains a commitment to provide an additional €250 million to support the implementation of a 10 year, cross-Government Early Years Strategy to be published in 2018. One of the core objectives of this strategy will be to increase the proportion of children who have access to high quality, early years care and education. Officials in my Department are currently examining possibilities for a multi-annual capital programme for childcare as well as research on existing capital holdings and future capital needs for the sector, at national and local level. Once gathered, this data will be used to inform large-scale, targeted capital investments in childcare.

### Library Services Funding

258. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Rural and Community Development the funding available for a project (details supplied); the funding provided to the end of 2017; the funding available in 2018; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20348/18]

**Minister for Rural and Community Development (Deputy Michael Ring):** The provision of premises and facilities in the public library service is generally a matter for each local authority in its capacity as a library authority under the Local Government Act 2001. Accordingly, the development of the new library in Portlaoise is primarily a matter for Laois County Council.

That said, my Department funds a Libraries Capital Investment Programme that will invest some €22m in 16 or so projects over the period 2016 to 2021. Some €1.65m has been allocated to Portlaoise Library under the capital programme.

Funding is provided for library projects on the basis of works completed and claims submitted by the relevant local authority. Work on Portlaoise Library is at an early stage. The project is currently progressing through the Department's *Four-Stage Capital Works Approval Process* and no funding has been drawn down by Laois County Council to date.

An indicative allocation of €200,000 is available to meet the cost of initial works on the project in 2018. I expect the remainder to be drawn down by Laois County Council in 2019 and 2020 as the project progresses.

### Capital Expenditure Programme

259. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Rural and Community Development the capital allocation across his Department in each of the years 2018 to 2022. [20456/18]

260. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Rural and Community Development his Department's capital allocation for projects underway and projects already tendered or committed to spending contractually. [20473/18]

261. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Rural and Community Development his Department's capital allocation in each of the years 2018 to 2022 disaggregated according to capital allocated to projects underway, projects contractually committed to and projects yet to be initiated. [20490/18]

**Minister for Rural and Community Development (Deputy Michael Ring):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 259 to 261, inclusive, together.

My Department's Capital allocation to 2022 is as follows:

-	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total Capital Allocation	88*	141	150	152	175

\* + 7.7 Capital Carryover

My Department provides funding at programme level to support local authorities and others in the delivery of individual projects. In respect of allocations for 2018, the breakdown of my Department's capital spend at programme level is as follows.

Capital allocations

-	-	€000
Administration		302
A3	Dormant Accounts	2006
A5	National Rural Development Schemes	15383

-	-	€000
A6	LEADER	35000
A8	Town and Village Regeneration Scheme	15000
A9	Rural Broadband, Regional Economic Development	600
A10	Local Improvement Scheme	10000
B6	RAPID	3767
B8	Programme for Peace and Reconciliation	700
B10	Library Development and Archive Service	2750
B11	Community Facilities Fund	2000

In general, the breakdown of capital funding for my Department between subheads is agreed annually as part of the Estimates process. In the case of the LEADER programme, the overall allocation for this programme for the period 2014-2020 has been agreed at €250 million as part of the EU co-funded Rural Development Programme 2014-2020.

Details of individual projects supported by my Department are available on my Department's website.

As recently announced, a new Rural Regeneration and Development Fund will be established under my Department as part of Project Ireland 2040. The fund will invest an additional €1 billion in supporting rural renewal. The additional investment under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund will commence in 2019 and will ramp up incrementally over the first 4 years before reaching a steady level of investment.

My Department is currently developing proposals for the detailed operation of the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, and I will announce the details following consultation with relevant Government colleagues.

### Social Welfare Benefits

262. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection if her Department has an obligation to advise jobseekers who are taking up employment that they may have an entitlement to certain payments such as the back to work family dividend scheme; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20269/18]

**Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty):** The Department operates a network of some 120 Intreo centres and Branch offices throughout the country. These offices provide information on the wide range of schemes and services provided by the Department. Frontline staff are available to give timely and accurate advice to people who contact any of the Department's offices on the various supports and services available including back to work family dividend to customers.

Customers also have access to the various scheme guidelines, information leaflets and application forms on the Department's website and if necessary they can contact their local office in relation to their particular circumstances.

Furthermore the activation process provides a professional employment service to help unemployed jobseekers secure and sustain suitable employment and by so doing achieve financial self-sufficiency. This function is carried out by Case Officers of my Department, the Local Employment Service and JobPath and can include advice and information on income supports, training and development opportunities, employment support, career guidance services and job



placements.

The Department offers a range of pro-employment incentives to assist and support jobseekers in the transition from unemployment to employment and to preserve the incentive for the employee to remain in employment where he/she might only be marginally better off than if he or she were unemployed and claiming social welfare.

Such incentives include the Back to Work Family Dividend and this support is designed to further improve the incentive of taking up employment for people with children via the retention of the child-related element of their welfare payments for a set time.

During the course of the engagement between the Case Officer and the jobseeker all possible pro-employment incentives are explored and explained to the jobseeker and the advantages and benefits of suitable employment take up are promoted as an integral part of the activation interaction.

### **Back to Work Family Dividend Scheme**

263. **Deputy Pearse Doherty** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection the reason the back to work dividend scheme does not facilitate an arrangement whereby payments can be collected by recipients at post offices; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20270/18]

**Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty):** The back to work family dividend (BTWFD) scheme is an in-work support payment. As an in-work support, payment by electronic fund transfer (EFT) into a bank account was chosen as the most convenient and appropriate payment method for the scheme whose recipients are at work. There is no provision for it to be paid into a post office account.

More generally, the Deputy should note however that customers of the Department can choose between payment at the post office or by electronic fund transfer, subject to overall control requirements.

### **Carer's Allowance Applications**

264. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection the status of an application for a carer's allowance by a person (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20282/18]

**Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty):** Carer's allowance (CA) is a means-tested social assistance payment made to a person who is habitually resident in the State and who is providing full-time care and attention to a person who has such a disability that they require that level of care.

CA was awarded on 19 April 2018 in respect of care provided by the person concerned to both of her parents and the first payment was issued to her nominated bank account on 26 April 2018.

Arrears of allowance due from 12 October 2017 to 25 April 2018 has also issued. The person concerned was notified of these details on 19 April 2018.

I hope this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

### **Disability Allowance Eligibility**

265. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection her plans or proposals under discussion to increase the age for the disability allowance application from 16 to 18 years of age; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20285/18]

**Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty):** I am assuming that the Deputy is referring to a national consultation process undertaken by my Department in relation to a number of recommendations made in the Make Work Pay (MWP) for people with disabilities report. The MWP report itself was published in April 2017 following a commitment in the Comprehensive Employment Strategy 2015 -2024 and was undertaken in order to better identify how people with disabilities could be supported to achieve their employment ambitions.

The consultation reflects a commitment made at the time of the publication of the MWP report to consult widely with persons with disabilities and their families in relation to the number of recommendations about the principle of early engagement and a proposed reconfiguration of the Disability Allowance (DA) payment. One MWP recommendation is to support young adults through education, training and social inclusion according to their capacity, and to change the lowest qualifying age for DA from 16 to 18 years. The other recommendation was to adopt an early engagement approach in order to support the employment ambitions of people with disabilities. Early engagement would mean that the State will support people with disabilities at the earliest stage possible to help them achieve their employment goals. To this end, people with disabilities would begin receiving assistance, advice and support from the departments Intreo service or other related services when they apply for a disability income support payment.

