

NORTHERN IRELAND EXECUTIVE

DRAFT PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT

24 September 2001

CONTENTS

	Page
FOREWORD	
SEEKING YOUR VIEWS	1
1. MAKING A DIFFERENCE	3
2. GROWING AS A COMMUNITY	10
3. WORKING FOR A HEALTHIER PEOPLE	23
4. INVESTING IN EDUCATION AND SKILLS	29
5. SECURING A COMPETITIVE ECONOMY	38
6. DEVELOPING NORTH/SOUTH, EAST/WEST AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	52
7. WORKING TOGETHER	60
ANNEXES	
ANNEX A	ACTIONS COMPLETED 66
ANNEX B	FINANCING OUR WORK 71
ANNEX C	PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENTS 72
	DARD 74
	DCAL 76
	DE 81
	DEL 85
	DETI 88
	DOE 92
	DFP 97
	DHSSPS 101
	DRD 105
	DSD 111
	OFMDFM 117
ANNEX D	EQUALITY ASPECTS 121
ANNEX D(i)	LIST OF EIAs UNDERWAY /PLANNED 132
ANNEX E	GLOSSARY OF TERMS 143

SEEKING YOUR VIEWS

We are presenting this draft Programme for Government to the Assembly alongside our proposals for our Budget, having taken account of the views expressed in responses to our Position Report on the Programme for Government and Budget published on 18 June.

We also want to hear the views of as wide a range of interests as possible, including the social partners in business, the trades unions, the voluntary and community sector, local government and the wider public sector, as well as individual citizens.

For this reason we are launching a consultation on the draft Programme for Government along with the draft Budget, prior to putting final proposals to the Assembly later in the autumn.

We encourage all those with an interest to respond to these proposals during the consultation period which will last until 20 November. In particular, we would like to hear your views on the draft Programme for Government, including the following key areas:

- The Executive's Priorities
- The sub-priorities we have identified
- The commitments we have given on actions we will take in support of our priorities
- The assessment of the equality aspects of the draft Programme for Government
- The Public Service Agreements.

One issue on which we would be keen to have views is the most appropriate approach to services for older people. In section 2.8, which describes sub-priority 6 of *Growing as a Community* we set out the main actions in this area, although there are other policies relevant to the needs of older people elsewhere in the draft Programme. We will be discussing with representatives of older people how best we should develop our policies and are keen to have views on this issue.

Copies of this document

We can send you this draft Programme for Government in Word or in hard copy – or you can access it on the Internet at www.pfgni.gov.uk. However, if the report is not in a format that suits your needs, please let us know and we will make alternative arrangements.

Contact Details

Comments should be sent to arrive no later than 20 November 2001 to:

Dougie Topping
Economic Policy Unit
Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
Room E5.20
Castle Buildings
Stormont
BELFAST
BT4 3SG

Tel: (028) 9052 0757

Email: pfg@ofmdfmi.gov.uk

You can also comment via our website www.pfgni.gov.uk. We plan to make available further information on the development of the Programme for Government on our website as well as details of consultation responses. If you do not wish your response to be published in total or in part on the website, you should make this clear in your response.

1. MAKING A DIFFERENCE

1.1 Introduction

In the Belfast Agreement, in order to create effective government of Northern Ireland, it was agreed that:

“The Executive Committee will seek to agree each year, and review as necessary a programme incorporating an agreed budget linked to policies and programmes, subject to approval by the Assembly, after scrutiny in Assembly Committees, on a cross-community basis”.

Last year we agreed our first draft Programme for Government. It covered the three years from April 2001, but focused on our work in 2001-02. Following widespread consultation, in particular with Assembly Committees, a revised Programme was endorsed by the Assembly on 6 March. It provides a strategic overview of the Executive’s work and demonstrates how policies and programmes, delivered by different departments and agencies, can be best combined to achieve our agreed priorities. It also sets out in Public Service Agreements the key targets that each department is seeking to deliver.

This new draft, while retaining the framework set out in the original Programme, focuses on key developments that we plan for 2002-03. It builds on our experience of the past year, but has been developed to give a clearer overview of our work.

As we made clear in our Position Report to the Assembly on the Programme for Government and Budget, published on 18 June, in which we sought initial views, this draft Programme and the draft Budget are interlinked. The Programme’s priorities drive our decisions on the allocation of financial resources. We are therefore publishing, alongside this draft Programme, our draft Budget for next year and are seeking the Assembly’s and the wider public’s views on both.

1.2 The Challenges we face

Our vision – as set out in the Agreement - remains of a peaceful, cohesive, inclusive, prosperous, stable and fair society, firmly founded on the “achievement of reconciliation, tolerance, and mutual trust, and the protection and vindication of the human rights of all”. It is based on “partnership, equality and mutual respect as the basis of relationships within Northern Ireland, between North and South and between these islands”.

The key challenge is how to turn such a vision into reality, delivering real benefits to all.

We have now the experience of the first full year of debate on policies and programmes within and between the Assembly, its Committees, the Executive, and of delivering programmes. In this process we have all learned a great deal. Within the Executive we have worked together on a range of initiatives.

We have allocated resources from the first round of the Executive Programme Funds. Following our review of student support, we have brought forward a new package of assistance to open up access to third level education for those on low incomes. We have worked across departmental boundaries to agree a new Regional Development Strategy and to develop a new road safety plan.

We have also taken forward work, through the Hayes Review, that will help us determine the future of our acute hospitals, and have launched a review of post-primary education that will inform our decisions on the future structure of education. We have agreed a new European Structural Funds Programme with the European Commission, consulted on the Single Equality Bill and a Victims' Strategy and begun work on the creation of a Children's Commissioner. In recent months we have worked together to address the threat of Foot and Mouth Disease. We set out the actions in the Programme for this year which have already been achieved in Annex A.

But the major challenges we described last year largely remain and can only be addressed over the longer term. They, and some of the key principles on which we will seek to tackle them, are outlined below.

Current economic and social climate

Our economy has continued to perform well over the past year. Employment has reached record levels while unemployment remains low. We have seen strong growth in manufacturing output, which has expanded at over six times the rate for the UK. In addition, earnings grew at a faster rate than for the UK whilst house prices rose strongly. Looking to the future, Northern Ireland's relatively youthful population and high levels of educational attainment, for example 24.6% of A level candidates achieve the top grade compared to 18.6% across the UK, demonstrates the potential opportunities for future economic development.

However, despite strong performance, there remain significant weaknesses. Unemployment remains above the UK average, with long-term unemployment declining much more slowly than we would like. Growth is constrained by the structure of the economy, which is over-reliant on the public sector and declining sectors such as textiles, and by skill shortages in areas including ICT and the hospitality industry.

The global economy is going through a period of uncertainty and, whilst economic growth is expected to continue in the medium to long term, there will be continuing pressures on our manufacturing and tradeable services sectors and a risk of short-term increases in unemployment. Our rural economy also faces continuing structural problems, exacerbated in recent

months by the impact of Foot and Mouth. In addition, almost a fifth of our workforce has few or no formal qualifications while almost a quarter of the entire adult population here has low levels of literacy.

These factors influence, and are influenced by, our social conditions. We still have a large percentage of our population dependent on benefits; almost 18% of children under 16 live in homes in receipt of Income Support. Evidence shows that those worst off have a considerably lower achievement level at school-leaving age. Our health record also is not good: our life expectancy compares unfavourably with the European average and, more worryingly, there are huge differences in health status between the best and worst off. In addition, we have a much higher proportion of people waiting for hospital treatment than in Great Britain.

1.3 A Cohesive, Inclusive and Just Society

We are also acutely conscious of the religious, political and racial divisions within our community and also the impact of poverty on individuals and communities.

We are therefore committed to a society where communities pull together; in which people feel valued and respected and can share in growing prosperity; and in which there is equality of opportunity and justice for all.

1.4 A Healthy Society

A modern, successful society must include major improvements in health. We recognise that we have to work across departments to improve health and tackle the current inequalities in health. Likewise, a good environment is essential for a good quality of life and health, and we accept that we must achieve the necessary levels of environmental protection.

We also want to improve the quality of treatment and health and social care available to those who need it. We are committed to looking at ways of improving standards of care and maximising the effectiveness of our health and social services.

1.5 Learning for all

High quality education, with equal access for all, leading to significantly improved participation and performance in post-16 education and training is also central to our strategy. We therefore need to extend accessibility, choice and excellence throughout education, raise standards and eliminate low achievement. We will particularly focus on the needs of our young people, ensuring that they get the best start in life. However, we also recognise the importance of lifelong learning, enabling adults to maintain or update their skills and qualifications to meet the needs of a changing economic climate and to achieve their potential.

1.6 A competitive economy

We recognise the real successes of many businesses in Northern Ireland and that the private sector is the key driver of economic growth. There is however a significant role for government to promote a dynamic, competitive economy that creates opportunities for all, assisting the creation of entrepreneurship and innovation. In addition, there is a major role for government in ensuring that the essential infrastructure necessary for the economy is in place. Here we have to tackle major problems arising from many years of significant under-investment. We are committed to dealing with these challenges in a way that can encourage competitiveness but also ensures sustainable development, respecting the environment and allowing the benefits to be shared across society.

1.7 An outward looking region

We recognise the importance of becoming a more outward-looking region and the benefits and opportunities that improved relations can bring. We will focus on developing new opportunities for co-operation, within the framework set out in the Agreement, on north/south and east/west axes. We will also work to strengthen existing links and develop new relationships within the European Union and with North America.

1.8 Our Priority Areas

In the light of these continuing challenges, we have reviewed our current priorities and have concluded that our priorities remain:

- | |
|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><i>THE EXECUTIVE'S PRIORITIES</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Growing as a Community• Working for a Healthier People• Investing in Education and Skills• Securing a Competitive Economy• Developing North/South, East/West and International Relations |
|---|

The sub-priorities that support these priorities also remain relevant and help define how we can work together most effectively. Our experience of the last year has however helped us to refine the rationale for our policies and programmes. This is set out in the following chapters.

Resourcing our work

- 1.9 Annex B sets out our proposed allocations for the 2002/03 financial year, allocations which are provided in more detail in our draft Budget document. Our resources for the period 2002/03 to 2003/04 were largely determined by the outcome of the 2000 Spending Review announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in July 2000. This provided a total budget for the Executive of £6,052.5 million for 2002/03.

This figure provides for a rise in public expenditure in 2002/03 of around 3% above the general rate of inflation, building on the 5.5% increase (also above the general rate of inflation) in 2001/02. This growth is very necessary given the problems facing many public services but may fall short of meeting expectations. In many areas, notably the health service, it is clear that there is real and sustained growth in demand for services and a trend in pay and price increases which tends to exceed the general level of inflation. This provides a challenging context within which the Executive must seek to allocate resources.

Common themes

- 1.10 Before we describe in greater detail our priorities, there are a number of common themes that are relevant across all our work, which influence how we will develop and implement our policies.

