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## Introduction

### Editorial

Please note that individuals and organisations outside of government also contribute items to the bulletin; consequently, the content of this bulletin should not be assumed to reflect government policy or opinion.

Welcome to the fourteenth issue of the policylink bulletin! There are a number of sections in this edition and hopefully there will be something of interest to everyone.

In Chapter 3 'Support for policy-making', we look at some of the ongoing work to help improve policy-making. Firstly, there is the **Northern Ireland research database** which went "live" earlier this year. Then there is the work underway to create a 'Policy Toolkit' – a series of workbooks intended to provide practical guidance on the policy development process.

In Chapter 4, we highlight a vast range of new official publications – everything from 'Spatial Strategies on the Island of Ireland' to 'Taking Our Place in Europe' – Northern Ireland's European Strategy 2006-2010.

In Chapter 5 'New from research institutes and think tanks', there are a number of interesting research articles from Democratic Dialogue, Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Institute for Public Policy Research.

Chapter 6 is a special theme chapter focusing on housing, with some interesting articles covering aspects such as the private rented sector and equity release.

As usual, this edition includes details of:

- current and forthcoming consultations;
- conferences and seminars;
- newly announced policies and strategies; and
- policy reviews coming up.

Hopefully there is something of interest for everyone! As always, you can email us at [policylink@ofmdfmi.gov.uk](mailto:policylink@ofmdfmi.gov.uk) with your views or suggestions. We also have a feature below on 'community planning' – read on for more details...

## Community Planning – a short commentary

The recent conference “ *Re-configuring Northern Ireland’s Public Sector: Meeting the challenge of implementation* ” held in Belfast on 24 October 2006 provided a valuable opportunity to examine in detail the change programme for public administration in Northern Ireland. The conference included a workshop which covered issues relating to the local government sector including governance, capacity building and community planning. This note briefly examines the concept and meaning of community planning and the implications it will have for Northern Ireland .

## The concept and meaning of community planning

In November 2005, when the Secretary of State announced decisions of the Review of Public Administration, he outlined the Government's desire to introduce Community Planning and a new power of well being to Northern Ireland . Under the new system, there will be a statutory duty on Councils to initiate and facilitate a community planning process leading to the development, coordination and delivery of a plan to address the requirements of their communities . This will require the council to consult all its constituents about issues that affect their lives and allow people to have a say in the way in which their area is developed. Other statutory agencies within the council area will be required by legislation to work with councils in developing and delivering a Community Plan. In addition the councils will have a new power of well-being. This will be a broad enabling power allowing councils to initiate actions that will improve the well-being of individuals, local communities or the local area.

## The work of the Local Government Taskforce Community Planning Sub-Group

Earlier this year, a sub-group on Community Planning was established under a Local Government Taskforce to advise the Minister on issues in respect of community planning, to consider its implications and to make recommendations on the introduction of community planning and the power of well-being to Northern Ireland . It was charged with bringing forward proposals to effect the devolution of the duty “of community planning” and the power of “well-being” to district councils in Northern Ireland . More specifically it was charged with the task of:

*“developing proposals for effective mechanisms that will champion the community planning process; ensure that ownership of community planning is secured vertically and horizontally within public agencies and with local communities; spread ownership; share good practice and advice on issues which arise as communities take forward their community plans”*

Source: Local Government Taskforce Community Planning Sub-Group paper (June 2006).

The Sub-Group reported at the end of June 2006 and made 21 recommendations. These included for example: the enactment of a modified Scottish model of community planning which also includes best practice identified in other situations; the provision of statutory guidance; the development of shared information and performance management frameworks as well as representation from the voluntary and community sector and from the private sector on each community planning partnership.

The full report of the Community Planning Sub Group along with its Terms of Reference, membership details and the minutes of meetings can be accessed on the DOE Local Government Reform Division website via the following link;

<http://www.doeni.gov.uk/lgd/localgovreform/>

Implications for policy and practice:

Currently there is no legislative requirement for local government in NI to consult with organisations to prepare a community plan. Community planning will be one of the most important new functions coming to local government. It will be a key strategic responsibility for strong local government working with other key agencies in their area. In recognition of the major cultural change which this will involve, the Sub-Group recommended that a capacity building programme for community planning should be developed in the immediate future. The RPA Central Implementation Unit, OFMDFM has also identified the need for such capacity building

In support of this, work is now underway within the Policy Innovation Unit, OFMDFM to hold a seminar in 2007 which will focus on the theme of community planning and its implications for both central and local government working. Given the enhanced role now planned for local government, the seminar will provide an opportunity for all those with an interest in developing the role of local government to explore the precise implications for both policy and practice. The seminar will include representatives from local government as well as from the voluntary and community sector. It is hoped that speakers with experience of community planning in Scotland will be able to participate to help explore lessons arising for NI.

**Note:** Further information on the seminar which is scheduled for the early part of 2007 will be placed on the Policylink website at: <http://www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/policylink/> once a final programme has been drawn up.





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## Support for policy-making

### Summary

Northern Ireland research database

For further details visit the [Northern Ireland research database](#)

The Policy Innovation Unit in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) compiled a research database to help make research, commissioned by the Northern Ireland Administration, more widely available. Research is an essential part of the policy development process, necessary to ensure that there is a robust evidence base supporting the decision-making. The Research Database website went "live" earlier this year. There is research on a wide range of topics. Any feedback on the new website would be welcomed – you can email your views to [policylink@ofmdfmni.gov.uk](mailto:policylink@ofmdfmni.gov.uk).

Draft 'Policy Toolkit'

The Policy Innovation Unit in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) has been working on the creation of a 'Policy Toolkit', which is intended to provide a practical overview of the key steps and key phases in the policy development process. The toolkit is divided into individual workbooks, which are structured around the key stages of the policy process. Each workbook seeks to provide practical guidance and draws on existing guidance material and best practice, in particular the [Northern Ireland Practical Guide to Policy Making](#). An early draft of the Policy Toolkit is currently with colleagues across the NICS and some external contacts for comment. It is hoped to have a working document during early 2007. Should readers wish to receive an email version of the draft toolkit, please contact the Policy Innovation Unit by email at [policylink@ofmdfmni.gov.uk](mailto:policylink@ofmdfmni.gov.uk).

Government Communications Network

For further details visit the [Government Communications Network website](#)

The Government Communication Network (GCN) links professional communicators across government. It is led by Howell James, Permanent Secretary, Government Communications and his team Government Communications Group (GCG). GCN helps communicators across government to access a wide range of skills needed for modern, professional and integrated government communication. It has a section on guidance for civil servants working as communicators, which includes best practice and gives access to useful information and signposts for further sources of help. It also links to the [GCN Engage programme](#), which offers a range of guidance and tools to help you through all aspects of a government communicator's role.