At the launch of the consultation process, I together with the Minister of State for Disabilities made clear that engagement would be voluntary: in other words, it would be a matter for persons with disabilities themselves to decide whether they wanted to avail of the supports offered through the Intreo service. This has been stressed at all stages throughout the consultation process.

The national consultation process concluded on April 13th and now will be followed by further consideration of the results with a stakeholder focus group. This group is comprised of persons with experience of disability issues and was established last September and has helped my Department with the design of the national consultation process.

I together with my Government colleagues, look forward to learning the outcome of the consultation process in due course. The Government will then consider what actions will best support the overall objective of improving employment outcomes for persons with a disability.

I hope this clarifies the issue for the Deputy.

### **Partial Capacity Benefit Scheme Administration**

266. **Deputy Jack Chambers** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection the average processing times for applications for partial capacity benefit; her views on whether the time it is taking to process such applications is discouraging persons from returning to work; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20301/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Finian McGrath):** The partial capacity benefit (PCB) scheme allows people with

restricted capacity to avail of employment opportunities while still in receipt of an income support. The scheme is open to people who:

a) have been in receipt of illness benefit for a minimum of six months;

or

b) are in receipt of invalidity pension.

The process of claiming PCB involves the submission and consideration of medical evidence in relation to the application by a Departmental Medical Assessor. A person must be assessed as moderate, severe or profound in order to be eligible for PCB.

Following a decision to put a PCB claim into payment, there is a requirement to liaise with the customer in order to commence the PCB claim on a date to coincide with the start date of the customer's employment. This can result in longer start times for PCB claims in certain cases.

My Department makes every effort to expedite decisions for PCB claims. The average time taken to process PCB claims is currently 14 weeks. The scheme is moving to a new computer system before the end the summer which, along with a streamlining of existing procedures, should further reduce processing times.

I hope this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

### Consultancy Contracts Data

267. **Deputy Mick Wallace** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection the contracts awarded by her Department or an agency under her remit to a company (details supplied) since March 2011, by year in tabular form; the cost per contract; the basis for each contract; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [2015/18]

**Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty):** Details of the contracts awarded to the company referred to by the Deputy are outlined in tabular form:

Year contract awarded	Details of contract	Value of contract
2015	Eircode Database – quarterly update. (Includes an annual data access fee of €500 p.a.)	€30,000 p.a. (excl. VAT)

The statutory bodies operating under the aegis of my Department are the Citizens Information Board, the Low Pay Commission, the Pensions Authority, the Pensions Council and the Social Welfare Tribunal.

Details of a contract awarded by the Citizens Information Board to the company referred to during the period in question are outlined in tabular form:

Year contract awarded	Details of contract	Value of contract
2013	Internal Audit Services from 2013 to 2015	€73,800 (incl. VAT)

No contracts were awarded by the Low Pay Commission, the Pensions Authority, the Pensions Council or the Social Welfare Tribunal to the company referred to, during the period in question.

### **Carer's Allowance Applications**

268. **Deputy Michael Healy-Rae** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection the status of an application by a person (details supplied); and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20345/18]

**Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty):** Carer's allowance (CA) is a means-tested social assistance payment made to a person who is habitually resident in the State and who is providing full-time care and attention to a person who has such a disability that they require that level of care.

Disability allowance (DA) is a means-tested allowance paid to a person with a disability who is substantially restricted from employment.

It is a condition for receipt of both CA and DA that the person's means must be less than the statutory limit. It is a further condition for receipt of payment that the recipients must furnish such certificates, documents and information affecting their right to payment, that are requested by an officer of my department and notify the department of any change in circumstances which affect their right to payment.

Once claims are in payment, the Department periodically reviews them to ensure that there is continued entitlement.

During the course of a review of payment of CA and DA to the person concerned, it was discovered that she had not fully disclosed her means to the Department and, to date, has not furnished all the documentation that was requested from her by a social welfare inspector (SWI).

The person concerned was notified on 17 January 2018 that her CA and DA payments were being suspended from 25 January 2018 because of this.

On 5 March 2018 the person concerned was advised that her entitlement to CA for the period from 7 April 2011 to 25 January 2018 had been reviewed and that an overpayment amounting to €47,525.10 had been assessed.

She was also advised that her entitlement to DA for the period from 13 April 2011 to 23 January 2018 had been reviewed and that an overpayment amounting to €71,006.40.10 had been assessed.

She was notified of the reason for these decisions and of her rights of review and appeal.

My Department was notified on 20 March 2018 that the person concerned had appealed this decision to the Social Welfare Appeals Office (SWAO).

On foot of this, the matter has been referred back to the SWI for further investigation.

Enquiries by the SWI are continuing. Once the SWI has reported, either the decisions of 5 March 2018 will be revised or a submission in support of the decisions will be prepared and forwarded along with the file to the SWAO for determination.

I hope this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

### **Carer's Benefit Eligibility**

269. **Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and So-

cial Protection the supports, monetary and otherwise available in circumstances (details supplied). [20354/18]

**Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty):** Carer's benefit (CARB) is a payment made to insured people who leave the workforce to care for a person(s) in need of full-time care and attention. It is not means tested and is paid for a maximum of 104 weeks per care recipient.

Recipients of CARB get €215 per week when caring for one care recipient and receive an additional €107.50 a week if proving full-time care to a second person.

To qualify the carer must satisfy PRSI conditions, employment conditions, show that they are providing full-time care and attention and must show that the care recipient(s) requires full-time care and attention.

Once the 104 weeks has expired, it would be open to the person concerned to apply for Carer's Allowance (CA).

This means-tested social assistance payment is made to a person who is habitually resident in the State and who is providing full-time care and attention to a person who has such a disability that they require that level of care.

Recipients of CA at the maximum rate get €214 per week when caring for one care recipient and receive an additional €107 a week if proving care to a second person.

An additional support available to carers is the carer's support grant (CSG) which is an annual payment for carers who look after a person in need of full-time care and attention. The payment is made regardless of the carer's means but is subject to the same caring conditions as CA and CARB.

The grant amounts to €1,700 per person being cared for. Recipients of CA or CARB are paid this grant automatically if they have an entitlement to either payment on the first Thursday in June.

I hope this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

### **Working Family Payment Applications**

270. **Deputy Robert Troy** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection if a FIS application by a person (details supplied) can be expedited. [20380/18]

**Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty):** Working Family Payment (formerly Family Income Supplement) is a weekly tax free payment which provides additional income support to employees on low earnings with children.

An application for Working Family Payment (WFP) was received from the person concerned on 26 April 2018.

The applicant has been awarded WFP from 26 April 2018 to 24 April 2019.

Payment is due to issue to the claimant's nominated financial account this week.

Any arrears due will issue shortly.

I trust this clarifies the matter for the Deputy.

## Capital Expenditure Programme

271. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection the capital allocation across her Department in each of the years 2018 to 2022. [20449/18]

272. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection her Department's capital allocation for projects under way and projects already tendered or committed to spending contractually. [20466/18]

273. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection her Department's capital allocation in each of the years 2018 to 2022 disaggregated according to capital allocated to projects under way, projects contractually committed to and projects yet to be initiated. [20483/18]

**Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection (Deputy Regina Doherty):** I propose to take Question Nos. 271 to 273, inclusive, together.

My Department's capital allocation is split across three subheads i.e. A.2.v Office Equipment and External IT Services, A.2.vi Office Premises Expenses and A.2.ix eGovernment Related Projects. Table 1 below outlines the capital allocation for 2018 to 2022, however, this is subject to ongoing review in the context of the annual Estimates.