(i) *Coherent and modern government*

We accept that our administration needs to be accessible, accountable and responsive. To achieve that we will improve the way in which we work together within our 11 departments. We need to improve co-ordination between our departments, agencies and local government, ensuring that services are delivered in a way that meets the needs of the public and that policies are designed for our own local circumstances.

We also recognise that an exclusively "top-down" approach to administration is neither desirable nor effective. Working together with our social partners in business, the trades unions and the voluntary and community sectors, will help us to tackle some of our greatest challenges. In particular, the community and voluntary sector has a key role to play in working with Government in the social sphere and the business sector in helping us shape economic policy. In the last year we have sought to consult widely and involve a large number of organisations. We have much still to learn in this process but we feel that a useful start has been made.

One of the most tangible ways in which we are promoting a more coherent approach to policy and programme development is through the use of **Executive Programme Funds, (EPFs)**. These Funds were created by the Executive to assist the development of new policies, services, programmes

and projects of major importance that can contribute towards delivering progress in each of the five priority areas we have identified, namely:

- ❖ Social Inclusion/Community Regeneration Fund
- ❖ Service Modernisation Fund
- ❖ New Directions Fund
- ❖ Infrastructure/Capital Renewal Fund
- ❖ Children's Fund.

In the first allocation of EPFs announced on 2 April 2001, 62 proposals, totalling £146 million over the next three years, received support. These included support for children through a range of interventions in education and social services; key infrastructure projects including the Toome bypass and A8 Belfast to Larne route; new measures in agriculture on farm management and organic farming; key investment in e-government; libraries and creativity; and programmes covering adult education and victims support. Further allocations of EPFs are planned later this year and next year.

(ii) Policy themes

There are also a number of key policy themes that cut across our five priority areas, where we need to maintain a particular focus and in many cases set up effective policy development and monitoring processes. These include:

Promoting equality of opportunity and good relations

At the heart of all our strategic planning are the statutory commitments both to equality of opportunity between all of the Section 75 categories, and good relations between people of different religious beliefs, political opinion and racial group.

New Targeting Social Need

Our New TSN policy aims to tackle social need and social exclusion. It means using more of our existing resources to benefit people and areas in greatest objective social need; it also means delivering our policies in ways that are more helpful to those in need. . New TSN is implemented through a range of policies and programmes across all Departments. It has a particular focus on tackling the problems of unemployment and on increasing employability. It is also concerned with inequalities in other policy areas.

Promoting sustainable living

We want to ensure that our society and economy develops in a way that meets our current needs, while ensuring that future generations too can meet their needs. We want to achieve effective protection of the environment and the prudent use of natural resources, and high and stable levels of economic growth. We need therefore to consider the environmental impact of all key policies. We will seek to do so in an increasingly integrated way, that will embed the principles of sustainable development in the rural and urban economy.

Developing as a region

We now have an important, overarching planning instrument, the Regional Development Strategy (RDS), which seeks to link the planning of key services with the wider economic and social development of the region. It provides a strategic planning framework which will guide future development in order to promote a balanced and equitable pattern of sustainable development.

To ensure that we address key aspects of these themes we will assess the impact of our policies in the following areas: -

- *Promoting equality of opportunity and good relations*
- *Promoting a culture of rights and responsibilities*
- *Targeting Social Need*
- *Assessing the needs of our rural communities*
- *Promoting health and social well-being*
- *Assessing the impact on business*
- *Protecting our environment.*

1.11 Monitoring and reporting our progress

As an Executive we want to ensure that progress continues to be made across the priority areas we have identified. We also want to share information about this progress with the Assembly and more widely.

We have set out in this document explanations of the overall direction of our policies and provided information on specific actions that we will take during 2002/03 and beyond in support of our priorities and sub-priorities. These have been supported by key targets in Public Service Agreements (attached at Annex C). We wish to make clear, however, that the actions and targets set out in our first Programme for Government and the Public Service Agreements that formed part of it also remain valid. Some of these have now been achieved and others are on course for achievement during the current year and have not therefore been repeated in this document. Others are restated in this document or in the relevant departmental Public Service Agreement, or will be included in the new Service Delivery Agreements that are currently being developed.

We are committed to monitoring regularly how effective we are in delivering our Programme for Government and in achieving the targets we set in Public Service Agreements and Service Delivery Agreements. We will also publish annually a report on progress towards achieving our targets as set out in the Programme for Government and our Public Service Agreements. This report will be published following the end of each financial year.

2. GROWING AS A COMMUNITY

2.1 Introduction

One of our key challenges is to develop a society – a wider community - in which all citizens can fully and freely participate. In such a community, equality, human rights, mutual trust and respect must be core values and citizens must be able to realise their full potential and live free from poverty.

We will focus on: -

- **promoting equality of opportunity and human rights;**
- **improving community relations and tackling the divisions in our society;**
- **addressing the needs of victims;**
- **protecting children’s rights, meeting children’s needs and including children’s voices;**
- **tackling social need and social exclusion;**
- **ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to access decent affordable housing,**
- **ensuring that those eligible for benefits receive the support to which they are entitled and that services for older people are provided in the most effective way;**
- **renewing the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and building community participation; and**
- **respecting, supporting and celebrating cultural and linguistic diversity and maximising the benefits of culture, arts and leisure activities.**

2.2 Overview

We seek to be a driving and unifying force for the whole community and are working to address divisions and to promote good relations. We seek to foster mutual understanding and respect for diversity and to support

dialogue. We will continue to pay special attention to the particular difficulties faced by victims of the Troubles.

We will work to ensure that everyone can have confidence and trust in a fair and effective system of government, underpinned by rights that are guaranteed for all, and responsibilities that all must share. We will work to tackle poverty and to promote equality of opportunity. We must also build up the capacity of local communities to express their needs and to participate in the development and implementation of policies and programmes to meet those needs.

We want to focus on the needs of our children and young people. In addition, we have a significant number of people moving into old age, with an important contribution to make, but with the right to look for support to maintain their quality of life. We want to ensure that they can continue to contribute to all aspects of life here and will engage with the voluntary and community sector in taking forward this work.

2.3 Sub-priority 1: We will promote Equality of Opportunity and Human Rights

The core principles and values of equality and human rights are fundamental to our work. We are committed to promoting equality and human rights through strong legislation and effective public policies and strategies, recognising best practice.

Taking account of consultation, we aim to bring forward legislation to harmonise our existing anti-discrimination legislation as far as practicable, to implement EC Directives and to take account of important developments particularly on disability rights, race and gender.

We will develop our work on human rights in accordance with the protocol agreed between departments and the Human Rights Commission. The protocol sets out arrangements under which departments obtain input from the Commission in the early stages of the development of policy and legislation, in order to ensure the highest human rights standards.

We will continue to ensure that all Departmental Equality Schemes are effectively implemented and that the challenging programme of Equality Impact Assessments arising from approved Equality Schemes is conducted to the highest possible standards.

We are further developing our information base so that we can more effectively carry out Equality Impact Assessments. A new Steering Group has been established in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action and the Equality Commission to drive this work forward.

We will also ensure that the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) itself follows best practice in continuing to promote equality of opportunity and protecting human rights in all its employment practices.

In support of this sub-priority, we will:

- during 2002, bring forward proposals to develop and harmonise anti-discrimination legislation as far as practicable;
- during 2002, develop a strategy to implement the Executive's response to the Disability Rights Task Force recommendations to bring about improved rights for disabled people;
- during 2002, implement our cross-departmental strategies on tackling gender and racial inequalities;
- by summer 2002, develop a strategic framework for increasing our research and information on equality and social need in close contact with affected groups;
- during 2002, take forward the Executive's response to the PSI Working Group report on Travellers, in particular to address accommodation and education needs;
- take forward recommendations arising from the independent review of the Senior Civil Service appointment and promotion procedures; and
- during 2002, establish a baseline and develop indicators against which to measure progress towards recognition of the NICS as a fully inclusive employer in which all sections of the community have confidence and trust.

2.4 Sub-priority 2: We will improve community relations and tackle the divisions in our society

We have to deal with very deep and painful divisions in our society after the decades of conflict. We are committed to continuing to develop the capacity for compromise and respect, seeking to resolve conflict, creating new links and building trust. Recent conflict at interface areas such as in North Belfast and the growth in sectarian and racial intimidation have emphasised the difficulties that remain in our society and the urgency for action. Of particular importance is the need to support the capacity of local communities to deal with matters of dispute and division including the proliferation of sectarian graffiti, unauthorised flag flying, the erection of memorials and other issues that can lead to community tensions. We also need to ensure that all that can be done by the Executive to assist is done.

We recognise that such contentious issues cannot be dealt with by individual departments or agencies working alone: rather, they require a cross-cutting strategy that involves both statutory bodies and local communities. We will bring forward proposals for dealing with these issues in a way that can command the confidence of all sections of our community and which will support local communities. We will continue to promote a culture of tolerance and mutual understanding among our young people.

We agreed last year to review current policies and put in place a cross-departmental strategy to promote improved community relations. Earlier this year we announced its establishment and terms of reference. Following completion of the review we will consult widely on recommendations on future policies.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- by 2002, complete the review of the current community relations policy and assess its impacts and achievements;
- during 2002, put in place a cross-departmental strategy and framework, within the devolved administration, for the promotion of community relations and to ensure an effective and co-ordinated response to sectarian and racial intimidation; and
- during 2002/03, take forward the recommendations of the "Towards a Culture of Tolerance: Integrating Education" Working Group which is examining the issues of pluralism, equity and tolerance within and between the schools sectors in Northern Ireland.

2.5. Sub-priority 3: We will address the needs of victims

We will build on the work undertaken in 2001/02 to meet the needs of those who have been most directly affected by the conflict..

That work includes the re-constitution of an Inter-Departmental Working Group on victims, now including the Social Security Agency and the NI Housing Executive; 30 meetings with victims' groups; responding to over 60 welfare cases; the involvement in capacity building for victims' groups; and the carrying out of research into the level of service provision for victims. In addition, meetings have been held with organisations working in the disability and trauma fields and Ministers have held a series of meetings with representatives from a wide range of victims' groups. The Victims Unit has also been working on the victims' measure of the Peace II European programme and has issued recently for widespread consultation a paper on a victims' strategy. We aim to have this cross-departmental strategy in place towards the end of 2001.

In support of this sub-priority we will take the following actions:

- during 2002/03, take forward the actions contained in the victims' strategy; and
- during 2002/03, ensure that policy makers' understanding of these issues develops and victims' groups are able to develop their role, including, where appropriate, work on a single identity basis.

2.6 Sub-priority 4: We will protect children's rights, meet children's needs and include children's voices

Children need the support of society to ensure that their right to a safe, happy and fulfilling childhood is respected and promoted. However, we are aware of the very great challenges. For example, over a quarter of our children come from households dependent on Jobseeker's Allowance or Income Support, and we know that there is a close relationship between family poverty and higher infant mortality, poor levels of general health and increased risk of social problems. The number of our children in care is significantly higher than in England and there is a need for a substantial increase in the number of residential child-care places with a range of specialised facilities.