National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis (NIRSA) ( Ireland )

For further details visit the [NIRSA website](#)

NIRSA undertakes fundamental, applied and comparative research on spatial processes and their effects on social and economic development in Ireland . NIRSA was established at NUI Maynooth in January 2001. Following a reorganisation of working structures from January 2006, the work of the Institute is organised into three clusters, each including researchers from the Institute's partner institutions: NUI Maynooth, Institute of Technology , Sligo, and Mary Immaculate College , Limerick . The three main areas for which the Institute undertakes research are: Planning Environments; Building Knowledge Societies/Economies; and Sustaining Communities.

Brussels Bulletin

For further details visit the [latest Brussels Bulletin](#)

The Brussels Bulletin is a helpful source of information about the EU in general and specifically Northern Ireland 's role within it. This is the tenth edition of the quarterly e-zine.

Policyhub Bulletin – October 2006 edition

For further details visit the [Policyhub Bulletin](#)

You will find a host of items in the Policyhub Bulletin. There are articles under the headings of: better policy-making; improving delivery; and evaluating policy, plus a "website of the month" feature. The October edition of the Policyhub Bulletin includes the stories behind the headlines for some recent high profile reports.





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## **New Official Publications**

### **1 April 2006**

Development of a draft strategy for voluntary and community sector support services

For further details contact [geoff.beattie@dsdni.gov.uk](mailto:geoff.beattie@dsdni.gov.uk) or visit the [Voluntary and Community Unit webpage](#) or the [Community NI research webpage](#)

### **June 2006**

Spatial Strategies on the Island of Ireland – Development of a Framework for Collaborative Action

For further details visit the [InterTradeIreland Publications webpage](#)

### **July 2006**

The Essential Skills for Living strategy – research evidence on delivery

For further details visit the [research report on delivery of Essential Skills for Living](#)

### **Summary**

The support strategy will build on the work of the Task Force and the actions presented in Positive Steps. The strategy will set out to deliver an infrastructure which is in keeping with the outcome of the Review of Public Administration, is sustainable, provides a model for government and other funding, and complements the differing and equally valuable roles of local and central government, and voluntary and community sector organisations.

The research report – Spatial Strategies on the Island of Ireland : Development of a Framework for Collaborative Action – was prepared by the International Centre for Local and Regional Development for InterTradeIreland. It is envisaged that the development of an all-island collaborative framework would:

- inform future investment programmes;
- maximise synergies between different aspects of the investment programmes;
- promote regional competitiveness; and
- re-position and re-image the island as a globally innovative and competitive location.

The report describes the outcomes of research into the delivery of Essential Skills training and highlights possible future actions for continued service delivery. The report provides a valuable insight into the delivery of Essential Skills training and has revealed a number of important themes that will be critical to the continued success of Essential Skills. The research links well with the Department's Skills Strategy and will help inform future planning of Essential Skills training.

## 11 September 2006

New Deal Statistical Bulletins:

(i) New Deal for 18 to 24 Year Olds in Northern Ireland : Statistics from April 1998 to June 2006

(ii) New Deal 25+ in Northern Ireland : Statistics from June 1998 to June 2006

For further details visit the [New Deal Statistical Bulletins 2006/07](#)

These Statistical Bulletins are part of a regular series analysing key statistical information for the New Deal programmes in Northern Ireland . Data has been provided on numbers participating in New Deal, on key personal characteristics of participants (such as gender and community background), on the New Deal Options chosen within the programme and on destinations after leaving the programme.

## October 2006

The Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey 2005: Summary Report

For further details visit the [Summary Report on the Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring Survey 2005](#)

The report provides an overview of the issues connected with current vacancies, difficulties in filling vacancies, skill shortages, skill gaps and training from an employer's perspective. The principal benefit of this report is that it provides a valuable insight into employer needs. The report updates findings from the Northern Ireland Skills Monitoring survey 2002 and this information provides the Department with some useful comparisons over time. The research links well with the Department's Skills Strategy under the theme "understanding the demand for skills", and will help inform current skill requirements and the future planning and funding of post 16 education and training. In particular it will help inform the work of the Skills Expert Group which has been established to advise government on the process of identifying skills needs and to make recommendations on the steps required to meet those needs.

## October 2006

Appraisal of Essential Skills for Living

For further details visit the [Appraisal of Essential Skills for Living](#)

The report describes the outcomes of research into the delivery of Essential Skills training and highlights possible future actions for continued service delivery. This qualitative research includes making an assessment of the performance of the strategy, identifying experiences of participants, barriers to participation and also areas of best practice.

### 16 October 2006

'Taking Our Place in Europe', Northern Ireland 's European Strategy 2006-2010

For further details visit the ['Taking Our Place in Europe' webpage](#)

'Taking Our Place in Europe' is a high level, overarching strategy that maps out a framework for Northern Ireland 's engagement with Europe . Guiding the work of regional and local government in partnership with civil society, it will help Northern Ireland to participate appropriately and effectively in European matters and to benefit fully from that engagement. Much of the detail of implementation, including systems for the evaluation of activities, will be brought together in a detailed action plan over the period to March 2007.

### November 2006

Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy (NIRSS) 2005: Annual report including three year review of targets

For further details visit the [NI Road Safety website](#)

The 3rd annual report on the Road Safety Strategy 2002-2012 covers the period from 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2005. It highlights measures implemented, or on which progress has been made, and that are having a positive effect on reducing road casualties in Northern Ireland . The report includes a review of the casualty reduction targets in light of progress to date and assesses, in the light of the latest data, the likelihood of achieving the targets by 2012.

### Late November/early December 2006

Office of the Industrial Tribunals and the Fair Employment Tribunal's Annual Report 2005/06

For further details visit the [Industrial Tribunal and Fair Employment Tribunal NI website](#)

The Office of the Industrial Tribunals and the Fair Employment Tribunal's (OITFET) Annual Report provides information on the work of the Office of the Industrial Tribunals and the Fair Employment Tribunal in 2005/06. The Annual Report replaces the previously published annual Statistical Bulletin. The Annual Report will be available via the web link provided.

### Early December 2006

2007 Census test questionnaire

For further details visit the [2011 Census Consultation webpage](#)

Following an extensive period of consultation with users and ongoing liaison between the UK Census Offices, the Northern Ireland and Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) has developed the test questionnaire that will be used in the 2007 Census test in Northern Ireland .

The test, scheduled for 13 May 2007, will take place in five areas selected on the basis of their different socio-economic characteristics and their difficulty of enumeration. It will include

- an operational test of different enumeration methodologies and systems being designed to ensure a successful field operation in 2011; and
- an examination of the impact of new questions (e.g. income) and the design of the census forms.

Proposals for the content of the 2011 questionnaire, and arrangements for the 2011 Census more generally, will be brought forward in a White Paper currently planned for Autumn 2008. The content of the 2011 Census questionnaire will ultimately be decided through the legislative process, probably around 2010.

### **Early December 2006**

Registrar General Annual Report 2005

For further details visit the [Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency publications webpage](#)

The Annual Report of the Registrar General for Northern Ireland presents statistical information arising from the registration of 'vital events' – births, marriages and deaths, together with divorces and adoptions – and related statistical information on the population of Northern Ireland . The report also summarises the migration data which was published in a report in July [ [NI Migrations Report 2005](#) (PDF 2,995 KB)]. In addition the report contains an article on fertility in Northern Ireland .