Tables 2 and 3 outline my Department's plans for the 2018 allocation of €11m. In relation to 2019 to 2022 it is intended that the allocation will primarily assist the Department in delivering additional IT modernisation and allow for the significant refurbishment of the Department's Áras Mhic Dhiarmada and other buildings in the coming years. The capital projects are agreed with the Office of Public Works (OPW) annually on the basis of the Departments requirements and the OPW available capacity and resources.

Table 1: 2018 to 2022

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
€11m (this includes €1m carried over from 2017)	€14m	€15m	€16m	€17m

Table 2: A.2.v Office Equipment and External IT Services and A.2.ix eGovernment Related Projects

Project	Project Status	Capital Allocation 2018
		€m
Ongoing purchase of computer hardware, photocopiers, other non-IT office machinery, software licenses including storage technology, investment in server infrastructure and in virtualisation technology etc.	Underway	6.758
Intreo Service Development	Subject to progression time-lines of project	0.400
Electronic Exchange of Social Security Information	Subject to progression time-lines of project	0.142



eGovernment - Electronic Exchange of Social Security Information	Subject to progression time-lines of project	0.2
Total		7.5

Table 3: A.2.vi Office Premises

Project	Project Status	Capital Allocation 2018
		€m
Tuam	Initiated	0.8
Kilmallock	Initiated	0.3
Kilbarrack	Project Underway	0.090
Bantry	Initiated	0.9
Nenagh	Initiated	0.45
Ballybofey	Initiated	0.5
Longford	Contractually Committed	0.1
Killybegs	Initiated	0.05
Dungarvan	Initiated	0.18
Generators	Project Underway	0.13
Total		3.5

### Housing Assistance Payment

274. **Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government if his attention has been drawn to the unrealistic repayment plans being forced upon HAP recipients who find themselves in arrears on their HAP rent contribution account and face having their HAP payments suspended if they cannot comply in view of the fact that HAP recipients are on this payment due to their low income; if an amendment will be made to guidelines pertaining to repayment plans in order that HAP recipients can enter a repayment plan that is within their individual financial resources; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20338/18]

**Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy):** The Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) scheme is a flexible and immediate housing support that is now available to all eligible households throughout the State. There are currently just over 36,000 households having their housing needs met via HAP and some 20,000 separate landlords and agents currently in receipt of HAP payments. A weekly average of 357 HAP tenancies are been set-up during 2018.

HAP is a form of social housing support under which local authorities make monthly payments on behalf of tenants directly to landlords in respect of rent, subject to the terms and conditions of the scheme. All the terms and conditions of the HAP scheme for both tenants and landlords are available on the dedicated HAP website, [www.hap.ie](http://www.hap.ie), and associated HAP documentation.

HAP tenants are required to sign a rent contribution agreement to pay a weekly rental contribution to the local authority, in line with the local authority's differential rent scheme. As set out in the rent contribution agreement, this weekly rental contribution must be paid by them so that they remain eligible for the HAP scheme. HAP recipients are required to set up automatic

electronic rent payment arrangements.

Section 63(3) of the Local Government Act 2001 provides that, subject to law, a local authority is independent in the performance of its functions. Accordingly, the day-to-day operation of the social housing system, including HAP, is a matter for the relevant local authority.

In addition, with regard to differential rent, section 58(3) of the Housing Act 1966 provides that, subject to such Regulations, as may be made by the Minister under the section, a housing authority may charge such rent or other payment, as they may determine from time to time, in respect of a dwelling of which they are the owner. The making and amending of rent schemes and the administration of such schemes is accordingly the responsibility of housing authorities, as an integral part of their housing management functions.

There is an onus on local authorities to ensure that the administration of rents and associated matters are undertaken within the framework of an effective system for the proper management and maintenance of the housing stock. Rental income is the main source of funding for the management and maintenance of dwellings. Rent schemes developed should ensure that the overall rental income reflects adequately, insofar as it is practicable to do so, the cost of management and maintenance of the local authority's rented housing stock and enables the authority to fulfil its obligations to its tenants in regard to the management and maintenance of their dwellings. Broad principles in relation to this matter were laid down by my Department via Circular letter and associated guidelines, which drew on an extensive process of consultation with local authority practitioners, were also issued which should be of assistance in achieving good practice in the administration of rent related matters.

The HAP Shared Service Centre (SSC) manages the collection of all HAP tenants' differential rents, on behalf of the relevant local authority, and the payment of all HAP rents to landlords on behalf of tenants supported by the HAP scheme. The HAP SSC applies a very clear communication policy if rental arrears issues arise. This policy includes regular and early written communication with tenants, landlords and the relevant local authority.

Outside of issuing the formal notification letters, there would always be attempts to contact the tenants by phone and by email to settle accounts and avoid escalation of the debt process. Depending on the activity of arrears in question, both the relevant local authority and the landlord are informed when an account has not been cleared and of possible suspension and/ or cessation of the HAP payment. However, in the vast majority of cases a payment plan to deal with the arrears is agreed between the tenant and the local authority, before there is any necessity to advise the landlord.

If the tenant does not contact their local authority or does not enter into a payment arrangement within 8 weeks of the arrears commencing, both the landlord and the tenant are informed that the HAP payment may be ceased.

To date, the approach has been very effective with minimal levels of rent arrears arising for HAP tenants. In 2017, when nearly 18,000 additional households were supported by HAP, the scheme had a 98% differential rent collection rate, with minimal arrears arising for tenants or local authorities. Therefore, only a very small number of tenants have fallen into difficulty with their differential rent.

My Department continues to keep the operation of the HAP scheme under review. In general, I am satisfied with the operation of the HAP scheme and I consider it to be a key vehicle for meeting housing need and fulfilling the ambitious programme under Rebuilding Ireland.

## Planning Data

275. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the number of judicial reviews undertaken in the context of Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 in the past five years to date; the outcomes of same; if he will supply this information by development under the provisions and local authority; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20210/18]

**Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy):** The annual planning statistics compiled by each planning authority for collation and publication by my Department do not include information related to judicial reviews of decisions made by planning or local authorities in the performance of their functions under the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, or the Planning and Development Regulations made thereunder.

Accordingly, this information sought is not available in my Department.

## Local Authority Funding

276. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the requests received by his Department from a county council (details supplied) for funding due to extreme weather events; the funding sought and the works proposed; when the application was submitted; the decision made on the request; the funding allocation made in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20222/18]

**Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy):** Since 2009, my Department has made financial support available to assist local authorities in meeting the costs of clean-up and necessary immediate works associated with the response to significant severe weather emergency events. This is in recognition of the exceptional nature of the activities carried out by local authorities in responding to these types of emergencies and the fact that the costs of these un-programmed activities cannot be met from within existing resources.

Requests for recoupment of these costs have been received from Mayo County Council in each of the years 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 and are in respect of a series of severe weather events that affected Mayo (and other parts of the country). The amounts claimed and the amounts recouped are set out in the table below. A claim for recoupment of response and clean-up costs relating to the recent severe cold weather and snow has been sought from Mayo County Council and is awaited.