We have worked closely with non-governmental children's organisations to develop proposals for a Commissioner for Children which have now been published for public consultation. These organisations have also been consulted about the future arrangements for accessing the Children's Fund. We will build on this partnership to ensure a more co-ordinated approach.

We also plan to bring forward a 10-year strategy for children and young people, taking account of the role of parents and families. This will include strategic goals in key areas affecting children and young people. It will also examine the scope for achieving a more joined up approach within the Executive to children's issues.

We are also reviewing how our law protects children from harsh discipline. We will look at ways to improve parents' access to the support, information and advice. In our programme of law reform, we will address issues including domestic violence, divorce and the physical punishment of children.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- during 2002, appoint a Commissioner for Children;
- by spring 2002, produce a consultation paper on the development of a 10-year strategy for children and young people;

- by March 2003, increase the number of residential child care places by 64 above the July 2001 level to reduce the short-fall in existing provision;
- by March 2003, develop a strategy to promote stability and security for looked after children through permanency planning and adoption;
- by January 2003, have implemented through the Sports Council a Code of Ethics and Good Practice for children's sport;
- by spring 2002, consult on the physical punishment of children in the home; and
- by autumn 2002, bring forward improvements to the divorce system, which will more fully take into account the needs of children.

2.7 Sub-priority 5: We will tackle social need and social exclusion

Poverty has for too long blighted the lives of individuals and communities, with clear links for example to poorer health, lower life expectancy, poorer educational attainment and greater difficulty in getting jobs and accessing public services. Experience of unemployment and poverty vary according to factors such as geographical area, gender, community background, age and disability.

Our New Targeting Social Need (TSN) policy is specifically designed to tackle such problems. Last year we published New TSN Action Plans showing how all departments are redirecting efforts and resources to benefit the most deprived. We have taken account of New TSN in our financial decision-making, including in the budget and the Executive Programme Funds.

For New TSN purposes, those in greatest social need must be identified objectively and targeted fairly, regardless of attributes such as gender, religion or race. New TSN aims to contribute to the reduction of inequalities among different sections of society. We will work to combat unemployment and differentials in employment rates. However, objective measures of inequality will need to be agreed as a matter of urgency by the administration before any measurement is used to assess the effectiveness of these policies.

We have already updated the measures of multiple deprivation. These measures, which identify seven different aspects of deprivation, will facilitate geographic targeting of deprivation and are already being used by departments to identify disadvantaged areas for New TSN targeting purposes.

By consistently addressing the problems of people who are objectively shown to be in greatest social need, New TSN should, over time, contribute to the erosion of inequalities.

For many people, the best route out of poverty is a job with a decent wage. That is why our New TSN policy has a particular focus on tackling unemployment and on increasing employability. We have now established a Taskforce on Employability and Long-Term Unemployment, under the leadership of the Minister for Employment and Learning. It is particularly concerned with the problems of people who have been out of work for a year or more, and with geographic and community differentials in unemployment.

Affordable, reliable and accessible public transport also has a critical role to play in overcoming social and economic isolation. Following the introduction of free travel on public transport for older people in October 2001, we will seek to improve opportunities for the mobility of those who are socially excluded and in greatest need.

The Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI) element of New TSN involves departments working together and with partners outside Government to improve the circumstances of those most at risk of social exclusion. During 2002, we will begin work on new PSI initiatives.

Finally, we acknowledge that ex-prisoners may face particular difficulties re-integrating fully into society. Some of these issues are within the scope of the devolved administration. We will consider what more might be done to help ex-prisoners overcome barriers to re-integration.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- implement all targets and actions in the New TSN Action Plans, updating and reviewing them in 2002 and publishing an annual report on progress;
- during 2002/03, following consultation, start to implement our action plan to tackle teenage parenthood;
- from April 2002, consider the Action Plan recommended by the Taskforce on Employability and Long-Term Unemployment; and
- by December 2002, complete an evaluation of New TSN.

2.8 Sub-priority 6: We will ensure that those who are eligible for benefits receive the support to which they are entitled and that services for older people are provided in the most effective way

We have a responsibility to ensure a reasonable standard of living for those who cannot support themselves. We are committed to providing a fair system of financial help to those in need, while encouraging personal responsibility and improving incentives to work and save. The Social Security, Child Support and Pensions Schemes bring support to every individual and household in Northern Ireland at some stage and play a key

role in our drive to combat poverty, particularly where it impacts on children.

One of the key aims of the Welfare Reforms & Modernisation Programme is to provide an integrated, efficient and secure social welfare system, across agencies, which assists and encourages work for those who can and provides security for those who cannot.

The new ONE Service, which is currently being piloted in Dungannon, will deliver a single point of access to an integrated job broking and benefit service, ensuring that everyone of working age who has the potential to work is provided with help to find employment. The pilot, which came into operation in May 2001, will run for 11 months, during which a full evaluation will be carried out. The findings of the evaluation and the availability of funding will influence decisions on further rollout.

The new Integrated Child Credit and Employment Tax will provide increased financial support for people on low incomes. We will be working to ensure the smooth introduction of these schemes in Northern Ireland.

We acknowledge that the current child support system is too complicated and too often fails parents, children and taxpayers. We plan to reform it, starting from April 2002, to make it easier to understand, transparent, responsive and accessible.

For older people, assistance in taking up benefit, the improvement of social security services and the introduction of the Pensioners Credit should provide important support, but we are conscious of the much wider range of services that can assist this group, including those relating to housing, health and transport. In the latter area, we are introducing free transport and will be looking closely at the impact of this initiative in improving quality of life for older people.

It is however important not just to focus on support services. Many older people will wish to continue to work and to be active in community and social life and we want to support this. Employment opportunities and volunteering, for example, can play a significant role, with major benefits to the wider economy and society. Actions and commitments we have made throughout this document, although not addressed specifically at older people also have the potential to enrich and improve the quality of life for older people. These include our commitments to improve health and support people with illness and disability, as well as commitments in other areas such as lifelong learning and promoting the benefits of culture, arts and leisure activities.

Building on such initiatives between departments and the voluntary sector such as the recent A-Z Guide to Services, we will open new channels of communication with organisations that represent older people to identify the developing needs of older people, to consider how our services can be best

tailored to their needs and to examine how information on public services can best be provided in appropriate and accessible ways.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- by April 2003, introduce the new Integrated Child Credit and Employment Tax Credit, transferring increases for child dependants from existing benefits schemes to the new scheme by October 2004;
- by March 2003, implement a programme to improve the delivery of social security services for disabled people; older people; people with literacy problems; people in isolated and deprived areas; those affected by the conflict; and those belonging to minority ethnic groups;
- by October 2003, introduce the Pensioners Credit which will start to bring together the tax and benefit system for pensioners and provide more help for those on low and modest incomes;
- by March 2005, complete a rolling programme of customer service improvements for all Social Security Agency customers; and
- while continuing to promote the take-up of social security benefits by those entitled to them on a continuing basis, by November 2003, complete the assessment of take-up of selected benefits and, by April 2004, produce an enhanced strategy to further encourage take-up.

2.9 Sub-priority 7: We will work to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to access decent, affordable housing

We are committed to ensuring that appropriate, accessible and high quality housing is available, in the tenure of their choice, especially for those in greatest social need. This fits closely to our New TSN priorities and has important connections to stable homes, better health and employment opportunities.

Working with the Housing Executive, housing associations and others in the voluntary sector, we plan to improve services and the quality of accommodation generally. We intend to increase the numbers of properties that meet special needs such as the needs of those with disabilities, older people and others.

We are determined to improve the living conditions of Travellers and have commissioned the Housing Executive to carry out a detailed assessment of Traveller accommodation needs. This will assist in the development of a rolling programme of Traveller accommodation schemes which will follow on from the current pilot group housing schemes.

People on low incomes living in badly insulated housing, are particularly vulnerable to fuel poverty and as a consequence may suffer from illness and social exclusion. To tackle this problem, in line with New TSN commitments, we have introduced the Warm Homes scheme, providing a comprehensive package of energy efficient insulation measures for private sector householders in receipt of income or disability based benefits. In addition, initiatives involving the Housing Executive, Northern Ireland Electricity and Energy Efficiency Advice Centres are helping to take at least 8,000 vulnerable householders annually out of fuel poverty.

Housing support is particularly important for older people, people with physical and learning disabilities and others such as victims of domestic violence, vulnerable young people (including those who are homeless), people who suffer from alcohol or drug addiction and some ex-offenders, to live independent lives. Current funding arrangements for supporting these services are complex and fragmented. To address this, and to streamline funding for housing support, we propose to integrate all sources of housing support into a single fund – “Supporting People”. This will simplify the funding arrangements and introduce new quality checks to ensure that people will get the support that best meets their needs.

The most vulnerable people can find themselves “sleeping rough” on the streets. The Housing Executive has extensively researched this problem and its findings are being considered as part of a fundamental review of Homelessness Strategy and Services, to be published in September.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- continue, in line with our New TSN commitments, to secure permanent tenancies, within three months of application, for 70% of applicants accepted as statutorily homeless; and
- by April 2003, introduce a new system for funding housing support costs, “Supporting People”.

2.10 Sub-priority 8: We will renew the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, building community participation

We want to regenerate and sustain our cities, towns and rural areas, building strong communities in line with New TSN. We will objectively identify the urban areas and neighbourhoods in greatest need, developing and delivering co-ordinated programmes to bring about real improvements, not only in physical infrastructure, but also in people’s lives and economic opportunities.

The differences between the standard of life experienced in the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of Northern Ireland are wide and have persisted for many years, despite many worthwhile achievements. The most recent measurement of deprivation provides a clear picture of the location and nature of the problem. The most significant concentrations of

deprivation, in both severity and numbers of people, are to be found within our cities and larger towns and we will take action to improve economic and social conditions as signalled in our New TSN Action Plan. We will also produce new strategies for the regeneration of the most disadvantaged urban areas and for town and city centres and we will use EU funding programmes, including URBAN II, to strengthen our approach. In so doing we will take equality considerations fully into account.

We recognise too the distinctive needs of our rural areas. Long-term unemployment tends to be higher and there is evidence that the population in rural areas is growing faster and is younger so the demand for jobs will increase more quickly. The contribution of agriculture has declined and many farms no longer provide a viable income from agriculture alone. Building community capacity has a role to play in regenerating rural areas and enabling people to identify local needs and decide on the best solutions.

In addressing these problems, we will continue to work in partnership with others. We will take account of New TSN principles and our statutory equality obligations in applying resources on the basis of objective need. The monitoring and evaluation of brown field development targets in the Regional Development Strategy will take account of the need both to encourage more sustainable forms of housing development and for the planning system to make provision for affordable housing, particularly but not exclusively for first time buyers and those on lower incomes.