### **14 December 2006**

Salmon and Inland Fisheries Annual Report 2005

For further details visit '[A Selection of Angling Waters in NI](#)' website

The Salmon and Inland Fisheries Annual Report 2005 provides detailed information on the statutory work undertaken by the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure during the year and includes statistical and financial information.

### **December 2006**

Revised Guide on Time Working Regulations

For further details contact [jeff.ard@delni.gov.uk](mailto:jeff.ard@delni.gov.uk)

This is an updated guide, covering the limits on working time and the entitlements for workers in the Working Time Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1998 (as amended).

### **Anticipated December 2006**

Labour Market Bulletin

For further details visit the [Department for Employment and Learning website](#)

The Labour Market Bulletin will contain a number of statistical, research, and evaluation articles on the Northern Ireland labour market. The purpose of the Bulletin is to provide a robust base of information and to stimulate debate about the Northern Ireland labour market.

### **December 2006**

Department for Employment and Learning Research Agenda 2006-09

For further details contact the Tertiary Education Analytical Services Branch (TEASB) by telephone on 028 9025 7606

The Department for Employment and Learning's updated Research Agenda 2006-09 will reflect, as far as possible, the Department's research needs for the coming three-year period. The Agenda will also set out details of the expanding evidence base and the link that has with policy development as well as how the Department plans to deliver its new research needs.

## **December 2006**

Strategic Resources Framework 2006/07

For further details contact

[lynn.campbell@dhsspsni.gov.uk](mailto:lynn.campbell@dhsspsni.gov.uk)

The Strategic Resources Framework provides a detailed analysis of planned expenditure by Health and Social Services Boards and Trusts for the financial year 2006/07. Analysis is provided on planned expenditure and activity volumes by Programme of Care and by Key Services with Hospitals, Community and Personal Social Services (PSS).

## **December 2006/January 2007**

Quality Improvement Strategy

For further details contact

[john.baird@delni.gov.uk](mailto:john.baird@delni.gov.uk)

The Department for Employment and Learning's ( DEL ) Quality Improvement Strategy presents a vision of quality which aligns the work of partner organisations across the further education and training system, and indicates key actions for improvement in order to support change. It aims to enhance the quality of the further education and training programmes funded by DEL. It will ensure a coherent approach to quality improvement, and the raising of standards across the system, working collaboratively with key partners including the Education and Training Inspectorate, Learning and Skills Development Agency NI and Lifelong Learning UK (Sector Skills Council). This involves the use of inspection, support, advice and guidance, and the dissemination of good practice to support improvement initiatives, both within individual providers and across the system as a whole.

## **December 2006/January 2007**

Falling through the cracks: an econometric analysis of the characteristics most associated with student attrition beyond the first year of Higher Education

For further details contact the Tertiary Education Analytical Services Branch (TEASB) by telephone on 028 9025 7606

Non-completion of courses by students has implications for themselves, the institutions that they attend, and for the economy and society in general. Through the analysis of non-completion of first year Higher Education courses at the University of Ulster, this paper reports the results of an econometric modelling exercise that shows that non-completion is associated with factors including gender, religion, socio-economic class, and the nature of the course undertaken.

## **December 2006/January 2007**

Education, occupational class and unemployment in the regions of the United Kingdom

For further details contact the Tertiary Education Analytical Services Branch (TEASB) by telephone on 028 9025 7606

This paper examines a measure of returns to education based on the probability of "labour market success" associated with different levels of qualification. Two measures of "success" are used based on data from the 2001 UK Census for the different regions of the UK : first, the likelihood of persons in employment being in "good" jobs; and second, the likelihood of persons in the labour force being in employment. The results show that, in every region of the UK , better qualifications are significantly and strongly associated with higher probabilities of labour market success.

## **December 2006/January 2007**

Enrolments in the Northern Ireland Further Education Sector 2004/05

For further details contact the Tertiary Education Analytical Services Branch (TEASB) by telephone on 028 9025 7606

This is a statistical overview of enrolment trends, in the Northern Ireland Further Education Sector, split by key variables such as subject area, qualification route and learner characteristics.

## December 2006/January 2007

Performance Statistics in the Northern Ireland Further Education Sector 2004/05

For further details contact the Tertiary Education Analytical Services Branch (TEASB) by telephone on 028 9025 7606

## January 2007

Statistical Bulletin: Students gaining Higher Education qualifications 2005/06

For further details contact the Tertiary Education Analytical Services Branch (TEASB) by telephone on 028 9025 7606

## January 2007

Museums and Galleries Northern Ireland (MAGNI) Annual Report and Accounts 2002/03

MAGNI Annual Report and Accounts 2003/04

MAGNI Annual Report and Accounts 2004/05

For further details contact [julie.pollock@dcalni.gov.uk](mailto:julie.pollock@dcalni.gov.uk)

## 8 January 2007

Series of Migrant Workers' Rights Guides

For further details contact [dougie.topping@ofmdfmi.gov.uk](mailto:dougie.topping@ofmdfmi.gov.uk)

## February 2007

Statistical Bulletin: Student enrolments on Higher Education courses 2005/06

For further details contact the Tertiary Education Analytical Services Branch (TEASB) by telephone on 028 9025 7606

This is a statistical summary of retention, achievement and progression statistics in the Northern Ireland Further Education Sector, split by key variables such as subject area, qualification route and learner characteristics.

This bulletin will provide details of qualifications gained by Northern Ireland domiciled students on higher education (HE) courses in the UK and details of all students gaining qualifications at higher education institutions in Northern Ireland in the 2005/06 academic year. It will be available via the [Department for Employment and Learning's statistical news releases webpage](#).

The Annual Reports and Accounts for National Museums and Galleries Northern Ireland (MAGNI) for 2002/03, 2003/04 and 2004/05 are due to be published early in January 2007.

Law Centre NI, in conjunction with the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), will publish three Rights Guides for Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland.

The guides have been produced for

- Workers from EU/EEA
- Workers from the Accession States (A8)
- Workers under permit schemes and sector based schemes.

The Guides will be an invaluable resource for officials at central and local government level, as well as migrant workers themselves.

This bulletin will provide details of Northern Ireland domiciled students on higher education courses in the UK and details of all students on Higher Education courses in Northern Ireland in the 2005/06 academic year and will be available via the [Department for Employment and Learning's statistical news releases webpage](#).

## February 2007

Flexible working comparative research report

For further details contact  
[lynne.taylor@delni.gov.uk](mailto:lynne.taylor@delni.gov.uk)

The Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) commissioned research in 2003, and again in 2006, on views and practices with regard to flexible working in the workplace. This research examined the views of both employers and employees. This report will compare the 2003 and 2006 findings of both the employer and employee research components.