Following the severe storms of winter 2013/2014 and the resulting widespread damage to public infrastructure particularly in Atlantic coastal counties, the Government decided to make funding of up to €69.5m available to local authorities to assist them in supporting communities affected by restoring roads, coastal protection, and other amenities/facilities that had been damaged. It was agreed that the funding would be made available via the Votes of the appropriate Departments, i.e. Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport; Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine; the Office of Public Works and my own Department. While my Department had an initial role in collating details and costs of damage in the immediate aftermath of the severe weather based on returns and estimates provided by local authorities, the other Departments and Offices listed above liaised directly with the local authorities on funding falling under their remit.

In the case of funding requirements relating to this event which fell under the remit of my Department, which included certain tourism infrastructure funded by the local authorities and certain piers, harbours and other facilities in the charge of the local authorities, a total of €784,000 was sought by Mayo County Council with €189,000 recouped in 2014 and €594,100 recouped in 2015.

It was a matter for individual local authorities to decide which projects were to be progressed and in which timescales with priority being given to works that were significant for economic activity and to support the tourism industry in particular.

Mayo County Council

	Claimed	Recouped
2014	509,000	509,000
2015	480,000	480,000
2016	413,000	413,000
2017	5,714	5,714
Total	1,407,714	1,407,714

### Planning Guidelines

277. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the process that follows in circumstances in which a proposed Part 8 development is rejected by councillors at local authority level; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20225/18]

280. **Deputy Catherine Murphy** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the circumstances in which a Part 8 development must be re-advertised for a period of time in order for the general public to make further submissions; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20252/18]

**Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 277 and 280 together.

Neither section 179 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, nor Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations made thereunder, relating to proposed development by a local authority that does not require environmental impact assessment or appropriate assessment, provide for a second round of public consultation in relation to a proposed development or for a further procedure to be followed where the elected members of the authority decide, by resolution, not to proceed with a proposed development. In the latter circumstances, it would, of course, be possible for a fresh Part 8 procedure to be initiated, if that was considered appropriate.

### Homeless Persons Data

278. **Deputy Eoin Ó Broin** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the number of the 600 persons which he claimed on 30 April 2018 in a Departmental press release had been miscategorised as homeless by local authorities that had tenancy agreements at the time of the alleged miscategorisation; and the number that were in short-term ad hoc accommodation arrangements provided by local authorities and or the Dublin Regional Homeless Executive. [20227/18]

**Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy):** I refer to the reply to Questions Nos. 24 and 25 of 8 May 2018. While tenancy arrangements are a matter for individual housing authorities, as indicated in the reply referred to, the issues arising in relation to the misclassification of certain households as homeless have not yet been fully addressed, so I am not in a position to provide a complete account in relation to such practices. My Department is engaging with local authorities as part of its continuing examination of the matter.

### **Septic Tank Inspections**

279. **Deputy Peter Burke** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government his plans to amend measures whereby grant assistance to fix domestic septic tanks can only be awarded if the tank is randomly inspected in view of the small percentage of inspections which happen annually; if the introduction of a system of inspections being requested by domestic dwelling owners with a view to expanding grant qualification will be examined; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20240/18]

**Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy):** The Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (Financial Assistance) Regulations 2013, a copy of which is available in the Oireachtas library, brought into operation a grant scheme to assist with the cost of remediation of septic tanks and domestic waste water treatment systems which are deemed, following inspection under the Environmental Protection Agency's National Inspection Plan, to require repair or upgrading.

The Regulations provide that, subject to the applicant meeting all qualification criteria, a local authority may pay a grant to a person who is required, following an inspection, to undertake repairs or upgrades to, or replacement of, a septic tank or other domestic waste water treatment system. Applications for grant aid are administered by the local authority in whose functional area the particular domestic waste water treatment system requiring remediation is situated. The local authorities then seek recoupment of the amounts paid from my Department. Where a local authority pays a grant under the scheme, my Department will repay the local authority 100% of the amount paid.

Full details of the scheme, including eligibility criteria, are set out in the explanatory leaflet and application form published on my Department's website at the following link: <http://www.housing.gov.ie/water/water-quality/domestic-waste-water-systemsseptic-tanks/domestic-waste-water-treatment-0>.

The grants scheme ensures that the limited financial resources available are targeted towards householders, particularly those on lower incomes, who incur expenditure directly as a result of the inspection scheme. My Department is revising this scheme to better support the programme of measures in the finalised River Basin Management Plan 2018 - 2021 published recently. The scheme is being extended in order to provide particular support to high status waters and areas identified for priority action in the River Basin Management Plan.

I have recently approved the establishment of a Working Group to conduct a review of the wider investment needs relating to rural water services. The review will focus on the actions required to improve and sustain rural water services and will consider issues such as governance, supervision and monitoring of the sector, in addition to capital investment priorities and requirements across all elements of rural water services, including domestic waste water treatment systems. The establishment of the Working Group is being undertaken in response to the recommendations of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Future Funding of Domestic Water

Services.

Householders who do not meet the eligibility criteria for the grant under the aforementioned Regulations and who wish to remediate or upgrade their on-site treatment systems may qualify for relief under the Home Renovation Incentive (HRI) Scheme introduced pursuant to section 5 of the Finance (No. 2) Act 2013. The HRI Scheme covers main residence repairs, renovations and improvements, including the repair or replacement of septic tanks. The Scheme is administered by the Revenue Commissioners and full details are published on the Revenue Commissioners' website at [www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie).

*Question No. 280 answered with Question No. 277.*

### Homelessness Strategy

281. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the funding allocated in 2017 to deal with the homeless issue; the funding provided to each local authority respectively; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20284/18]

**Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy):** My Department provides current funding, under Section 10 of the Housing Act 1988, to housing authorities towards the cost of providing accommodation and related services for individuals experiencing homelessness. Housing authorities are also required to provide at least 10% of the cost of any service they are funding. Funding in respect of homeless services is allocated on a regional basis. Details of the 2017 funding provided to the housing authorities on a regional basis is set out in the table below.

Funding under Section 10 of the Housing Act, 1988

Region	2017
Dublin	€83,616,643
Mid-East	€3,092,923
Midland	€1,467,615
Mid-West	€3,906,686
North-East	€2,762,845
North-West	€450,000
South-East	€3,444,510
South-West	€6,703,444
West	€3,791,334
Total	€109,236,000

Increased funding has been put in place to deal with homelessness. Budget 2018 provides for an Exchequer allocation of €116 million towards the delivery of housing authority managed homeless services; this is an additional €18 million, or 18%, on last year's initial provision of €98m.

### Supported Residential Accommodation Provision

282. **Deputy John Curran** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the stage at which his Department and the Department of Health are at in relation to pro-



viding a new supported model of housing for elderly persons; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20329/18]

**Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy):** Government policy, as expressed in the Programme for Government and in the Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan on Housing and Homelessness, is to support older people to live in their own home with dignity and independence for as long as possible.

In this context, my Department, in conjunction with the Department of Health, is currently exploring policy options including supported housing/housing with care so that older people have a wider range of housing options and choices available to them. A cross Department/Agency steering group chaired by my Department with representatives from the Department of Health, the Department of Community and Rural Development, the Health Service Executive, the Housing Agency and other key stakeholders was established in 2017 to consider the issues and to provide input into the drafting of a policy statement on housing options for older people.

The draft statement, which will be jointly published by my Department and the Department of Health, is currently being finalised and I expect it to be ready for publication shortly. This will be a first step in the broader process of seeking to ensure that older people are provided with appropriate accommodation options suited to their needs. The policy statement will set out a framework by which the Government can facilitate housing, including housing with care, for older people having regard to current demographics and looking at best practice models. The aim is to ensure that people can grow older and live in a community of their choosing, with dignity and independence.