Our voluntary and community sector has particular strengths and vibrancy and makes a significant contribution and we are committed to working with it. We will take action to develop the community infrastructure necessary in disadvantaged areas, focusing on neighbourhoods where it is weakest. We will encourage people to take responsibility for their own communities. We will seek out best practice and ensure that there is a sharing of knowledge and experience between neighbourhoods and communities.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- during 2002, implement strategies for renewal in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in urban areas and for the re-invigoration of city and town centres;
- by April 2002, under URBAN II, in partnership with the local community, launch a regeneration initiative targeted at inner North Belfast;
- by April 2003, identify the action needed to develop a strategy for the sustainability of the voluntary and community sector;
- by January 2003, have developed objective measures for the identification of areas of weak community infrastructure in order to inform funding priorities;

- by March 2004, increase, through the Active Community Initiative, the number of volunteers by 1,500;
- by September 2002, ensure initial implementation of all aspects of the Rural Development Programme 2001-2006, taking New TSN policy and our statutory equality commitments fully into account;
- by March 2004, work with local councils to implement local cultural strategies and develop the cultural quarter concept; and
- by December 2003, through the West Belfast Task Forces initiative, have produced and implemented a set of practical recommendations to target the particularly serious economic and social problems faced by the Greater Shankill and West Belfast areas.

2.11 Sub-priority 9: We will respect, support and celebrate cultural and linguistic diversity and maximise the benefits of culture, arts and leisure activities

People value their creativity, identity and their cultural and linguistic diversity. Building dialogue, mutual understanding and trust among our people is an immediate priority. The potential for arts, leisure and cultural activities to be linked to the development of good citizenship and the embedding of peace is significant.

We will continue to support the Arts Council in the delivery of its five year Arts Plan, to increase opportunities for artists working to the highest standards and in innovative ways, strengthen the arts infrastructure, engage with community and voluntary arts to increase opportunities for creative participation and expression and to increase the quality of access for the disabled and young people.

We need to promote and celebrate the richness of our cultural diversity in the process of developing policies on linguistic diversity, which includes Irish, Ulster-Scots, ethnic minority languages and British and Irish Sign Languages. The work of the North/South Language Body will proceed. We have undertaken to make key information available in languages other than English and guidance is being provided for all NI departments in support of the Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. The work of the North/South Language Body and its associated agencies, Foras na Gaeilge and Tha Boord o Ulster-Scotch will proceed. We have extended, and will continue to develop, the Diversity 21 initiative to promote greater understanding of our cultural diversity and shared heritage.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- during 2002, provide 200 workshops, seminars and exhibitions through Diversity 21 on aspects of cultural diversity;

- during 2002/03, we will continue our accessibility programme covering arts venues, taking full account of New TSN and the statutory duties to promote equality of opportunity and good relations; and
- during 2002/03, we will seek to enhance children's and young people's access to creative expression through the arts.

3. WORKING FOR A HEALTHIER PEOPLE

Introduction

- 3.1 We want to promote good health for all. In addition, we recognise the strong links between healthy citizens, healthy communities and a healthy economy within our society.

We will focus on:

- **improving the health of all our people and reducing health inequalities;**
- **ensuring an environment that supports healthy living and the safe production of food;**
- **promoting public safety by reducing the numbers of injuries and deaths caused by accidents at home, at work and on the roads;**
- **modernising and improving hospital and primary care services to ensure more timely and effective care and treatment for patients; and**
- **enabling those with disability, mental health difficulties, chronic illness or terminal illness to achieve the highest possible standard of living and to be fully integrated within our society.**

3.2 Overview

While life expectancy here is better than in the past, it still remains slightly below that in Britain and well below the best in Europe. Coronary heart disease, cancer and strokes remain the main causes of adult death. While deaths from heart disease are falling among those under 75, cancer deaths have been increasing and are likely to become the main cause of death in the coming years. We will therefore maintain a focus on prevention and treatment of cancer and heart disease.

Here, as elsewhere, there remain significant variations in life expectancy. At the most extreme end of the inequality spectrum, the life expectancy of Travellers is almost 20 years less than that of the settled community. Those who are worst off financially are more likely to be sick or disabled and to die at a younger age. We will work to tackle inequalities in health and will target our resources appropriately.

We also want to improve the quality of care and the effectiveness of both our health and social services. We recognise the rising cost of health and social care. Much of this can be attributed to the ageing of our population. Also people become better informed about new developments in healthcare, so too their expectations are changing. Modern medicine can treat more illnesses and conditions more successfully, but inevitably modern treatments, new technology and new drugs all carry cost implications.

3.3 Sub-priority 1: We will work to improve the health of all our people and reduce health inequalities.

We want to take steps to reduce preventable death and illness and improve the health of all. In November 2000 we published our "Investing for Health" consultation document which set out our proposals for an integrated, inter-departmental approach to health improvements. The consultation will end in October 2001 and we intend to publish our strategy document by January 2002. It will outline a programme of work for departments and their agencies, in partnership with interests across society. It will take full account of our New TSN policy and our statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity.

The Investing for Health Strategy Paper will set a number of high level targets for health improvement. These will reflect the fact that health is influenced by a wide range of social, economic, and environmental factors and policies. The targets might include reducing poverty in families; increasing the availability of decent housing; extending literacy and developing life skills across all school-leavers; promoting mental health and emotional well-being; reducing injuries and deaths from accidents; promoting healthy diet and physical activity; and reducing the levels of respiratory and heart disease caused by air pollution.

Within this framework, we will also tackle the serious damage caused by smoking, the single greatest cause of preventable death and chronic illness here. We will shortly consult on an action plan which will focus on preventing young people from taking up smoking, helping those who want to quit and protecting people from the dangers of passive smoking.

We recognise also the important role of schools in encouraging healthy lifestyles from an early age and we will ensure that proposals emerging from the current review of the curriculum will include a focus on personal health and development.

We will provide opportunities for more active lifestyles by developing cycle and pedestrian networks. We also want to promote the benefits of sport, since those active in sport have a much lower incidence of heart disease and older people who have remained active through sport have much greater mobility.

We are also concerned about the misuse of drugs and alcohol and will continue with our cross-departmental action to reduce the harm caused by drug and alcohol misuse.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- from April 2002, implement actions to improve health in the light of the Investing for Health strategy paper;
- from April 2002, take strategic action to: reduce the damage to our health caused by smoking; tackle the problems associated with teenage pregnancy; and improve mental health and emotional well-being; and
- from April 2002, progressively introduce the methodology of health impact assessment as an integral part of our policy development process.

3.4 Sub-priority 2: We will work to ensure an environment that supports healthy living and the safe production of food

We want to ensure that the environment supports healthy living and to maintain a focus on food production and food safety. While Northern Ireland has a positive environmental image, we need to ensure that this is maintained and is enhanced where possible, through credible and sustainable actions.

We will maintain a focus on water and air quality. In relation to our rivers and public water supply, we have recently consulted on new legislation to control industrial and farm pollution and will implement new measures. Our air quality is generally good but there are short lived episodes when a combination of cold weather and local topography can lead to high concentration of pollutants in natural basins, like that created by the Belfast Hills. We will therefore continue to work with local councils to identify the main pollutants of concern and their sources. This work will be vital to the establishment of a system of Local Air Quality Management which will seek to ensure that health-based air quality standards are not exceeded in the future.

We will also support the work of the Food Standards Agency and the North/South Food Safety Promotion Board and will work during 2002/03 and beyond to meet all food safety targets agreed with the Food Standards Agency.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- by March 2003, achieve a 20% reduction on the 1996 level in the number of high and medium severity water pollution incidents;

- by October 2002, publish a Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy;
- by May 2003, have in place a policy and legislative framework to deliver our contribution to the targets in the UK Air Quality Strategy;
- meet and maintain requirements for EU recognition of Northern Ireland's low incidence of BSE; and
- during 2003, enact legislation to meet our EC obligations on waste, landfill and industrial pollution.

3.5 Sub-priority 3: We will promote public safety by reducing the number of injuries and deaths caused by accidents at home, at work and on the roads

We want to reduce the risk of harm by making the environment in which we live safer, by preventing accidents and fires in our homes, improving safety in our workplaces and on the roads. Home accidents are a major cause of death and disability, particularly among children and older people, and we will therefore develop a Home Accident Prevention Strategy, focusing particularly on those most at risk.

Every year around 150 people are killed on our roads and on average another 12,000 are injured. These are unacceptably high figures. In May 2001 we launched a consultation on a 10-year road safety strategy and will put in place, by the end of this financial year, a new Road Safety Strategic Plan to 2010, setting out a programme of action on education, engineering and enforcement aimed at cutting the casualty figures. To achieve this we will need the support of the entire community and we will be asking people to take personal responsibility for their own safety and the safety of other road users.

Modern and efficient fire services are also essential. We will ensure that the Fire Service resources are managed and planned effectively. A key aspect of this will be the promotion of fire prevention and fire safety with all sections of the community.

It is conservatively estimated that each year 55,000 people suffer from illnesses caused by, or made worse by, their work. Accordingly the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland has embarked on a process to develop an Occupational Health Strategy which will aim to complement the "Investing for Health" strategy. We also want to make sure that our sporting and recreation venues are safe.

In support of this sub-priority, we will:

- by December 2002, publish a Home Accident Prevention Strategy;
- by March 2003 to examine the opportunities for establishing a capital fund to improve the physical infrastructure and health and safety aspects of sporting facilities in Northern Ireland; and
- from April 2002, put in place arrangements to meet the road casualty reduction targets contained in the Road Safety Plan to 2010.

3.6 Sub-priority 4: We will modernise and improve hospital and primary care services to ensure more timely and effective care and treatment for patients

Everyone has a right to timely, quality care based on clinical and social need. The health and social care system must be able to respond to assessed individual needs and provide modern flexible services which will make full use of new technologies. At the same time the users of these services must use them with consideration so that scarce resources are not wasted.

We will work to contain waiting lists at current levels and meet all year round pressures by a range of initiatives and by maintaining numbers of nursing and other front-line staff.

As well as maximising the resources going to front-line care, we will develop proposals for a modern acute hospital service. The consultation on the Report of the Acute Hospitals Review Group ends on 31 October 2001. The Executive will then be involved in discussions, leading to the issue of a consultation paper which will consider the way forward. We expect to take decisions in the course of 2002 and will take steps in the meantime to maintain safe and effective services at smaller hospitals. We will ensure that any new configurations of hospital services are supported by a modern and effective Ambulance Service, delivered through a programme of targeted investment and change. We will bring forward a strategy to enhance the quality of services in primary care.

We will also ensure that equality perspectives are incorporated at all stages in the development, improvement and evaluation of all policies for the provision of health and personal social services and that New TSN principles are applied where appropriate.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- by December 2002, develop an implementation plan for hospital services, including capital development and human resource programmes;

- from April 2002 , have in place new arrangements in primary care that will support co-operation between primary care professionals to enhance local services; and
- continue to address workforce shortages and in particular increase the intake of student nurses to provide an output of 640 trained nurses per annum by 2003-04.