## Spring 2007

Understanding why people return to the New Deals in Northern Ireland

For further details contact  
[sheila.mcneill@delni.gov.uk](mailto:sheila.mcneill@delni.gov.uk)

The Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) has recognised that those starting on New Deal increasingly comprise those who had participated on the programme previously. DEL wanted to understand more about the characteristics of New Deal returners and if there is anything that could be done to minimise the number of people that return to the programmes. This study will describe the extent and characteristics of those who return to the New Deals.





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## **New from research institutes and think tanks**

### **Summary**

'A picture of health?'

For further details contact Democratic Dialogue at [info@democraticdialogue.org](mailto:info@democraticdialogue.org)

This report – of a project organised by Democratic Dialogue and Stratagem, and supported by Pfizer – addresses public health and health inequalities in Northern Ireland . It makes the case for a change of focus from healthcare to *health* , and for joined-up approaches to tackling health inequalities. The report is due to be published during January 2007 and will be available via the web link provided.

'Securing the future'

For further details contact Democratic Dialogue at [info@democraticdialogue.org](mailto:info@democraticdialogue.org)

This report, of a project organised by Democratic Dialogue and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland , addresses crime and justice issues. It offers an agenda-setting framework for reducing crime and costly resort to imprisonment, with a focus on crime prevention and non-retributive models of justice. The report is due to be published during February 2007 and will be available via the web link provided.

Monitoring poverty and social exclusion in Northern Ireland 2006

For further details visit the [Monitoring poverty and social exclusion in Northern Ireland findings](#)

Part of an annual series looking at indicators of poverty and social exclusion, this study from the New Policy Institute is the first to look specifically at the latest data for Northern Ireland . While income poverty is central to this, the indicators also cover benefit reciprocity, employment and pay, disadvantage in work, exclusion from services, housing and neighbourhoods, health and harm, and education. On each subject, it looks at the situation in Northern Ireland compared with that in Great Britain, trends over time in Northern Ireland (except for income poverty, where such data is not available), and the major inequalities within Northern Ireland. The report by Peter Kenway, Tom MacInnes, Aveen Kelly and Guy Palmer, is published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

## The Tomorrow Project

For further details visit the [Tomorrow Project website](#)

The Tomorrow Project is an independent programme of research, consultation and communication about people's lives in the next twenty years. Its aims are to help individuals and organisations to think and learn about the future of people's lives in order to gain a better understanding of the present and to learn about the choices which will influence the future. The Tomorrow Bulletin issues three times a year; the most recent edition, issued in September 2006. Visit the [latest Tomorrow Bulletin](#), which focuses on the theme of 'Changing values from freedom to self-improvement?'

Dormant accounts funding for projects working with persons with a disability ( Ireland )

For further details visit the [Wheel website](#)

Up to €13.5 million is being made available from the Dormant Accounts Fund in Ireland in 2006 to support groups working with persons with a disability. Pobal ( the not-for-profit company with charitable status that manages programmes on behalf of the Irish Government and the EU) invited applications from locally based community and voluntary groups who have experience of working with persons with a disability.

Launch of learningpoint.ie – the central resource about training for the community and voluntary sector

For further details visit the [Wheel website](#)

In September, The Wheel ( Ireland ) has announced the launch of learningpoint.ie – a central web-based sign-posting service providing a single source of accurate, up-to-date information about training opportunities throughout the community and voluntary sector in Ireland . Access [www.learningpoint.ie](http://www.learningpoint.ie) and find information on: training courses; training providers; news and events; publications; and useful web links, in your area and desired learning subject. The website is being maintained and monitored by The Wheel, and information will be added on an on-going basis.

## The Stockholm Syndrome

For further details visit [the Stockholm Syndrome article](#)

The Stockholm Syndrome, written by Jenny Bird (Researcher, Sustainability Team, Institute for Public Policy and Research), was published in the Whitehall and Westminster World in October. The article looks at the divergent attitudes of two cities to congestion charging, namely Stockholm where residents voted in favour of the idea, and Edinburgh where residents voted against. Jenny Bird found that the reason the Swedes were more favourable to the idea was chiefly the way in which road pricing was presented and communicated as opposed to any cultural differences. Her article highlights some important lessons to be learnt:

- policy-makers cannot rely on a groundswell of support for the idea of road pricing;
- good communications are important, but people may need to see the benefits of road pricing to believe them;
- people don't trust politicians to deliver on their promises, so if road pricing is to be accompanied by public transport improvements these should be provided up-front;
- while support may be low before charging is introduced, it can increase once a scheme is running successfully.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) public finance bulletin: October 2006

For further details visit the [October 2006 IFS finance bulletin](#)

The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) public finance bulletin provides some headline comparisons between 2005-06 and 2006-07 on, for example, central government current receipts, central government current spending and public sector net investment.

Characteristics of care providers and care receivers over time

For further details visit the [study on characteristics of care providers and care receivers](#)

This study draws on census data to examine who provides unpaid care and how this may have changed over time. The study found that caregiving was associated with disadvantage. The proportion of the population providing unpaid care was higher in deprived areas and areas with higher levels of poor health. Carers were also relatively disadvantaged and more likely than others of the same age to be in poor health themselves. The research, by a team from the Centre for Population Studies, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, used data from the Office for National Statistics Longitudinal Study, including individual-led census information. The full report is published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and is available via the web link provided.

The poverty trade-off: work incentives and income redistribution

For further details visit the [study on the poverty trade-off](#)

This study explores the tensions between policies to help people on low incomes by providing them with financial support directly and encouraging them to earn more. Two strategies that governments have to help people on low incomes – providing them with financial support directly, and encouraging them to earn more – generally conflict, according to the study by Stuart Adam, Mike Brewer and Andrew Shephard of the Institute for Fiscal Studies. The study found that two aspects of financial work incentives are important: the incentive to be in work at all, and the incentive to progress in work (that is, increase earnings). It also states that work incentives are most weakened through the withdrawal of means-tested benefits and tax credits, not through high rates of income tax. The key findings are available on the Joseph Rowntree Foundation website via the web link provided.

Neighbourhood play and community action

For further details visit the [study on neighbourhood play and community action](#)

This study draws together lessons from five community projects which sought to combine community development with developing play spaces for children and young people. The five local community groups took part in developing and piloting the resources, which sought to bring together 'play development' and 'community development'. The study found that participating in a play development project built networks within the community, increased opportunities for children and adults to come together, expanded partnerships and thus increased social capital. The summary, by Haki Kapasi, is published on the Joseph Rowntree Foundation website via the web link provided.

Economics of climate change: Stern Review

For further details visit the [Stern Review report](#)

On 30 October 2006, HM Treasury published a report – the Stern review on the economics of climate change – which finds that there is still time to avoid the worst impacts of climate change if governments, businesses and individuals act now and act internationally to work together to respond to the challenge. The first half of the review focuses on the impacts and risks arising from uncontrolled climate change, and on the costs and opportunities associated with action to tackle it.