Part of the St. Michael's Estate site in Inchicore, owned by Dublin City Council, has been identified as a 'Housing with Support' demonstration project under Rebuilding Ireland. It will deliver 52 homes and is intended to set a new standard for the future of housing provision for older people and to act as an exemplar for others to follow.

The 'Housing with Support' model brings together a range of services and supports - principally relating to housing, community, social and care needs - that enables older persons to live full lives in their own homes within their own community, thereby both promoting independence and reducing or deferring the need to move into long term residential care. The overall aim is to develop a new model of housing for older people where the key components, physical environment and care supports are provided on-site, integrated into the community and are designed with older people at the core.

The project has been approved for funding of almost €15 million under my Department's Capital Assistance Scheme with a contribution of €450,000 from the HSE towards additional communal facilities for the residents. Circle Voluntary Housing Association and Alone have been commissioned to design, build and operate the project.

### **Approved Housing Bodies**

283. **Deputy Eoin Ó Broin** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government if his Department has engaged consultants, other outside bodies or persons to conduct research, provide advice or assistance on the issue of the recent EUROSTAT designation of approved housing bodies; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20343/18]

**Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy):** To date, my Department has not engaged external consultants or outside bodies to undertake research or analysis on this issue. However, I am aware that the AHB sector have independently

engaged their own research into the matter, and my Department is evaluating the work that has been undertaken in that regard.

As the Deputy will be aware, the Minister for Finance has recently published the Draft Stability Programme Update for 2018. This included an analysis of the financial impact of the EU-ROSTAT decision to reclassify the majority of Tier 3 Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) as part of the local government sector. This was an important first step in the Government's assessment as to the impact of the EUROSTAT decision.

Following the completion of this analysis, which has defined the scope of the financial implications of this decision for the Exchequer, my Department will be engaging closely with the Department of Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform to ensure that AHBs can continue to fulfil their full potential in the delivery of the targets set out in the Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan. In that context, arrangements are being made for further discussions on the next stage of this process, which will take place in the coming weeks.

The Government continues to see a central role for the voluntary housing sector in contributing to delivery of social housing under Rebuilding Ireland, and is committed to using all mechanisms and schemes, including through the AHB sector, to ensure that we maintain the momentum towards meeting the ambitious 50,000 social housing target under the Action Plan.

### **Social and Affordable Housing Data**

284. **Deputy Sean Fleming** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the number of new social houses on which construction work was completed in 2017, by local authority; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20347/18]

**Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy):** Through the supports made available from my Department, funding is available to all local authorities to deliver additional social housing through new construction projects, through the acquisition of new and previously owned houses/apartments and through working with approved housing bodies under a range of delivery options.

Details on the number of new social homes delivered during 2017 under these funding initiatives, including those built in each local authority area, for letting to those on the social housing waiting lists, are available on my Department's website at the following link: [http://www.housing.gov.ie/sites/default/files/attachments/1a2-sh-2015-2017-brkdn-final\\_2018\\_v3\\_0.xlsx](http://www.housing.gov.ie/sites/default/files/attachments/1a2-sh-2015-2017-brkdn-final_2018_v3_0.xlsx).

### **Homelessness Strategy**

285. **Deputy Darragh O'Brien** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the number of times the National Homelessness Consultation Committee has met per annum since its establishment to date; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20365/18]

286. **Deputy Darragh O'Brien** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government if his Department consulted with the statistics subgroup of the National Homelessness Consultation Committee in relation to the calculation of homeless figures for March 2018; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20366/18]

**Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 285 and 286 together.

The National Homelessness Consultative Committee (NHCC) was established in April 2007. The Committee included representatives from my Department and a number of the NGOs working in the area. It was established to provide a forum for a dialogue between the Department and NGO members in relation to policies to address homelessness. While an informal working group including members of the NHCC had been established at one point to examine data and reporting, there is no statistics subgroup of the NHCC in existence.

The number of meetings held between 2009 and 2017, including meetings held jointly with the Cross Departmental Team on Homelessness (CDT), are set out in the following table.

Year	No of meetings
2007	5
2008	3
2009	4
2010	2
2011	0
2012	1
2013	4
2014	4
2015	2
2016	1
2017	1

My Department meets regularly with NGO service delivery partners, outside the structures of the NHCC, to discuss issues of common concern.

### Housing Data

287. **Deputy Darragh O'Brien** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government if the findings of the working group on rural housing will be published; the timeframe for the publication of new guidelines on rural housing; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20369/18]

**Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy):** Following engagement between the European Commission and my Department regarding the 2013 European Court of Justice ruling in the “Flemish Decree” case, a working group, comprising senior representatives from my Department and planning authorities, was established in May 2017 to review and, where necessary, recommend changes to the 2005 Planning Guidelines on Sustainable Rural Housing, issued under section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, with a view to ensuring that rural housing policies and objectives contained in local authority development plans comply with the relevant provisions of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

This Working Group concluded its deliberations in September 2017 and taking account of the Group’s analysis and recommended outcome, my Department has been engaging with the Commission on the matter, with a view to issuing a further circular letter to planning authorities as soon as possible, setting out revisions to the 2005 Guidelines that take account of the relevant ECJ judgment.

## **Water Charges Refunds**

288. **Deputy Darragh O'Brien** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the number and amount of water charge refunds paid to date; the plans of Irish Water for further repayments; the purpose to which unspent money will be put; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20370/18]

**Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy):** In keeping with the spirit of the provisions for the refund of domestic water charges under the Water Services Act 2017, and the earlier recommendations of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Future Funding of Domestic Water Services on this matter, all reasonable efforts have been made to refund in full relevant domestic Irish Water customers the amounts due to them.

My Department provided funding of €177,535,103 to Irish Water in 2017 to cover the costs involved in issuing a refund to some 995,000 domestic customers of the utility, who paid water charges in full or in part. This included a provision of €5,869,630 in respect of administration costs.

Irish Water has recently reported to my Department that as of 30 April 2018, it has issued cheques to some 951,720 customers at a total value of approximately €166,340,224. Irish Water is continuing to actively encourage remaining customers to provide details necessary to enable payments to be made. This would include customers that have changed address, where the name on the account has changed, accounts that are in the name of 'the Occupier' or 'the Owner', those who have moved abroad without a forwarding address and rental properties where the tenant has moved on.

While there is no cut-off date for the making of refunds, the low level of engagement by the remaining customers to be refunded at this stage suggests that Irish Water may not be able to refund many of these customers.

My Department is currently liaising with Irish Water in relation to the arrangements to close out the funding provision for making refunds and a mechanism will be agreed with Irish Water that will enable it to meet its ongoing liability to relevant customers who seek a refund at a future date.

## **Compensation Schemes**

289. **Deputy Charlie McConalogue** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the stakeholders with whom he has met with a view to gathering a fund to establish a redress scheme for homeowners affected by defective mica concrete blocks in County Donegal; and if he will make a statement on the matter. [20393/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Damien English):** The Expert Panel on concrete blocks was established by my Department in 2016, to investigate problems that have emerged in the concrete blockwork of certain dwellings in Counties Donegal and Mayo.

The panel had the following terms of reference:

(i) To identify, insofar as it is possible, the numbers of private dwellings which appear to be affected by defects in the blockwork in the Counties of Donegal and Mayo;

(ii) To carry out a desktop study, which would include a consultation process with affected

homeowners, public representatives, local authorities, product manufacturers, building professionals, testing laboratories, industry stakeholders and other relevant parties, to establish the nature of the problem in the affected dwellings;

(iii) To outline a range of technical options for remediation and the means by which those technical options could be applied; and

(iv) To submit a report within six months.