3.7 Sub-priority 5: We will work to enable those with disabilities, mental health difficulties, chronic illness or terminal illness to achieve the highest possible standards of living and to be fully integrated within our society

We need to support those with chronic and mental illness, disability or terminal illness to live independently, supporting them and their carers, wherever possible in their own homes and communities.

The primary care sector – GPs, community nurses and others – will continue to play an important role in caring for those with chronic conditions in their own homes. Cancer services have been reorganised over the past few years to improve the treatment and care that is available. Funds have been allocated and specific targets have been set for increasing consultations provided for mentally ill people living in the community. Plans are also being finalised for a medium secure unit, for which Executive Programme Funding has been made available, and for a regional brain injury unit.

To meet the needs of the 21st century, we plan to bring forward new mental health policies and legislation that recognise the importance of care in places other than hospital and the continuing development of new drug treatments and therapeutic approaches. We will also continue to implement the regional plan to resettle long-stay patients from specialist learning disability hospitals.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- by March 2003, complete a strategic review of mental health services; and
- by March 2004, complete a review of mental health legislation.

4. INVESTING IN EDUCATION AND SKILLS

4.1 Introduction

Education and training at all levels have a central role in this Programme, not only for their social impact, but also as major engines of our economy. They are crucial to our New TSN policy, with its particular focus on increasing employability and tackling unemployment. The basic right to education helps to create new opportunities for the individual and promotes personal and community development. It is essential that we equip our citizens with the confidence, skills, knowledge and values to live their lives to the full and create a stronger, peaceful society.

We will focus on:

- **ensuring high quality education and training for all;**
- **providing an education and training system which recognises and responds to the diversity of our society and the needs of its young people, promotes a culture of tolerance, unlocks creative potential and ensures equality of provision and access for all;**
- **equipping our young people with the skills and qualifications to gain employment in a modern economy;**
- **providing lifelong learning opportunities to enable people to update their knowledge, skills and qualifications;**
- **assisting and supporting the socially excluded to enable them to enter or return to the workforce ; and**
- **preserving our cultural and information resources and making them available to the widest possible audience.**

4.2 Overview

We want to ensure the highest possible standard of education and training. Education can motivate our children and young people to achieve their potential, build their confidence and prepare for adult and working life. This will, in turn, provide the foundation for an inclusive and tolerant society, a

strong, vibrant, innovative, knowledge-based economy, a healthier environment and an incentive for lifelong learning.

While 57% of year 12 pupils achieved 5+ GCSEs A* - C in 1999/2000, and this proportion has been rising over time, it needs to rise still further. This is particularly so for socially disadvantaged pupils, only 31% of whom achieved comparable results. Similarly, while the proportion of pupils who do not achieve any GCSEs has dropped to 3.6% in 1999/2000, we wish to see it reduce further, not least among those in the less well off groups for whom the figure for 1999/2000 school leavers was 11%.

We have made important progress in laying the necessary foundations for this strategy at pre-school and primary school level. We are well on our way to delivering on our promise that, by 2003, we will provide one year of free pre-school education for every child in their immediate pre-school year whose parents wish it. By April 2002, we will have provided places for at least 86% of these children and we expect this to rise to 95% by April 2003.

We will ensure, through review and consultation, that the structures of post-primary education and the curriculum taught in our schools are appropriate to the needs of children, young people and our community.

In addition, we need to examine more closely how far the skills and knowledge provided through our education and training curricula match the needs of a modern, global economy which has to become much more knowledge-based. We have made much progress already in improving education standards among our workforce and those seeking work. However, the Labour Force Survey indicates that 19% of the existing workforce have few or no formal qualifications, and according to the International Adult Literacy Survey 24% of our adult population, (about 260,000 people) perform at the lowest levels of literacy. We are committed to taking action to tackle these problems.

We also have a vast and as yet relatively untapped information resource in our Libraries, Museums and Public Record Office. There is huge scope for developing this element of our cultural heritage and information services as a resource for children and young people, students, teachers and individuals of all ages who are engaged in lifelong learning, including community groups.

4.3 Sub-priority 1: We will provide high quality education for all

To ensure the highest standards of achievement, we need to give our young people the best possible start by expanding and enriching pre-school provision. We need a curriculum, assessment and examination system which addresses the educational and social needs of our young people, fosters their creativity and helps secure their full participation as active and informed citizens. We need to retain in school as many as possible of those young people at risk of disaffection from the mainstream education system or, where this is impossible, to make special multi-agency provision for them.

We will also aim to ensure that all children leave school with the highest standards of literacy and numeracy which they can achieve.

To improve standards, we will continue to increase pre-school provision and maintain programmes of support for under-achieving schools, small primary schools and for increased out-of-school learning opportunities. We will also continue to implement the Reading Recovery programme in primary schools. We will continue to invest in the quality of our teachers and principals, in particular through initial and in-service training opportunities and through the establishment of a General Teaching Council. We will also ensure that the opportunities for the enhancement of teaching and learning offered by information and Communications Technology are fully exploited.

We have adopted key targets for educational improvement, including in the areas of literacy and numeracy and examination performance. These are set out in the Department of Education's Public Service Agreement.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- by September 2002 bring forward proposals for the future structure of post-primary education;
- by September 2002, launch a revised school support programme to improve performance in low and under-achieving schools;
- by September 2002, launch a revised Literacy and Numeracy Strategy in our schools;
- by September 2004, begin the introduction of a revised Northern Ireland Curriculum;
- by March 2003, provide one year of pre-school education for every child whose parents wish it; and
- by 2002, review youth service provision to increase young people's participation and ownership and enhance scope for personal development.

4.4 Sub-priority 2: We will promote an education system which recognises and responds to the diversity of our society and the needs of its young people, promotes a culture of tolerance, unlocks creative potential and ensures equality of provision and access for all

The education service, from pre-school through to further and higher education, will play an important part in helping us develop a cohesive, inclusive and just society. Through the curriculum and the youth service, we will instil in children and young people a recognition of their rights and responsibilities as citizens and an appreciation and respect for the

environment, both locally and globally. Long term educational strategies will be complemented by urgent action to support schools serving the most disadvantaged catchments and, through our funding formula, we will ensure an equitable distribution of resources, sensitive to educational and social need.

We will work to help teachers provide learning environments where all children can feel safe, valued and motivated. We will provide positive and safe learning conditions for young people by tackling bullying and disruptive behaviour and improving arrangements to prevent unsuitable persons from working with children.

In recent years integrated and Irish-medium education have grown in response to the wishes of parents. We will continue to support greater diversity in education where it is in the educational interests of the child and cost effective to do so. All of the partners in the education system must promote an understanding and acceptance of diversity and work to create a culture of tolerance. Support will continue for activities within schools, the youth sector and the further and higher education sectors to promote contact and understanding between young people.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- by April 2005, have fully implemented a common funding formula for schools which distributes resources equitably on the basis of educational and social need;
- by July 2002, introduce new legislation promoting disability rights in schools and further and higher education;
- during 2002, implement a strategy supporting worthwhile alternatives to mainstream schooling for the most disadvantaged young people;
- assist Youth Service providers to extend access for socially disadvantaged children and young people, including those with severe learning disability;
- from September 2002, begin a phased implementation of a Citizenship Programme for all post-primary pupils; and
- during 2002/03, begin the implementation of the Unlocking Creativity Strategy drawn up by DCAL, DETI, DE and DEL.

4.5 Sub-priority 3: We will equip our people with the skills and qualifications to gain employment in a modern economy

Too many people in the existing workforce have no or few formal qualifications, too few avail of opportunities for training while in employment

and too many are leaving formal education without appropriate qualifications or preparation for work. If we are to compete economically and ensure that prosperity is fairly shared, we need to ensure that our current and future workforce has the necessary skills and qualifications.

We will therefore focus on developing key skills to meet the needs of our economy and to create higher quality vocational education and training programmes and provision. We will ensure the effective and efficient delivery of New Deal and will provide through "Focus for Work" help for jobseekers who are not yet eligible for the New Deal. We will develop policy on employability and we will continue to promote lifelong learning.

We will improve labour market information and use this to ensure that vocational education and training provision is responsive to current and future skill needs. Skills related to ICT and emerging technologies will be a particular priority. We will also support the implementation of the Northern Ireland Business Education Partnership three-year strategic plan and the recommendations of the Review of Careers Education and Guidance.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- by March 2003, increase enrolments in FE Colleges by 5 per cent over 2001/02 in the priority skill need areas of: construction; computing; software engineering; electronics; manufacturing engineering; and hospitality, tourism and catering;
- by September 2003, improve standards and student achievement of full or unit passes at NVQ levels 2 to 4 (or equivalents) by 5% over 2001/02 through a range of quality improvement initiatives;
- during 2002/3, enhance university research through the investment of up to £10m under a public private partnership (the Support Programme for University Research); and
- by September 2002, extend the opportunity for FE lecturers to return to industry for up to three months to update their skills.

4.6 Sub-priority 4: We will provide lifelong learning opportunities to enable people to update their knowledge, skills and qualifications

Everyone must have access to opportunities for lifelong learning after their initial education and training if they are to maintain and enhance their own employability and if the economy's developing skill needs are to be met. Company-provided workforce development, part-time further education, community based learning, private training provision and distance learning are all available, but when we benchmark our uptake against the rest of the United Kingdom we do not compare favourably.

The Executive is committed to meeting this challenge through increasing adult participation in further education; promoting workforce development; developing 'learndirect'; and providing Individual Learning Accounts and Career Development Loans. Through these and other measures, we want to encourage participation in skills development for the growth sectors, increase opportunities for workplace learning, enhance lifelong learning and engage the trade union movement through a trade union learning fund.

We will, in particular, encourage small companies, including tourism companies and the creative industries, to develop their workforces and management to enable them to compete successfully internationally. We will also continue to help attract new inward investment projects by negotiating assistance towards meeting the initial training and development needs of such new investments. With the increased pressure on agricultural incomes, we recognise the need to support farmers in developing the skills needed to enhance competitiveness through the best use of new technology and business management and to help farmers and their families to develop the skills needed for higher-value off-farm employment.

We will also implement an awareness programme to ensure that creativity is recognised as a key driver of education and training policy at all levels and take action to develop opportunities for lifelong learning through sport and the arts.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- by September 2002, develop an integrated system of Individual Learning Accounts and Career Development Loans;
- by March 2005, taking account of New TSN principles, provide an additional 12,000 business development training places for farmers;
- by June 2003, in conjunction with the Sports Council for Northern Ireland, develop opportunities to acquire and update qualifications in sports leadership, coaching, management and administration which can be availed of by sports organisations and individual participants;
- by 2004, develop a strategic framework to encourage the educational potential of our information, cultural and sporting resources; and
- by March 2005, 3,000 farmers to benefit from training supported by the Peace Programme.