Scientific evidence, risk and evidence based policy making

For further details visit the [report on scientific advice, risk and evidence based policy making](#) (PDF 1.5 MB)

On 8 November 2006, the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee published a report 'Scientific evidence, risk and evidence based policy-making (Seventh Report, HC 900-I)' which calls for a strengthening of the role of government scientific advisers so that ministers can be sure of getting the best scientific advice possible when making policy. In considering evidence based policy, the report concludes that the Government should not overplay this mantra, but should acknowledge more openly the many drivers of policy making, as well as any gaps in the relevant research base. It makes the case for greater public investment in research to underpin policy-making and recommends the establishment of a cross-departmental fund to commission independent policy-related research. In order to combat the short-term nature of the political cycle, there is a need for horizon scanning to be embedded into the policy-making process and for a

general recognition that changing policy in the light of evidence should be regarded as a strength rather than a weakness. The report includes evidence from Chief Government Social Researcher, Sue Duncan.

Department for Communities and Local Government – Strong and prosperous communities – The Local Government White Paper

For further details visit the [Local Government White Paper](#)

The aim of this White Paper is to give local people and local communities more influence and power to improve their lives. It is about creating strong, prosperous communities and delivering better public services through a rebalancing of the relationship between central government, local government and local people.

High stakes – designing emissions pathways to reduce the risk of dangerous climate change

For further details visit the [IPPR report on climate change](#)

This report ( Dr Paul Baer with Dr Michael Mastrandrea), commissioned by the Institute for Public Policy Research (ippr), outlines precisely how large and how fast cuts in greenhouse gas emissions will need to be if we are to have a high chance of avoiding dangerous climate change. It features fresh quantitative analysis of the relationships between global greenhouse gas emissions trajectories, atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations, and temperature changes.

Missed opportunities: the case for investment in learning and skills for homeless people

For further details visit the [Crisis report on investment in learning and skills for homeless people](#) ( PDF 555KB)

The research, by Jane Luby and Julie Welch for Crisis, highlights how participation in learning and skills can transform the lives of homeless people, at the same time as delivering important policy and financial benefits for a wide variety of government policies and programmes. Despite these clear benefits, the research also found that funding and delivery of learning and skills to homeless people is largely ad hoc and under-resourced. The report calls upon the Government to make learning and skills a central core of its homelessness strategies and programmes and ensure the creation of effective partnerships to deliver the benefits at the national, regional and local level. This includes identifying homeless people as one of the key target groups within its Skills and Welfare to Work strategies.

Transport White Paper mid-term review

For further details visit the [European Commission's Transport White Paper mid-term review](#)

In 2001, the European Commission presented a White Paper proposing numerous measures to overhaul the European Union's transport policy in order to make it more sustainable and avoid economic losses due to congestion, pollution and accidents. The White Paper sets out a framework for transport policy within the EU from 2001-2010. The 2006 mid-term review, published during the summer, attempts to rebalance the policy towards current economic, social and environmental needs.





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## Special Theme: Housing

### Summary

Characteristics and functions of the private rented sector

For further details visit the [study on characteristics and functions of the private rented sector](#)

Drawing on the 2001 Census, this study gives a snapshot analysis of the people and households living in private rented accommodation, finding young, mobile people dominating the sector. The private rented sector (PRS) housed 10.6% of UK households during 2001. The sector was sizeable in a number of coastal and university towns, and largest of all in Greater London, where 16.4% of households were living in the PRS. The study is by David Rhodes of the University of York ; the key findings are available on the Joseph Rowntree Foundation website, available via the web link provided.

Overcoming obstacles to equity release

For further details visit the [study on overcoming obstacles to equity release](#)

Over two million older home owners have housing assets worth over £50,000 but incomes so low that they qualify for means-tested benefits. Drawing on housing equity could improve their quality of life significantly, helping them to live more comfortably in their own homes for longer. But only around 25,000 of home owners (of all incomes) conclude equity release each year. This study, by Rachel Terry and Richard Gibson, identifies the obstacles to older home owners with relatively low incomes releasing housing equity and suggests ways of overcoming them. The study focuses on funding home improvements and repairs, and additional care at home. The full report is published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and is available via the web link provided.

Monitoring housing and neighbourhoods trends 2006

For further details visit the [study on monitoring housing and neighbourhood trends 2006](#)

This study draws on extensive data to analyse the current state of housing and neighbourhoods in the UK . On housing, the study covers availability, affordability, unmet need, security of tenure and environmental impact. Household numbers have been growing at a much faster rate than the population. Since 1991, the number of new dwellings has – nationally – broadly kept up with household growth but meeting projected future growth will require a substantial increase in the rate of house-building. Mortgage costs for first-time buyers have now reached their 1990 peak. A third of all working households under 40 cannot afford to buy even at the low end of local housing markets. The use of temporary, rather than permanent, accommodation for homeless people in England has more than doubled since 1997. On neighbourhoods, most people had positive views about their neighbourhood. The report, by Guy Palmer, Peter Kenway and Steve Wilcox, is published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and is available via the web link provided.

Addressing housing affordability, clearance and relocation issues in the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders

For further details visit the [study on addressing housing affordability, clearance and relocation issues in the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders](#)

This study examines how effectively the support and financial needs of residents relocated during demolition and clearance programmes are being met. It also explores how the Pathfinders are addressing housing affordability issues facing relocating households. The researchers found that a sense of home and neighbourhood are vital elements of communities' social and economic well-being. Demolition and relocation processes therefore need to be managed sensitively, efficiently and equitably. There are several examples of good practice where Pathfinders, local authorities and partner agencies are providing a wide range of advice and support to affected residents. The 'affordability' gap between the compensation value of demolished homes and the price of purchasing alternative properties means that affected residents need to be offered a range of financial assistance packages. The key findings from the study, which was carried out by researchers at Sheffield Hallam University, are available on the Joseph Rowntree Foundation website via the web link provided.





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## Newly announced policies and strategies

### Summary

#### 26 October 2006

Planning Policy Statement 3: Access, Movement and Parking (AMP3) (February 2005)

Clarification of Policy AMP3: Access to Protected Routes

For further details visit the [Planning Service website](#)

This document removes ambiguity in the Department's planning policy as to whether or not particular roads are designed to an appropriate standard as dual carriageways, ring roads, through-passes and by-passes. It also addresses in policy terms access provision onto high standard dual carriageways, a new standard of dual carriageway that is similar in design terms to a motorway.

#### 13 November 2006

'Lifetime Opportunities' – Government's anti-poverty and social inclusion strategy for Northern Ireland

For further details visit the [Central Anti-Poverty webpage](#)

This strategy replaces New Targeting Social Need (New TSN), which was government's former high level policy for tackling poverty and social exclusion in Northern Ireland. 'Lifetime Opportunities' adopts a life cycle approach with targets and goals specifically aimed at key stages in people's lives and has two overall strategic objectives:

- to work towards the elimination of poverty and social exclusion in Northern Ireland by 2020; and
- to end child poverty by 2020 – based on the estimate of approximately 130,000 children in Northern Ireland living in relative income poverty in 1998/99. This means lifting 65,000 children out of poverty by 2010 on the way to eradication by 2020.