On 13 June 2017, the report of the *Expert Panel* was published and included eight recommendations which my Department are actively progressing with the relevant stakeholders.

My Department is prioritising the implementation of Recommendations 1 and 2.

With regard to Recommendation 1, the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) Technical Committee, established to scope and fast track the development of a standardised protocol, held its inaugural meeting on 11 September 2017 and has held several further meetings since. The standardised protocol will inform the course of action in relation to remedial works for all affected householders. My Department understands from the NSAI that the Technical Committee is in the process of finalising the standardised protocol, which will be available for public consultation shortly. The public consultation will run for a period of six weeks.

With regard to Recommendation 2, my Department has been in contact with Engineers Ireland in relation to the establishment of a register of competent engineers for homeowners/affected parties' reference. Engineers Ireland have provided assurance that they will collaborate with the Department, the NSAI and others on measures to establish such a register once the standardised protocol is in place.

Last year I visited Donegal and Mayo and met with key stakeholders, including affected homeowners, elected members and officials of the local authorities and other interested parties. On 18 December 2017, I again visited Donegal and met with key stakeholders to provide an update on the progress to date. I made a similar visit to Mayo on 26 January 2018.

In addition, and in light of the information contained in the report, I am currently considering what further actions may be required to assist the parties directly involved in reaching a satisfactory resolution to the problems that have emerged in the two counties.

### **Capital Expenditure Programme**

290. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government the capital allocation across his Department in each of the years 2018 to 2022. [20453/18]

291. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government his Department's capital allocation for projects underway and projects already tendered or committed to spending contractually. [20470/18]

292. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government his Department's capital allocation in each of the years 2018 to 2022 disaggregated according to capital allocated to projects underway, projects contractually committed to and projects yet to be initiated. [20487/18]

**Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government (Deputy Eoghan Murphy):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 290 to 292, inclusive, together.



The capital allocation for my Department as announced in the National Development Plan 2018-2027 for the period 2018-2022 amounts to €10.232 billion.

The annual breakdown of funding is as follows:

Capital Allocations 2018-2022 (€m)	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Housing, Planning & Local Government	€1,631	€2,033	€2,079	€2,209	€2,280

My Department has a wide and diverse business agenda including delivering on a wide range of social housing capital programmes under the Rebuilding Ireland Action Plan, the Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund and Urban Renewal as well as a range of smaller scale capital projects including the Rural Water Programme, Fire Services and Met Eireann. My Department allocates significant resources to a wide range of organisations, including local authorities, dedicated agencies and non-statutory bodies, as well as to individuals. The information requested, related to individual capital projects, is not readily available in my Department in the format requested and its compilation would involve a disproportionate amount of time and work. If a more specific question is tabled relating to a particular area of funding from my Department, I will endeavour to provide the information sought.

### Oideachas Gaeilge

293. D'fhiafraigh **Deputy Pearse Doherty** den Aire Cultúir, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta an bhfuil sí ar an eolas faoi na deacrachtaí atá ag coláiste Gaeilge i gContae Dhún na nGall (sonraí curtha ar fáil) maidir le tacaíochtaí airgeadais a fháil ó na gníomhaireachtaí ábhartha, rud a fhágann nach dtig leis an gcoláiste rochtain a fháil ar roinnt de na scéimeanna atá dírithe ar an nGaeilge a theagasc do scoláirí; an iarrfaidh sí ar oifigigh na Roinne an cás seo a chíoradh agus dul i dteagmháil leis an gcoláiste d'fhonn cuidiú a chur ar fáil; agus an ndéanfaidh sí ráiteas ina thaobh. [20220/18]

**Minister of State at the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Joe McHugh):** Tá iarrtha agam go rachadh ionadaí mo Roinne i dteagmháil leis an gcoláiste atá i gceist faoin ábhar seo chomh luath agus is féidir. Ní mór dom a chur in iúl don Teachta, áfach, gurb í mo Roinn fhéin an príomheagraíocht Stáit a chuireann tacaíochtaí ar fáil, idir dheontais do na teaghlaigh a choinníonn scoláirí faoi Scéim na bhFoghlaimoirí Gaeilge agus deontais caipitil do na coláistí féin, d'earnáil na gcoláistí Gaeilge. Tá iarrtha agam ar mo chuid oifigigh lucht bainistíochta an choláiste a chur ar an eolas maidir leis na tacaíochtaí seo chomh maith.

### Arts Funding

294. **Deputy John Curran** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the projects in County Dublin that received funding for the small scale local festivals and summer schools grants in 2017; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20332/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** 18 projects received a total of €54,020 under my Department's 2017 Small Scale Festivals and Summer Schools Scheme. The maximum grant available under this Scheme was €5,000.

Of these projects, 3 were in Dublin, receiving a total of €9,250. These were AE George Russell Seminar (€2,000.00), the Dublin Ghost Story Festival (€3,250.00) and the James Joyce Summer School (€4,000.00).



**National Parks and Wildlife Service Staff**

295. **Deputy Donnchadh Ó Laoghaire** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her plans to further resource park rangers nationally. [20421/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** My Department continues to work with the Public Appointments Service to appoint Conservation Rangers from a panel which was created in 2017. I am advised that in the last twelve months my Department has recruited twelve Conservation Rangers from this panel.

The staffing resources required to meet my Department's business needs are assessed through the Department's workforce planning process, having regard to emerging business priorities, the availability of payroll resources and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform directives, guidelines and circulars on staffing.

**Capital Expenditure Programme**

296. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the capital allocation across her Department in each of the years 2018 to 2022. [20446/18]

297. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her Department's capital allocation for projects under way and projects already tendered or committed to spending contractually. [20463/18]

298. **Deputy Jonathan O'Brien** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her Department's capital allocation in each of the years 2018 to 2022 disaggregated according to capital allocated to projects underway, projects contractually committed to and projects yet to be initiated. [20480/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 296 to 298, inclusive, together.

The capital allocations for my Department in each of the years 2018 to 2022 are as follows:

- €54 million in 2018. The capital allocation across my Department for 2018 is published in the Revised Estimates Volume for this year at [www.per.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/REV-2018-compressed.pdf](http://www.per.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/REV-2018-compressed.pdf)

- €75 million in 2019;

- €76 million in 2020;

- €80 million in 2021; and

- €110 million in 2022.

The broad capital allocations for projects and programmes in the years 2019 – 2022 are set out in my Department's 10 Year Plan, "Investing in our Culture, Language & Heritage 2018 – 2027", at [https://www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2018/04/capital\\_plan\\_april3-8.pdf](https://www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2018/04/capital_plan_april3-8.pdf) which explicitly recognise that our culture, language and heritage are an essential part of the sustainable development of the country.

The Annual Appropriation Account for the Department, which is audited by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (<http://www.audgen.gov.ie/ViewDoc.asp?fn=/home.asp>),

details the commitments at the end of each financial year. With regard to the break out of capital allocations for the years 2019 – 2022, this not yet been finalised as investments over the period are subject to appraisal and evaluation in line with the Public Spending Code. 2018 is a critical year for the appraisal of, and planning and design for, many of the flagship projects with a view to moving to the implementation phase as soon as possible. More details on the individual projects and programmes will emerge as we go through this process of appraising and planning for these important investments. The final disaggregation will be completed as part of the annual Estimates process for each of those years.