4.7 Sub-priority 5: We will assist and support the socially excluded to enable them to enter or return to the workforce

We recognise the barriers that can discourage many people from taking up opportunities for education and training that could enhance their prospects for employment and improve the quality of their lives. Some of the barriers are financial; some are cultural or geographical; and some are related to the individual's learning difficulties and/or disabilities. We will work to overcome these barriers and to promote wider access. The Executive's proposal for student support will make a real and meaningful difference to the lives of students and their families and are targeted specifically at those from less well off backgrounds. Half of all higher education students will benefit through an increase in the threshold for fee contributions and the provision of bursaries. The changes include the introduction of bursaries worth up to £1,500; the creation of 1,000 new higher education places; the abolition of tuition fees for a wide range of vocational courses in further education, and the introduction of a childcare grant for higher education students on low incomes.

The new arrangements are a clear sign of the Executive's commitment to investing in the education and skills of our people. Over three years up to £65 million in extra spending will be targeted at assisting students from low income families to enter third level education. We will also direct more financial support at those students most in need.

Our aim is to ensure that young people have the best possible opportunity to access quality higher and further education. The changes to student support will open up access to many more people who would not previously have considered participation. They will help to promote much greater equality of opportunity and equity of treatment and will encourage students to follow courses in areas of greatest value to the economy.

Two particular barriers which we wish to tackle are poor basic skills and poor access to learning for those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Internationally benchmarked evidence shows that we have a significant problem with basic skills in the workforce, in the wider population and among the long-term unemployed. There are particular problems of access to learning facing those with disabilities and learning difficulties.

We will develop, in particular, a strategy to address our basic skills problems, including ICT. In relation to helping those with disabilities and learning difficulties we will bring forward educational legislation which will respond to the educational recommendations of the Disability Rights Task Force and will focus on the improvement of access.

Reducing long-term unemployment is of fundamental importance. The Taskforce on Employability and Long Term Unemployment is already identifying actions which can be taken across departments to tackle barriers to employment. We are committed to ensuring that programmes such as New Deal and the Welfare Reform Programme give people the skills and

incentives which they need to get jobs and escape the cycle of deprivation. Further, as part of our enterprise strategy, we will continue to create awareness of entrepreneurship, presenting self-employment and starting up in business as a positive option.

In addition it is important that we enable older people to stay in employment if they so choose.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- by March 2003, following a pilot scheme, have begun the full implementation of a Basic Skills Strategy;
- from 2002, provide additional help for unemployed people before they reach the New Deal threshold through a range of measures including additional Jobclub provision and new vocational training provision;
- by 2003, achieve the full implementation of an enhanced range of measures entitled Focus for Work which includes additional Jobclub provision and new vocational training provision;
- from 2002, enhance New Deal basic skills provision through standard assessment arrangements across all Gateway providers in line with the emerging strategy; and
- by September 2003, have implemented, on a phased basis the agreed changes to student support in HE and FE.

4.8 Sub-priority 6: We will preserve our cultural and information resources and make them available to the widest possible audience

We have rich cultural and information resources in our museums, in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland and in our 126 public libraries. Our museums play a significant role in the life-long education through the various interpretive experiences they provide. They have preserved the past for today's generation and are active in adding to their collections for the benefit of future generations. Our libraries too play a key role in the movement towards better education and self-improvement and their value in supporting life-long learning cannot be overemphasised.

There is a huge scope to open up these resources to provide a key learning resource for all our people and also capitalise on new opportunities for academic and cultural tourism, including the growth in interest in genealogy-related services.

New technology has a major role to play in this and we want to harness these technologies to deliver lifelong learning and ensure greater access to and use of our resources. This will also be fundamental to meeting our

Freedom of Information commitments. We are connecting all libraries to the internet through the Electronic Libraries Project, opening them up as electronic and information centres ensuring that those people who do not have the technology at home are not disadvantaged. Funding from the New Opportunities fund has been used to train library staff to assist the public in the use of new technology and access to the internet gives access to the National Grid for Learning which consists of a wide range of education related web sites. Community Grids will facilitate local information bases and access to local services.

In support of this priority, we will take the following actions:

- by April 2003, complete the Electronic Libraries Project for Northern Ireland;
- by April 2003, develop a common electronic gateway to enable users to have access to the resources of archives, libraries and museums, and
- by April 2004, digitise key cultural resources thus providing virtual access via the internet.

5. SECURING A COMPETITIVE ECONOMY

5.1 Introduction

If we are to achieve a cohesive, inclusive and just society, it is essential that we create a vibrant economy to produce employment and wealth for the future. In doing this we must recognise the needs of all. In line with the principles of sustainable development, we want to promote employment, protect the environment by using our natural resources prudently and at the same time maintain a high and stable level of economic growth.

We will focus on:

- **ensuring that our communications, energy, and physical infrastructure is developed to a standard that a modern information age economy requires;**
- **creating a more co-ordinated and efficient planning process that integrates environmental, economic and social needs;**
- **promoting entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity;**
- **working to attract inward investment;**
- **increasing Northern Ireland's attractiveness to visitors;**
- **improving efficiency in our economy and ensuring that businesses and consumers have access to regulatory services of an international standard;**
- **working together to regenerate the rural economy; and**
- **ensuring the protection and enhancement of the environment.**

In this priority area, EU support under the Building Sustainable Prosperity and Peace 2 Programmes as well as Community Initiatives will play an important complementary role.

5.2 **Overview**

We want to secure a dynamic, competitive economy, creating opportunities for all in a wide range of sectors, with many more skilled jobs in the new

knowledge-based economy. We are already making good progress – for example, our unemployment rate currently stands at 5.9%, a decrease of 0.3 percentage points on the rate a year ago. In addition, over 90% of new jobs promoted by the Industrial Development Board during 2000/01 were in the high growth sectors of telecommunications, electronics and international traded services. We are however aware of the challenge of global competition and the current, more difficult international economic climate which is likely to impact on business here. The challenge is to increase the investment in knowledge and get more people with the right skills into employment while creating the environment in which firms can compete more effectively.

We are also conscious of the real structural weaknesses of this economy, which is over-dependent on a number of declining or slow-growing industries and on the public sector. While we have seen positive growth in employment and decline in unemployment, long term unemployment remains relatively high and wages relatively low. Restructuring our economy from a low wage to a high wage, knowledge-based economy is therefore a key challenge. The new agency, Invest Northern Ireland, will spearhead work on key aspects of this work and the Task Force on Employability and Long-Term Unemployment will also have a key role, working alongside government departments and the Skills Task Force. Indeed, the skills and competences of the workforce are essential aspects of our work and the measures set out in chapter 4 are aimed to have a major impact on competitiveness.

The provision of infrastructure and major public services such as public transport, roads, water and sewerage is essential for the social and economic well being of the region. We recognise the serious deficiencies that exist in our essential physical infrastructure, deficiencies that have the potential to affect our competitiveness as a region. We will tackle these with a purpose and vigour, comparable to the step change in addressing infrastructure deficiencies in Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland.

We are also committed to regenerating the rural economy and enabling the agri-food sector to respond to the challenges presented by changing consumer demands and increasing competition. Despite a slight recovery in agricultural income in 2000, incomes remain low by historical standards, mainly as a result of the weak Euro and low world prices. The current year has been particularly difficult, mainly because of the outbreak of Foot & Mouth Disease in Great Britain, which has also hit the tourism and hospitality industry.

As we take forward our work to develop a competitive economy we are conscious also of the need to develop sustainably as a region. We will work to protect and enhance our natural and built environment, following the fundamental principles of sustainable development including the “precautionary principle”, the “polluter pays” principle and will promote the conservation of biodiversity.

5.3 Sub-priority 1: We will ensure that our communications and transport infrastructure is developed to a standard that our economy requires

Business is increasingly being conducted electronically. Therefore, so that we can compete effectively, we will encourage the development of a cutting-edge telecommunications infrastructure. We will also ensure that access to e-business opportunities is available to all areas and all sections of our community.

The movement of people and goods is equally important and we recognise the economic consequences of increasing road congestion and long-term under-investment in public transport. We want to develop an effective, safe and reliable road network and a quality public transport system that can benefit society, provide real transportation choice for those living in both rural and urban communities and help us grow our economy in a sustainable way. The 10-year Regional Transportation Strategy will identify a strategic approach to meeting our transport needs and enable us to identify the necessary improvements.

Our road network is our main transport infrastructure, supporting the economic development by distributing 99% of all freight. We will ensure that the roads infrastructure is maintained to a satisfactory standard. We will also make significant capital investment in key strategic routes and have, for example, made a significant financial commitment to the roads programme with the objective of completing all parts of the Trans European Network from Larne to the border south of Newry over the coming years. We will also undertake a programme of roads structural maintenance. This will address the significant backlog in roads maintenance, targeting specifically the non-motorway and non-trunk route network and undertaking high priority bridge strengthening projects to keep open key routes.

We recognise the importance of public transport and will also give priority to work to consolidate our railway network and to implement a programme of road-based transportation measures including measures to speed up bus travel and new walking and cycling facilities.

We will keep under review the policy and regulatory framework within which our ports and airports work. We will also work with others to improve our strategic transportation links within this island and with Great Britain and our air and sea connections with Europe and beyond. In particular, we will ensure that our strategic aviation connections with the rest of the UK are reflected in the forthcoming White Paper on Air Transport. We also plan to bring forward new legislation to extend the powers of the Trust Ports and improve their public accountability, including publishing a short Harbours Bill by April 2002.

We will also enhance the role which mapping and geographic information can play in developing our infrastructure, to support a relatively cheap and

efficient land registration system and in the provision of power, gas, water and transport.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- during the period 2002-05, working with the private sector, continue to implement the telecommunications strategy that will ensure that all of Northern Ireland has a world class infrastructure in terms of broadband capacity, access and cost;
- by December 2002, we will publish the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan to formulate a challenging 25-year vision for transport in the Belfast metropolitan area;
- improve transport in the region by addressing improvements to strategic routes, enhanced roads maintenance and public transport; through a series of transport plans in support of the 10 year Regional Transportation Strategy (this will include a need to consider alternative funding sources);
- advance a railways safety bill to provide a new legislative framework to support modern and safe rail travel; and
- enhance the mapping and geographic information infrastructure by developing a geographic information policy by June 2002 and capturing and providing significant topographic changes into mapping databases.

5.4 Sub-priority 2: We will ensure that our energy infrastructure meets the standards that our economy requires

Our energy market is relatively small. We must strengthen gas and electricity interconnection North/South and East/West, where it is feasible and economically viable to do so. We are continuing to prepare an energy market strategy for Northern Ireland in an all-island and European context. A report by consultants is being considered by officials here and in the Republic. Discussions are also continuing between NIE and ESB on further interconnection. The aim is to open up the market for gas and electricity. This should help to improve business competitiveness and create greater consumer choice at affordable prices.

Our work on energy is linked to our approach to sustainable development, which will promote action in all sectors to reduce consumption of natural resources and encourage the development of renewable sources of energy.