**Publication Date: December 2006;**  
**Operational Date: April 2007**

Departmental response to flexible working consultation 2006

For further details contact [lynne.taylor@delni.gov.uk](mailto:lynne.taylor@delni.gov.uk) or visit the [Department for Employment and Learning Work and Families webpage](#)

Between April and June 2006, the Department for Employment and Learning consulted on various family friendly proposals aimed at helping employees balance their work and family commitments. This document sets out the Department's response to those aspects of the consultation which dealt with proposals to extend the right to request flexible working, and outlines the shape of the new legislation planned to come into operation in April 2007.

**Publication Date: December 2006**

Departmental response to additional paternity leave and pay consultation 2006

For further details contact [lynne.taylor@delni.gov.uk](mailto:lynne.taylor@delni.gov.uk) or visit the [Department for Employment and Learning Work and Families webpage](#)

Between April and June 2006, the Department for Employment and Learning consulted on various family friendly proposals aimed at helping employees balance their work and family commitments. This document sets out the Department's response to those aspects of the consultation which dealt with proposals to introduce additional paternity leave and pay, and outlines the next steps in relation to taking these proposals forward.

**Publication Date: February 2007**

**Operational Date: April 2007**

Departmental response to dispute resolution – extension of jurisdictions consultation 2006

For further details contact [lynne.taylor@delni.gov.uk](mailto:lynne.taylor@delni.gov.uk) or visit the [Department for Employment and Learning Resolving Disputes webpage](#)

Between July and October 2006, the Department for Employment and Learning consulted on proposals to add three employment rights to the list of those already subject to statutory dispute resolution procedures. This document sets out the Department's response to the consultation, and outlines the shape of the new legislation planned to effect the proposed amendments.





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## Conferences and seminars coming up

### Summary

#### 15 January 2007

Scottish Parliament

Over the Horizon: Fresh Perspectives on Alcohol and Drugs

For further details, or if you wish to receive an invite, please email [alcoholanddrugs@scotlandfutureforum.org](mailto:alcoholanddrugs@scotlandfutureforum.org)

After the Scottish Parliament elections in May 2007, Scotland's Futures Forum will conduct a year long participation project, taking a futures view on the use of alcohol and drugs in Scotland. Working towards the start of this project, a one-day conference is being held on 15 January 2007 at the Scottish Parliament, in association with The Scottish Association of Alcohol and Drug Action Teams. The Forum offers a chance to come round the table and take part in open and honest debate. The Forum does not develop policy but uses fresh approaches to look over the horizon and stimulate public policy debate on the near and long term actions that should be taken.

#### 16 January 2007

Belfast venue – to be confirmed

'Securing the future' round table

For further details contact Ellen [ellen@democraticdialogue.org](mailto:ellen@democraticdialogue.org)

The last of four round tables, organised by Democratic Dialogue and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland, will address crime and justice issues, focusing on key governance questions. Proceedings from previous events are available – contact Ellen at Democratic Dialogue by the email address provided.

#### 17 January 2006

NICVA, 61 Duncairn Gardens, Belfast

Qualitative data on the Northern Ireland Conflict

Professor Robert Miller, Dr Peter McLoughlin, and Dr Mark McNally, Queen's University Belfast, will speak at the event. They will present the objectives and current status of the 'Qualitative data on the Northern Ireland Conflict' project currently under development by ARK.

For further details visit the [ARK Events Calendar](#)

**17-18 January 2007**

Savoy Place , London WC2

The atlas of ideas final conference: mapping the geography of science and innovation

For further details visit the [Demos Atlas of Ideas Final Conference webpage](#)

**8 February 2007; 19.00 to 23.00**

Culloden Hotel

Institute of Directors ' annual dinner

For further details contact [lorraine.corry@iod.com](mailto:lorraine.corry@iod.com)

**21 February 2007**

NICVA, 61 Duncairn Gardens , Belfast

Attitudes to and experience of complementary medicine in Northern Ireland

For further details visit the [ARK Events Calendar](#)

The think tank, Demos, has arranged a two-day international conference to launch the findings from 'The Atlas of Ideas: China , India , Korea and the new geography of science'. The conference will include a project overview by Charles Leadbeater and James Wilsdon, co-authors of 'The Atlas of Ideas'.

The Institute of Directors annual dinner will take place on 8 February 2007. The evening will include a guest speaker and formal dinner. The cost of attendance is £76.37 including VAT and dinner.

Professor Suzanne McDonough ( University of Ulster ) will highlight attitudes to, and experience of complementary medicine in Northern Ireland , using data from the 2005 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey.





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## Current consultations

### Consultation period

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**Draft Plan published 27 June 2006**

Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs)  
Subject Plan for Belfast

For further details visit the [Houses in Multiple Occupation Subject Plan Belfast City Council Area 2015 webpage](#)

Following publication of the Draft Plan, the Department of the Environment invited representations over an eight week period ending on 22 August 2006. The Department may decide to cause an independent examination to be held by the Planning Appeals Commission for the purpose of considering objections to the Draft Plan. The Planning (Development Plans) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2004, requires the Department to make copies of all objections to a development plan available for inspection and accept further objections to these. The objections may be inspected, and any further objections submitted, up until 19 December 2006.

**Draft Plan re-advertised on 25 August 2006**

Craigavon Town Centre Boundaries and Retail Designations Plan 2010

For further details visit the [Craigavon Town Centre Boundaries and Retail Designation Plan 2010 webpage](#)

Following re-advertisement of the Draft Plan, the Department of the Environment invited representations over an eight week period ending on 20 October 2006. The Department has decided to cause an independent examination to be held by the Planning Appeals Commission for the purpose of considering objections to the Draft Plan. The Planning (Development Plans) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2004 requires the Department to make copies of all objections to a development plan available for inspection and accept further objections to these. The objections may be inspected, and any further objections submitted, between 10 November 2006 and 5 January 2007.

**5 October to 29 December 2006**

A strategy and action plan to promote equality, good relations and human rights

For further details visit the [consultation on a strategy and action plan to promote equality, good relations and human rights](#)

A strategy and action plan – aimed at promoting equality, good relations and human rights within the health and social care system – is now available for consultation. The strategy aims to accommodate diversity and will ensure accessibility to health and social care for all those who need it. Proposed actions include: providing high quality interpreting and translation services; improving disabled people's access to Health and Personal Social Services (HPSS); promoting community engagement and service user feedback; assessing the impact of our policies and functions on the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations; and training our staff on equality and human rights.