### National Monuments

299. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which her Department is engaged in the restoration of major historical or cultural sites throughout the country; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20494/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** I refer the Deputy to my reply today to Question No. 70, Reference No.19913/18.

### Creative Ireland Programme

300. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which the culture, arts and heritage sectors continue to generate employment throughout the country; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20495/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** My reply to Parliamentary Question No. 700 of 23rd January last, in which I set out the real and substantial funding increases across the cultural, heritage and Gaeltacht areas of my Department provided for under budget 2018, refers.

In addition to these measures, on 10th April last I was pleased to launch *Investing in Our Culture, Language and Heritage 2018 - 2027* - a ten year plan setting out the Government's commitment for capital investment of almost €1.2 billion in Ireland's culture, language and heritage.

This level of investment will transform our cultural and heritage infrastructure right across the country and will support the development of employment opportunities across these sectors.

Details of the funding being made available under this programme and the text of the plan itself are available on my Department's website at <https://www.chg.gov.ie/investing-in-our-culture-language-and-heritage-2018-2027/>.

### Arts Funding

301. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which the arts sector continues to attract support from philanthropists; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20496/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** Private support for the arts is an important funding source and the Government continues to support

this through tax incentives and other initiatives. While my Department does not have a breakdown of the total flows of philanthropic funding to the sector, the *Programme for a Partnership Government* does contain a commitment to encourage strong, mutually beneficial links between the business community and the arts community to assist arts organisations to capitalise on sponsorship opportunities and to develop business partnerships and fundraising skills. In this regard, I recognise the important work carried out by *Business to Arts* for which my Department provides a small amount of assistance.

In addition, the Arts Council operates the RAISE programme, which seeks to enhance fundraising skills in arts organisations with a view to diversifying the sector's sources of funding. It is designed to assist the sector in securing philanthropic contributions to the arts in Ireland.

In terms of other capital investment requiring co-funding, a €10 million investment scheme for arts and cultural centres is in progress, focused on upgrading the existing stock of such centres around the country. The funding, which is being made available as part of the *Capital Investment Framework 2016-2021*, is dependent on matching funding being secured by project promoters and therefore provides an opportunity for philanthropic support.

### Culture Ireland

302. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht her plans and vision for the utilisation of Ireland's culture as an international brand with consequent economic benefits; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20497/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** Ireland is a country that has demonstrated a capacity to make a global impact at a scale beyond our size and our culture plays a central role in achieving this impact. Cultural connections have an important value in and of themselves but in a world of increasing global competition for investment, tourism and export markets, they also help to identify Ireland and to open doors in a welcoming and encouraging way.

Culture Ireland, a Division of my Department operates on a cross-Government basis with the Expert Advisory Committee comprised of representatives of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, IDA and Tourism Ireland as well as representatives of the sector. Culture Ireland supports Irish artists at 500 events in about 60 different countries every year and in 2017, Culture Ireland supported activities reached an audience of more than 3.5 million people and over 7 million online/radio/tv viewers, introducing Irish arts and the strength of Ireland's creativity culture to new and disparate audiences.

Throughout 2018, Culture Ireland is promoting a special year long programme which is planned to celebrate and renew the unique cultural relationship which exists between Ireland and Great Britain. The GB18 programme aims to showcase Irish artistic excellence in partnership with UK institutions, venues and festivals and expand the reach of Irish culture to new audiences. The programme aims to build on existing relationships as well as forge new connections to be further developed in future years and ensure ongoing cultural connectivity at this time of critical change with Ireland's closest neighbour.

Overall the Creative Ireland Programme – a collaboration between central and local government, between culture and industry places a special emphasis on unifying Ireland's Global reputation. Pillar 5 of the Programme, *Unifying Our Global Reputation*, is about presenting a coherent representation of Ireland as a creative people to the world. It aims to create a compelling proposition about Ireland, based on our culture and creativity, so as to enhance our interna-

tional reputation and increase our influence in the world.

### Architectural Heritage

**303. Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which particular historical sites or buildings in County Kildare are deemed to be at risk; the action taken or pending to address such issues; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20498/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** My role, as Minister, with regard to the protection and management of our built heritage, is set out in the provisions of relevant legislation, as are the roles of local authorities and the responsibilities of owners.

Under the National Monuments Acts, I am the owner or guardian of approximately 1,000 national monuments located at approximately 750 sites and in such cases there is a statutory duty to maintain the national monument. Such maintenance is undertaken by the Office of Public Works.

Local authorities are responsible under the National Monuments Acts for maintaining the national monuments of which they are owners or guardians. A wide range of other monuments (of the order of 130,000) are currently subject to protection under other provisions of the National Monuments Acts but my Department and the Office of Public Works do not have a direct role in their maintenance except where, as already noted, a monument is a national monument of which I am the owner or guardian.

Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, provides for the protection of architectural heritage. The Act gives primary responsibility to planning authorities to identify and protect the architectural heritage by including relevant structures on the Record of Protected Structures. Inclusion on the Record of Protected Structures places a duty of care on the owners and occupiers of protected structures and also gives planning authorities powers to deal with development proposals affecting them and to seek to safeguard their future.

I draw on information provided by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, maintained by my Department, to recommend structures for inclusion on the Record of Protected Structures. However, the final decision is a reserved function of the planning authority. I understand that Kildare County Council employs both an architectural conservation officer and a heritage officer. There is also a monuments advisory committee in the county.

In addition to the statutory role of Local Authorities, Financial support is provided by my Department through a number of structured schemes for the conservation and protection of heritage buildings. €2m has been provided for the Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2018. 370 projects have been approved for funding, including 15 projects in County Kildare for which aggregate grant aid of €50,000 has been approved. €1,324,000 has been provided for the Structures at Risk Fund 2018. 76 projects across the country have been approved for funding, including for three projects in County Kildare with an aggregate grant aid of €66,000.

In terms of funding for future years, *Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage 2018 – 2027* represents a major capital investment scheme of close to €1.3 billion in funding over the next 10 years. This plan will see increased investment in protecting and celebrating our built heritage across the country. More details on the commencement and completion dates for projects and programmes, as well as the timing of the expenditure in relation to them, will emerge as we go through the process of appraisal and planning as required under the Public

Spending Code.

### **Creative Ireland Programme**

304. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which she expects to be in a position to enhance the promotion and development of an awareness of the arts and culture with a view to maximising economic benefit in the future; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20499/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** The Creative Ireland Programme was launched in December 2017 as the Government's Legacy Programme arising out of the Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme and as the main implementation vehicle for the priorities identified in Culture 2025/Éire Ildánach.

The Creative Ireland Programme is a high level, high ambition, 5-year initiative, from 2017 to 2022 which aims to place creativity at the centre of public policy. The programme is being led by my Department in partnership with other Government Departments and Agencies, local authorities, the third level sector, arts and culture organisations (including the National Cultural Institutions) and relevant NGOs.

As part of the Programme, each of the 31 local authorities has established a Culture Team and in 2017 published and implemented local Culture and Creativity Plans which were supported by an allocation of €2m (€1m from my Department and €1m from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government). In total, these plans listed over 750 local cultural projects, events and initiatives taking place nationwide last year which gave us a snapshot of the rich cultural activity taking place in each country.

Each local authority is now in the process of drawing up more detailed five-year Strategic Creativity Plans which will be published later this year. These strategies will be accompanied by an Activity Plan outlining initiatives being supported by the local authorities in their respective areas. The implementation of these Activity plans will be supported by a sum of €3m (€2m from my own Department and €1m from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government). Each local authority will therefore receive approximately €96,000 this year under the Creative Ireland Programme.