We have agreed grant aid towards gas transmission pipelines to be constructed between Belfast and the North West and from Gormanstown, north of Dublin, to link in at Antrim.'

We will develop new actions in support of this sub-priority over the coming months. These will reflect the outcome of the continuing work described above.

5.5 Sub-priority 3: We will create a more co-ordinated and efficient planning process that integrates environmental, economic and social needs

We must give careful consideration to where people live and work and other key social, environmental and community factors so that we can plan our public infrastructure most effectively. The Regional Development Strategy will provide the strategic planning framework for this purpose. It will seek to address not only the infrastructure, but also the conditions for long-term competitive and sustainable development.

In order to promote a more sustainable pattern of development, the strategy sets a target of 60% of urban housing growth to be provided within urban limits, without town cramming, by 2010. Progress towards this ambitious target will be monitored against a baseline of 25/30% achievement in the 1990s and will take account of the target's effects on our objective of securing affordable housing as set out in our *Growing as a Community* priority.

To implement this strategy successfully, we need an agreed way to deliver it which has the active support of key stakeholders. This will require departments, agencies, local councils, business, the voluntary and community sector and individuals to co-operate closely. The strategy also needs to be sufficiently flexible to enable it, Area Development Plans and the Development Control process to respond appropriately to emerging trends and opportunities.

In order that progress on the strategy is managed, monitored and actions co-ordinated we will establish an inter-departmental steering group chaired by the Minister for Regional Development.

An important component of the Strategy will be the development of a number of key Regional Planning Policy Statements covering housing, retailing, transportation and the countryside. We will also ensure that there is a comprehensive statement of operational planning policy for Northern Ireland in the form of Planning Policy Statements, which inform the preparation of Development Plans and decisions in development control. This programme of work is already well under way.

We have embarked upon a Development Plan Programme, stretching to 2005, with the aim of providing Development Plan coverage for all 26 local council areas, and we have made substantial progress. We are engaged in preparing 11 such Plans this year and aim to have all 14 in place by 2005. This will produce, for the first time, an up-to-date relevant basis at local level for the effective planning and management of development. In doing so, we will consult with people and communities about planning issues affecting their

daily lives and, where necessary and appropriate, take account of the cross-border context.

We will continue to seek to reduce the backlog of planning applications. The backlog of applications was reduced by 17.2% in 2000/01. This is against a trend of year on year increases in the overall number of planning applications, including an increase of 4% in 2000/01.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- by end December 2002, eliminate the backlog of planning applications;
- by the end of 2005, complete the current programme of Development Plan preparation;
- by the end of 2004, complete the current programme of Planning Policy Statement preparation;
- by June 2002, finalise and publish the Regional Planning Policy Statements on *'Housing in Settlements'* and *'Transportation and Land Use'*; and
- by June and September 2003 respectively, publish Regional Planning Policy Statements on *'Retailing and Town Centres'*, and *'The Countryside'*.

5.6 Sub-priority 4: We will promote entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity

We recognise that promoting competitiveness requires a focus on entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity and we will continue to take action to promote these, including promoting Northern Ireland as a world-class centre for e-commerce.

We will maintain our focus on innovation and research & development (R&D) through the Northern Ireland R&D and Innovation Strategy, working to stimulate private sector investment, developing local industrial design capacity and harnessing the R&D strengths in our universities and the support capacity of our FE colleges. We will also work with local businesses to ensure that they are able to exploit new technologies, including nanotechnology, (which is technology at a micro scale), which is predicted to become a major driver of economic growth.

Northern Ireland is essentially a small-firm economy and we recognise that competitive small firms are vital to its future. While many of our small firms have demonstrated a capacity to compete successfully in world markets, too many others have not moved to develop export markets or make best use of ICT, while innovation and R&D remain poorly developed. We will work through a new, strategic approach to small business development, to increase business start-ups and business competitiveness. Local councils will continue,

through the Business Start Programme, to play a key role, particularly in encouraging potential high growth businesses while our universities and centres of excellence will play their part too in creating a framework of support to help businesses innovate and succeed.

We recognise the important role that financial support can play in stimulating competitiveness and will focus our support on those markets, sectors and businesses that have the greatest potential to contribute to the economy, encouraging exports, R&D and innovation. We are reviewing the effectiveness of Selective Financial Assistance and will reassess the contribution of equity and loan capital. We will also provide a range of financial support options to meet the specific needs of the micro and small business sector and help companies to access appropriate funding from other sources.

We will continue to work with the community and voluntary sector to develop the contribution of the social economy. We will take forward work to promote creativity among our workforce and across the population, building on our cross-departmental strategy for unlocking the creative potential of individuals and communities.

We recognise the importance in both economic and social terms of promoting a balance between work and other activities. We will therefore fund the Work–Life Balance campaign to encourage more employers to explore employment practices which enable employees to achieve a better balance between work and their other responsibilities.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- through the Business Start Programme, achieve 600 new business starts over the period to March 2005;
- during the period 2002-2005, fund 120 high technology/value added spin-out and spin-in companies in research-linked incubation units;
- by 31 December 2004, establish 20 new and enhanced Centres of Research Excellence;
- by July 2002, complete a detailed report on nanotechnology capability and set out an Action Plan for strengthening and exploiting this key area of knowledge-based advanced technology;
- by July 2002, implement a Design Strategy and Action Plan covering the promotion of good design, the provision of design advice and design capability programmes;
- by June 2002, complete a programme of research on the potential development of creative industries and develop an action plan for the development of the sector in Northern Ireland;

- during 2002/03, support a programme aimed at encouraging graduates to pursue careers in management and provide management development opportunities for existing managers to strengthen management competence in NI industry; and
- from 2002, pilot an initiative in further education colleges to support small and medium sized enterprises.

5.7 Sub-priority 5: We will work to attract inward investment

Inward investment plays a useful role in seeding new sectors in the local economy and bringing new attitudes to, and skills in, training, innovation, marketing and other key areas. It can also contribute to increasing high quality employment opportunities. A challenge will be to change international perceptions to ensure that we can be a competitive location for investment and to ensure sufficient investment in areas of disadvantage and high unemployment. Other actions of the Executive, particularly in relation to skills and education, will be of major importance.

We are continuing to roll out and build upon the new inward investment branding for Northern Ireland.

We also recognise the important role of local councils in this area and will work with the regional groupings of local councils to co-ordinate marketing information about Northern Ireland and individual council areas as a location for inward investment.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- work with universities, further education colleges, local councils and the private sector to secure investments by 20 knowledge based businesses each year.

5.8 Sub-priority 6: We will increase Northern Ireland's attractiveness to visitors

Tourism continues to enjoy a year on year growth with overall visitor numbers increasing to 1.672 million in 2000. While we are experiencing significant international interest and good will, we must continue to invest in the development of a high quality tourism experience that will meet the expectations of our international visitors. We must also capitalise on the profile for Northern Ireland that will be provided by the activities of Tourism Ireland Limited, the all-island tourism marketing company.

The strategy for tourism marketing and development has highlighted our priorities for investment in our tourism infrastructure and how we intend to

market Northern Ireland overseas. Central to this is our commitment to attracting the type of visitor who will place most value on the Northern Ireland experience and who will spend longer enjoying it. Through investment in appropriate tourism development and in attracting the right type of consumer, we hope to grow overall tourism from 1.672 million to 2.010 million by the end of 2003. Furthermore, by targeting our consumer effectively we aim to increase average visitor spend per trip from £160 in 2000 to £210 per trip by the end of 2003. This will increase tourism's contribution to the economy to £421.5million by 2003.

We are in the process of carrying out a fundamental review of the Northern Ireland international and regional tourism policy. The objective of the review is to examine tourism policies over the last five years and to produce a strategic framework of coherent and co-ordinated policies including vision, aims, structural arrangements and measurements, to enable tourism in Northern Ireland to grow and prosper. We also want to broaden the skills base of rural communities and increase the contribution of tourism to the economy of the areas of greatest rural disadvantage which have, coincidentally, real tourism potential.

In support of this sub-priority we will: -

- implement a programme of substantive actions on tourism arising from the review of tourism policy, including establishing effective inter departmental and agency linkages by July 2002;
- during 2002/03, implement a tourism development strategy that will capitalise on our regional strengths in the natural and built environment, creativity and heritage and enable us to develop competitive advantage in the international market place;
- during 2002/03, agree and implement a marketing strategy that ensures that the Northern Ireland tourism industry benefits fully from the activities of Tourism Ireland Limited;
- by June 2002, have selected five Local Partnerships to deliver the Natural Resource Tourism Programme and notified them of indicative funding allocations;
- by March 2003, prepare a strategy to develop the recreational potential of our inland waterways as a tourist attraction; and
- by March 2003, design and implement a strategy for the development of visitor amenities to ensure that they meet the highest standards.

5.9 **Sub-priority 7: We will improve efficiency in our economy and ensure that business and consumers can make a key contribution to policy making and benefit from effective regulation**

We want to provide the conditions in which consumers and businesses can influence the development of government policy and develop efficient regulatory services that can both protect consumers and ensure business competitiveness. We made a commitment last year to develop a Consumer Strategy by the end of 2001 and work is well underway in this area. A draft strategy has been issued for consultation, prior to finalisation and implementation.

We will continue to put in place, maintain and enforce effective health and safety at work regulations. Workplace accidents are estimated to cost in the region of £250m - £300m each year and we have therefore developed a campaign about managing risk.

We are supporting the private sector-led Euro Preparations Forum in its objective of ensuring that local companies are better informed about the Euro and better prepared for its introduction. The public sector will continue to make preparations for the possibility of a UK decision to join the European Monetary Union.

We will also continue to work with the construction industry through the Construction Industry Forum for Northern Ireland and the new Rethinking Construction Centre for Northern Ireland to promote continuous improvement in the industry and in the procurement of public sector projects.

We recognise that good relations in the workplace are essential if the economy is to operate efficiently. A framework of law which sets out clear rights and responsibilities, provides for orderly handling of individual and collective disputes when they arise, and is recognised as fair and balanced by all interests, can make a major contribution. We will continue to develop employment law and to strengthen and diversify the dispute resolution mechanisms available.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- from 2002/03, take forward the implementation of the agreed Consumer Strategy;
- by March 2003, complete the third phase of a "Managing Risk – A Key Investment" campaign aimed at reducing the cost and burden of occupational accidents and ill health to the economy; and
- during 2002/03, amend and consolidate the procedures of the industrial tribunals and the fair employment tribunals, develop proposals on work

and parents and transpose European employment directives into domestic law.

5.10 Sub-priority 8: We will work together to regenerate the rural economy

A major challenge is the need for a recovery plan for the agricultural industry following the Foot and Mouth outbreak. We also plan to review the effectiveness of the way in which the outbreak was handled.