## 24 October 2006 to 31 January 2007

Play policy for Northern Ireland

For further details visit the [Play Policy webpage](#)

## November 2006 to January 2007

Future EU Structural Fund Peace Programme and future Cross Border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013

For further details contact [bill.pauley@dfpni.gov.uk](mailto:bill.pauley@dfpni.gov.uk) or visit the [Special EU Programmes Body website](#)

## November 2006 to March 2007

Review of statutory legacy figures

For further details contact [neil.lambe@dfpni.gov.uk](mailto:neil.lambe@dfpni.gov.uk)

## 6 November 2006 to 12 January 2007

Draft Enterprise Ulster (Dissolution) Order ( Northern Ireland ) 2007

For further details visit the [Draft Enterprise Ulster \(Dissolution\) Order \(NI\) 2007 webpage](#)

## 7 November 2006 to 30 January 2007

Belfast City Centre North-West Quarter Part Two: Baseline Regeneration Issues Report

For further details visit the [North-West Quarter Part Two: Baseline Regeneration Issues Report webpage](#)

## 17 November 2006 to 9 February 2007

Draft policy for residents' parking schemes

For further details visit the [Roads Service NI consultations webpage](#)

A draft play policy was issued for consultation on 24 October 2006. The consultation document sets out Government's commitment to a play policy for Northern Ireland . The consultation period runs until 31 January 2007.

The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) will fulfil the Managing Authority role for both the future Peace Programme 'Peace III' and the Cross-Border Cooperation Programme. The Cross Border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013 is the successor to the current EU Interreg IIIA Community Initiative 2000-2006. The region eligible for support under the Cross-Border Programme 2007-2013 will include Western Scotland .

This consultation sets out proposals to increase the current levels of the statutory legacy, which determines entitlement to the estate of a person dying without making a will.

On 21 March 2006, when announcing the outcome of the Review of Public Administration, the Secretary of State announced that Enterprise Ulster is to be abolished. This consultation document invites views on the content of a draft Order, which provides for the wind-up and closure of Enterprise Ulster , a Non-Departmental Public Body established under the Enterprise Ulster ( Northern Ireland ) Order 1973.

The Department for Social Development (DSD) has published GVA Grimley's report on regeneration issues affecting the North West Quarter (Part Two) of Belfast City Centre. The report identifies the socio-economic issues facing the Quarter and provides a potential framework for a regeneration masterplan for the area. Feedback from the consultation period will inform the preparation of the masterplan.

The draft policy:

- provides a framework to allow the Department to introduce residents' parking schemes in Northern Ireland as a form of parking control (using the Road Traffic Regulation (NI) Order 1997);
- outlines the requirements for schemes to be implemented, with local support being required in the majority of cases; and outlines the various types of residents parking scheme permits that will be issued and the level of charge associated with each.





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## Forthcoming consultations

Consultation start date/period	Summary
<b>Early December 2006</b>  Licence – to appoint water and sewerage undertaker  For further details contact <a href="mailto:martin.mckee@drdni.gov.uk">martin.mckee@drdni.gov.uk</a>	The licence is the legal instrument of appointment of the water and sewerage undertaker in Northern Ireland , developed under the powers conferred to the Department for Regional Development by the Water and Sewerage Services (NI) Order 2006. The licence imposes standard industry conditions on the appointed undertaker for the duration of the appointment. The licence provides the means by which the Economic Regulator can ensure adherence by the appointed undertaker to price setting limits; that the supply and quality of services are maintained; and that customer interests are protected.
<b>December 2006</b>  Future EU Competitiveness Programme 2007-2013  For further details contact <a href="mailto:bill.pauley@dfpni.gov.uk">bill.pauley@dfpni.gov.uk</a>	There will be two new EU Programmes for NI under the EU's Competitiveness and Employment objective for the period 2007-13: one co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the other by the European Social Fund (ESF). The ERDF programme aims to boost Northern Ireland 's economic and social competitiveness and will focus on innovation, research and sustainable development. The ESF programme has similar objectives but will focus on reducing the rate of economic inactivity in Northern Ireland and improving knowledge and skill levels in the workforce. Both programmes are currently being prepared in consultation with relevant regional partners and are expected to go out for a 12- week public consultation in December 2006. Programme proposals must be submitted to the EU Commission by 6 March 2007, after which the Commission has up to four months to approve the new programmes.
<b>December 2006</b>  Affordability Review – interim report  For further details visit the <a href="#">Affordability Review webpage</a> or email: <a href="mailto:affordabilityreview@dsdni.gov.uk">affordabilityreview@dsdni.gov.uk</a>	David Hanson, Minister with responsibility for Social Development, established a review into affordable housing under the direction of Sir John Semple. The Review's remit is wide-ranging and will examine the mechanisms aimed at securing social housing for rent, growing a quality private rented sector and helping people into homeownership. An interim report for consultation will be published in December 2006 with a final report for presentation to the Minister in March 2007.

### **December 2006**

Draft Libraries ( Northern Ireland ) Order 2007

For further details contact  
[irene.armstrong@dcalni.gov.uk](mailto:irene.armstrong@dcalni.gov.uk)

There is public consultation on legislation and the Parliamentary Explanatory memorandum to create and confer functions on the Northern

Ireland Library Authority following a decision of the Review of Public Administration.

### **December 2006**

Review of governance arrangements within Colleges of Further Education

For further details contact  
[richard.monds@delni.gov.uk](mailto:richard.monds@delni.gov.uk)

The Education ( Northern Ireland ) Order 2006, which came into operation on 1 August 2006, contains powers to enable the Department for Employment and Learning to alter the composition of membership of a governing body of an institution of further education and to pay remuneration to the members. The Department will consult with interested parties with a view to introducing changes through subordinate legislation.

### **December 2006 to February 2007**

The Draft Buildings Regulations Amendment Order

For further details contact  
[gerry.mckibbin@dfpni.gov.uk](mailto:gerry.mckibbin@dfpni.gov.uk)

This consultation will focus on reviewing the provisions of the Building Regulations (NI) Order 1979.

### **December 2006/January 2007**

Sports Policy Framework and Strategy for Northern Ireland 2006-2016

For further details contact  
[ciaran.mee@dcalni.gov.uk](mailto:ciaran.mee@dcalni.gov.uk)

The Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL), in partnership with the Sports Council, is developing a new Sports Strategy for Northern Ireland . This will detail the vision and rationale for sport and establish key priorities and actions for the future development of sport in Northern Ireland . The overall aim will be to produce a 10 year Strategy for Sport which reflects government's policy and priorities for sport and with which key stakeholders can identify. DCAL is hoping to publish a draft Strategy for consultation in December/January.

### **December 2006/January 2007**

Planning Policy Statement 7 Addendum: Residential Extensions and Alterations

For further details contact  
[valerie.hamilton@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:valerie.hamilton@doeni.gov.uk)

Planning Policy Statement 7 Addendum: Residential Extensions and Alterations is the draft policy and guidance to assist consideration of planning applications for the extension and alteration of residential property.

### **Early 2007**

Proposals for managing the coexistence of Genetically Modified (GM), conventional and organic crops

For further details contact  
[margaret.mcclenaghan@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:margaret.mcclenaghan@doeni.gov.uk)

This consultation will focus on the development of a Northern Ireland strategy covering coexistence of Genetically Modified (GM) and non-GM crops.