The overall aim of these plans will be to mainstream and promote culture and creativity in the life of the nation so that individually and collectively, we can realise our full creative potential with commensurate economic benefits.

### **Film Industry Promotion**

305. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which she continues to encourage internationally the use of Ireland as a film location with obvious beneficial economic implications; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20500/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** The Irish film, television and animation industry is experiencing a period of sustained success and critical acclaim. For example, over the last number of years, Irish talent has been a consistent presence at the Academy Awards, with Nora Twomey's debut animated feature, "The Breadwinner", leading the Irish charge at the most recent ceremony alongside other nominations for Irish tal-



ent including Saoirse Ronan, Consolata Boyle, Martin McDonagh and Daniel Day-Lewis. The industry's current flourishing is the result of the IFB's years of investment in Irish creative film-making talent, made possible through consistent Government backing as well as Section 481, which plays a crucial role in attracting inward production to Ireland.

The Irish Film Board is the national development agency for Irish film making and the Irish film, television and animation industry. Its statutory remit is to assist and encourage the making of film in the State and the development of a film industry in Ireland.

The Film Board also supports the Irish screen industries at major international markets and festivals, promotes inward investment, the use of Ireland as a location for international production and provides support for companies filming in Ireland. The Board liaises with IDA Ireland and Tourism Ireland to maximise opportunities for the promotion of Ireland as a location for film productions as well as a tourism destination. The other primary mechanism through which the Government supports the film industry is Section 481 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 - the film tax relief scheme. In Budget 2018, I allocated an increase of €1.55 million to the Irish Film Board to build on its vital work in supporting Irish film, television drama, documentary and animation. This increases its annual budget by 9.3% to €18 million. Last month, the Government's capital investment plan *Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage 2018- 2027* provides for funding of €200m to be invested in media production and audio visual industries through the Irish Film Board over the next 10 years which will have a positive impact right across the country.

This will assist in realising the vision under Pillar 4 of the Creative Ireland Programme to develop Ireland as a centre of excellence in media production.

### Waterways Issues

306. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which she expects to achieve an amicable resolution of issues between Irish Waterways and traditional dwellers and recreational users of the Grand Canal, County Kildare; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20501/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** Waterways Ireland continues to work closely with boat owners using the canals, and adjacent land owners and committees. Meetings are held with the key stakeholder interest groups, the Royal Canal Amenity Group, Inland Waterways Association of Ireland (IWAI) and the Heritage Boat Association (HBA).

In addition, Waterways Ireland works alongside the Friends of the Grand Canal and Royal Canal Clean-Up Group in Dublin, who like many of the communities throughout the waterways support the maintenance and operation of the canals.

Operational staff, lockkeepers and waterway patrollers meet canal users, including those in County Kildare, on a regular basis and provide a wide range of services.

Inspectorate staff manage boat use on the canals in accordance with the 1988 Canal By-laws. In this regard, Waterways Ireland continues to concentrate on boats which consistently remain in breach of the by-laws. Where a boat owner fails to respond to requests to comply, after notification by letters, telephone calls and formal notice, a programme of boat removal continues.

Regulation of use of prime location berths is being taken forward under the 1988 Canal By-



laws to protect these public amenities.

Waterways Ireland in 2018 will deliver a programme to extend boat effluent pump out facilities and fresh water locations for boat owners using the canal network.

### **Arts Funding**

307. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which her Department continues to provide funding for the arts at local and community level, directly or indirectly; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20502/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** The Creative Ireland Programme was launched in December 2017 as the Government's Legacy Programme arising out of the Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme and as the main implementation vehicle for the priorities identified in Culture 2025/Éire Ildánach. The Creative Ireland Programme is a high level, high ambition, 5-year initiative, from 2017 to 2022 which aims to place creativity at the centre of public policy. The programme is being led by my Department in partnership with other Government Departments and Agencies, local authorities, the third level sector, arts and culture organisations (including the National Cultural Institutions) and relevant NGOs. Under Pillar II of the Programme, each of the 31 local authorities has established a Culture Team and in 2017 published and implemented local Culture and Creativity Plans which were supported by an allocation of €2m (€1m from my Department and €1m from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government). In total, these plans listed over 750 local cultural projects, events and initiatives taking place nationwide last year which gave us a snapshot of the rich cultural activity taking place in each country. Each local authority is now in the process of drawing up more detailed five-year Strategic Creativity Plans which will be published later this year. These strategies will be accompanied by an Activity Plan outlining initiatives being supported by the local authorities in their respective areas. The implementation of these Activity plans will be supported by a sum of €3m (€2m from my own Department and €1m from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government). Each local authority will therefore receive approximately €96,000 this year under the Creative Ireland Programme. The local authorities have full discretion in terms of what activities they support. The overall aim of these plans will be to mainstream and promote culture and creativity in the life of the nation so that individually and collectively, we can realise our full creative potential with commensurate economic benefits.

### **Creative Ireland Programme**

308. **Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which she has had discussions with other Departments or interest groups with a view to creating greater awareness of national heritage and culture throughout primary and second level schools; if she continues to have discussions with the Minister for Education and Skills in this regard; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20503/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** The Creative Youth Plan, as part of the Creative Ireland Programme, was launched in December 2018. This Plan will be progressed over the next five years in partnership with the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and the Arts Council. At this plan's core is a firm belief that creativity and culture should be at the heart of education for all our young people and I look forward to working with the Department's key partners to deliver

this plan for all our children and young people.

My Department also partners with the Heritage Council to deliver programmes to create a greater awareness of national heritage throughout primary and second level school. Programmes include Heritage in Schools, programmes run through our National Museums, the Heritage Maps database and the National Heritage Week. Indeed, as 2018 is the European Year of Cultural Heritage, there are many extra events being run throughout the country in partnership with the Creative Ireland Programme.

### **Arts Promotion**

**309. Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the number of applications received from various amateur societies involved in the promotion of the arts throughout County Kildare in the past 12 months; the extent to which she expects to be in a position to respond positively to such applications; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20504/18]

**310. Deputy Bernard J. Durkan** asked the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht the extent to which she continues to communicate with local community groups involved in the production of amateur dramatic and musical festivals with particular reference to the need to offer appropriate financial assistance; and if she will make a statement on the matter. [20505/18]

**Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Josepha Madigan):** I propose to take Questions Nos. 309 and 310 together.

Enabling creativity in every community is a key strand of the Creative Ireland Programme. To facilitate community engagement with creative activities, each of the 31 local authorities has established a Culture Team and has a designated Creative Ireland co-ordinator.

In 2017, each local authority published and implemented local Culture and Creativity Plans which were supported by an allocation of €2m (€1m from my Department and €1m from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government). In total, these plans listed over 750 local cultural projects, events and initiatives taking place nationwide last year which gave us a snapshot of the rich cultural activity taking place in each country. The 2017 plan for Kildare can be accessed through this link: <https://creative.ireland.ie/en/library/kildare>. The Department does not manage the application processes for these funding applications and is not prescriptive as to which creative activity should be prioritised.

Each local authority is now in the process of drawing up more detailed five-year Strategic Creativity Plans which will be published later this year. These strategies will be accompanied by an Activity Plan outlining initiatives being supported by the local authorities in their respective areas. The implementation of these Activity plans will be supported by a sum of €3m (€2m from my own Department and €1m from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government). Each local authority will therefore receive approximately €96,000 this year under the Creative Ireland Programme.