## Early 2007

Planning Policy Statement 18: Renewable Energy

For further details contact  
[stephen.hamilton@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:stephen.hamilton@doeni.gov.uk)

Planning Policy Statement 18 is the draft policy to assist consideration of planning applications for the development of renewable sources of electricity generation and heat production.

## Early 2007

Planning permitted development rights for small scale renewables development

For further details contact  
[wilfrid.reavie@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:wilfrid.reavie@doeni.gov.uk)

This consultation paper will seek views on changes to planning permitted development rights to facilitate small scale development associated with generation of energy from renewable resources.

## Early 2007

Consultation on Careers Education, Information Advice and Guidance Strategy

For further details contact  
[judith.shaw@delni.gov.uk](mailto:judith.shaw@delni.gov.uk)

This project is being taken forward under the Northern Ireland Skills Strategy and will result in the development of an all-age Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (EIAG) Strategy. It will enhance the Careers Education offered to young people and adults and will also ensure that the mechanisms are in place to enable Careers EIAG to be based on up-to-date labour market information. Through better-informed decision-making, the project is aimed at encouraging increased participation in education, training and employment. The strategy is being developed jointly by the Department for Employment and Learning and the Department of Education and other key stakeholders.

## Early 2007

Employment Agencies – consultation on amending the Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations ( Northern Ireland ) 2005

For further details contact  
[andrew.dawson@delni.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.dawson@delni.gov.uk)

The Department for Employment and Learning will initiate a consultation concerning Government's proposals to amend the Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations ( Northern Ireland ) 2005. The package of measures will be targeted at specific issues including charges and loans, drivers working excessive hours, charges to models/actors and simplifying information provisions for very short term tasks. As well as distributing consultation documents the Department intends to engage sector-specific representatives.

## February 2007

Amendment to Working Time Regulations – extension of holiday entitlement

For further details contact  
[jeff.ard@delni.gov.uk](mailto:jeff.ard@delni.gov.uk)

This is the second of two consultation exercises relating to the increase in the current statutory minimum holiday entitlement. Views will be sought from businesses, trade unions, representative bodies, individuals and other stakeholders on the Regulations emanating from an initial policy consultation which ended on 19 October 2006.

## February/March 2007

Planning Policy Statement 2 (Revised): Natural Heritage (provisionally renamed)

For further details contact  
[valerie.hamilton@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:valerie.hamilton@doeni.gov.uk)

Planning Policy Statement 2 (Revised) is the updated draft policy for the protection of Natural Heritage in the development control process.





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## Policy reviews coming up

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#### May 2006

Review of frontline service in Jobs and Benefits Offices

For further details contact [sheena.mairs@delni.gov.uk](mailto:sheena.mairs@delni.gov.uk)

This review will examine a new fully integrated frontline model to all Jobs and Benefits Offices (JBOs) within the Network. It is envisaged that the proposed new structure will provide more flexibility for Personal Advisers and give greater emphasis to support for all customers, especially those furthest from the labour market. The new structure will be piloted in four offices from April 2007 and an ongoing evaluation carried out.

#### June 2006

Evaluation of the New Deal for Musicians Programme

For further details contact [john.mallon@delni.gov.uk](mailto:john.mallon@delni.gov.uk)

The New Deal for Musicians is part of the New Deal programme and is designed to help long term unemployed people find employment, primarily in the music industry. The overall aim of the exercise is to evaluate the extent to which the aims and objectives of the programme have been achieved. Peer Consulting have been appointed to conduct the evaluation with a report due by January 2007.

#### November 2006

Review of the Health and Personal Social Services (HPSS) Finance Regime

For further details contact [adrian.murphy@dhsspsni.gov.uk](mailto:adrian.murphy@dhsspsni.gov.uk)

To review the current HPSS Finance regime and make recommendations aimed at implementing HM Treasury/Department of Finance and Personnel guidance in relation to the budgetary treatment of the HPSS as Non-Departmental Public Body equivalents. The revised system should reduce complexity; ensure efficient management of cash balances, whilst allowing for efficient and effective financial management and control of budgets both within the Department and the HPSS bodies.

#### January 2007

Review of Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS)

For further details contact [alan.preston@drdni.gov.uk](mailto:alan.preston@drdni.gov.uk)

The Department is committed to undertaking a formal mid term review of the Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS). It will include the following in considering its future direction:

- Any variation in the Regional Development Strategy (RDS);
- Transport budgets secured;
- Rate of implementation of the RTS; and
- Monitoring of the effectiveness of the RTS Initiatives.

## Anticipated January 2007

Evaluation of the Work of the Skills for Business Network in Northern Ireland

For further details contact  
[tim.devine@delni.gov.uk](mailto:tim.devine@delni.gov.uk)

The Skills for Business Network (SfBN) comprises 25 Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) and the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA). The aims of a review of the Network's activities to date in Northern Ireland (NI) will be to:

- Examine progress and success factors for SfBN in Northern Ireland and how these can be achieved;
- Understand how the SfBN can support the policy objectives of partners and how partners can support the SfBN to improve the delivery of skills in NI; and
- Analyse the impact of policies, processes, structures, resources and other institutional factors on the performance of the SfBN in NI.

## February 2007

Review of the Department for Employment and Learning's relationship with Ulster Supported Employment Ltd (USEL)

For further details contact  
[john.campbell@delni.gov.uk](mailto:john.campbell@delni.gov.uk)

Ulster Supported Employment Ltd is an executive Non-Departmental Public Body for which the Department for Employment and Learning has responsibility. The review will consider how effectively USEL contributes to government and departmental objectives. The review will consider the appropriateness of the relationship between USEL and the Department.





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## Summary of key past events

### Summary

#### 19 September 2006

Shifting Brilliances conference

For further details contact [david.mann@dcalni.gov.uk](mailto:david.mann@dcalni.gov.uk)

This one day conference brought together key players in the arts and broadcasting sectors from across the UK and Ireland . The conference was opened by the Secretary of State, followed by speeches and panel contributions from senior broadcast executives, producers, writers, directors, performers and leading industry figures. The conference explored what needs to be done to increase television drama production in Northern Ireland .

#### 4 October 2006

Policy seminar on 'Evidence Based Policy Making'

For further details contact the Policy Innovation Unit in OFMDFM [policylink@ofmdfmi.gov.uk](mailto:policylink@ofmdfmi.gov.uk) .

The Policy Innovation Unit in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) hosted this seminar on 'Evidence Based Policy Making'. The seminar was chaired by Nigel Hamilton, Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, and the keynote speaker was Mr Stephen Aldridge, Director of the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit. Also speaking at the event were Michelle Frew, from the Office of Science and Innovation, and Dr Miriam McCarthy, Director of Secondary Care, Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

Stephen Aldridge gave an overview of the work of the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit and highlighted its core roles. He talked about how they provided an analytical, strategic and challenge function for the Prime Minister and departments with a view to providing confidential advice and analysis, sometimes working in conjunction with departments. Stephen explained that research and analysis will be most effective in driving evidence-based policy where they are linked to the resolution of specific problems rather than providing general information.





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