In addition, ensuring the highest standards of animal health and building confidence in the safety of local food are also important. The recent Foot & Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreaks have highlighted the need for more effective controls on the importation of animals and the internal movement of livestock. This will mean continued vigilance at ports and airports, particularly while the threat remains in Great Britain. Additional testing on cattle susceptible to BSE will be carried out in accordance with EU requirements. We will also work to reverse the rising trends in the incidence of Brucellosis and Tuberculosis in cattle to ensure that Official Disease-Free Status is maintained.

We will develop an action plan for the strategic development of the agri-food industry for the next decade. Our aim will be to have an industry producing food which people around the world will trust and buy; and to stimulate alternative sources of employment in the countryside, such as in tourism. We will also improve the management and co-ordination of local economic development initiatives in rural areas. This programme will involve close links to the actions in the "Investing in the Education and Skills" priority.

We will examine how public services can fairly be provided in these areas to improve social conditions. We need also to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the region's built heritage and its natural resources including the diversity of species and habitats. We will ensure that the rural dimension is routinely considered as part of the making and implementation of policy by the new process of "rural proofing".

A review is underway to examine the long-established link between DARD and the School of Agriculture and Food Science at the Queen's University of Belfast and to address the effectiveness of that link in terms of service delivery and cost.

We will also operate an agreed work programme to promote rural development on a cross-border basis and will support the North/South Implementation body to promote development of the Foyle and Carlingford areas.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- during 2002/03, begin implementation of the Action Plan arising out of the *Vision for the Future of the Agri-food Industry* exercise;
- throughout 2002/03, maintain full portal inspection cover at all ports and airports to ensure that Northern Ireland remains free of Foot and Mouth Disease;
- in 2002/03, achieve the relaxation of beef export restrictions as soon as possible;
- by 2006/7, under the Beef Quality Initiative, increase the number of clean cattle achieving E/U and R grades to 30,000 and 150,000 respectively per annum;
- by March 2003, have 300 participants (currently there are 60) in the Organic Farming Scheme farming 9,000 hectares; and
- during 2002/03, participate at European level in efforts to ensure the recovery of Irish Sea cod.

5.11 Sub-priority 9: We will ensure the protection and enhancement of the environment

Securing a high quality, unpolluted environment with good quality water and air is an important part of building our future economy. We recognise the value to tourism and the rural economy of sustaining our clean, green image. We also recognise the growing demands for products that have been developed in an environmentally responsive way or that can help protect our environmental heritage.

We will ensure that the principles of sustainable development underpin our policies and programmes. We will take action to protect and conserve our landscapes, wildlife habitats and species and to recognise the value of our built heritage, including our industrial heritage. We will shortly publish our strategy for biodiversity and will be progressively implementing the action plans that support it. We will also implement further measures for the conservation and protection of wild salmon stocks which are now below safe biological limits.

We recognise the role of farmers as custodians of our countryside and have set ourselves a number of actions and targets in the Rural Development Regulation Plan (RDRP). We plan to increase the number of places on environmental training courses for farmers and to increase significantly the number of farmers participating in the Countryside Management Scheme as well as to extend the area of woodland. However, we also recognise the

problem of farm pollution and plan, during 2002, to introduce regulations covering the storage of silage, slurry and agricultural fuel oils on farms as well as regulations that will require work to be undertaken to prevent or deal with pollution. We will take steps to reduce industrial pollution too and ensure that development respects concepts such as the “polluter pays” principle and the “precautionary” principle (taking action to protect the environment from significant environmental damage even though the impact is uncertain).

Reducing, recycling and disposals of the waste the community generates will remain a priority for the Executive. We will assist local councils in implementing sustainable arrangements for the provision of an integrated network of waste facilities through their Group Waste Management Plans. We are concerned that recycling and reuse in Northern Ireland are very low with a 96% dependency on landfill. We will also assist industry to improve its production processes in order to produce more with less, promoting improved environmental management, energy efficiency, waste minimisation and recycling. We will encourage and facilitate our local companies to develop environmentally friendly products and services that will have a market as a result of increased customer awareness of environmental issues. We also want government departments and other public bodies here to continue their efforts to improve their energy management; to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases from the buildings for which they are responsible; and to purchase “green electricity” wherever possible, and where this is consistent with value for money.

Services such as water and sewerage, which are absolutely essential to quality of life, attract most attention when things go wrong. We will maintain effective arrangements for the treatment and disposal of sewage and sewage sludge, using whatever levers we can to ensure continuity of these basic services, and to promote competition where it leads to greater effectiveness. We will also ensure the provision of wholesome drinking water and effective wastewater disposal through the management of a modern water and sewerage network.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- in 2002/03, maintain 98.2% compliance with drinking water standards set in the Water Quality Regulations (NI) 1994, attaining 99% compliance by March 2006;
- in 2002/03, achieve 65% compliance with the waste water treatment works discharge standards set by the Environment and Heritage Service, with the aim of achieving 80% compliance by 2005;
- by March 2005, taking account of New TSN, provide an additional 12,000 places for environmental training for farmers;

- by December 2002, produce a strategy seeking to reduce eutrophication levels through a combination of advice and research;
- during 2002/03, assist the Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority in finding a solution to the problem of contaminated sediment from the three fishery harbours, principally Kilkeel;
- by March 2003, assure the quality of the list of historic buildings by carrying through the recommendations of the second survey of listed buildings in 20 more wards;
- by June 2002, agree with the Waste Management Advisory Board a public awareness campaign to increase waste minimisation and recycling;
- by July 2003, put in place a new policy and legislation framework for the protection and management of Areas of Special Scientific Interest;
- introduce new bye-laws for the conservation and protection of wild salmon stocks for the 2002 fishing season;
- during 2001/2004, provide financial assistance to local councils to support the review and assessment of local air quality;
- in 2002, agree final Waste Management Plans of local councils;
- from 2002/03, achieve a 1% reduction per annum in the emission of greenhouse gases from public buildings; and
- aim to increase the amount of green electricity purchased by public bodies to meet the target of 5% overall by March 2003.

6. DEVELOPING NORTH/SOUTH, EAST/WEST AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

6.1 Introduction

In the Agreement, unique structures were established within the island of Ireland, within the United Kingdom, and East/West to provide a new basis for relationships. These structures and our offices in Brussels and Washington, provide an opportunity to develop Northern Ireland as an outward looking region, ready to work with others on areas of mutual benefit.

We will continue to focus on:

- **developing North/South relations and realising the potential for enhanced co-operation;**
- **developing North/South co-operation in relation to European Structural Funds and policies;**
- **developing relations and co-operation within the United Kingdom;**
- **developing relations and co-operation on an East/West basis;**
- **developing effective links in Europe;**
- **developing effective representation in and relations with North America; and**
- **presenting a positive international image of Northern Ireland.**

6.2 Overview

The Agreement provided a framework, and the infrastructure and institutions to support this process, and to ensure the development of policies and implementation of agreed programmes have been put in place. The challenge now is to ensure that they operate effectively, to the mutual benefit of all the people on these islands. We are committed to strengthening and developing links on an East/West and North/South basis.

We also want to develop our involvement in the European institutions, since on some key policies such as the environment and agriculture, the European

Union has a lead role. We are therefore developing an overall strategy to seek to ensure that our interests are addressed. At the same time we are keen to see how our experience as a region emerging from communal strife can assist other regions which have a legacy of communal division.

We will not in future years benefit to the same degree from EU funding. We must therefore ensure that not only do we maximise the benefit from these resources but that we retain and build upon the benefits after this funding has ended.

We also recognise the considerable help that Northern Ireland receives from the Washington administration and the recent strong flows of investment from North America and will continue to strengthen our existing links and build new ones, particularly with the new administration in the USA.

In taking forward our Programme for Government, we also must work to change perceptions about our region and, in doing so, give hope to other areas facing problems that democratic processes can overcome deep-seated community divisions.

6.3 Sub-priority 1: We will develop North/South relations and realise the potential for enhanced co-operation

This administration, together with the Irish Government, is seeking to realise the full potential for enhanced cross-border co-operation. We will take forward co-operation through the North/South Ministerial Council and in particular through the agreed areas for co-operation - Agriculture, Education, Environment, Transport, Health and Tourism - and the work of the North/South Implementation Bodies - Waterways Ireland; the Food Safety Promotion Board; InterTradeIreland; the Special EU Programmes Body; the North/South Language Body; and the Foyle, Carlingford & Irish Lights Commission.

As part of the implementation of the Programme for Government the Executive will consider tabling relevant sections of this document in the North/South Ministerial Council. A similar approach will be adopted for the British-Irish Council and the Joint Ministerial Committee.

The Executive will focus on delivering tangible actions for mutual benefit on an all-island and cross-border basis. These will include progressing work in areas we highlighted last year. Following the completion of the study on obstacles to mobility North/South, we will develop proposals to overcome barriers where appropriate.

We will also develop proposals to enhance the competitiveness of the two economies on the island.

We will also take forward co-operation in education, particularly in relation to educational under-achievement; special educational needs; the mobility of teachers; and school, youth and teacher exchanges and university

co-operation including research and development collaboration. We will build on the progress we have made in developing joint approaches to health promotion and will continue to liaise closely with FÁS and the National Qualifications Authority to develop actions on areas of mutual interest in relation to vocational training and qualifications and, through EURES, develop the potential for the exchange of information on vacancies and career opportunities.

We will continue to develop the work of the Invest NorthWest pilot programme, a joint IDB/IDA programme established to promote the North West of Ireland as a single location for inward investment. Under the Tourism remit, a new company - Tourism Ireland Ltd - is now established and preparing plans to market the island of Ireland internationally.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- by 31 March 2002, develop proposals to establish a joint Market Development Programme for recyclable waste products to ensure the successful implementation of an integrated waste management strategy for the island;
- by December 2002, develop a joint strategy for improved animal health on the island of Ireland;
- by December 2002, to have an all island strategy on the control of animal movements for disease control purposes agreed with the Republic of Ireland authorities; and
- by end 2002, complete a scoping study into the environmental impacts of agriculture.

6.4 Sub-priority 2: We will develop North/South co-operation in relation to European Structural Funds and policies ;

North/South co-operation is particularly important in relation to European Structural Funds Plans, not only in the context of opportunities for improved co-operation arising from peace but also on the basis that borders should not be a barrier to balanced development across the European Territory. The overall aim of promoting economic, social and cultural cross border co-operation is reflected in the Community Support Framework (CSF) for Northern Ireland (2000-2006) through the inclusion of "North South and Wider Cooperation" as one of the strategic priorities which will govern the implementation of the PEACE II and Building Sustainable Prosperity (BSP) Operational Programmes. The overall objective of the INTERREG III Community initiative is to strengthen economic and social cohesion by promoting cross border co-operation.

The Common Chapter, as detailed in the Northern Ireland Structural Funds Plan, provides a framework for developing new and existing plans for co-operation on an all-island and a cross border basis, not only in relation to Special EU programmes but also in other areas such as Energy, Communications and Electronic Commerce and Human Resource Development. We will develop and improve how we operate within the strategic framework for co-operation set out in the Chapter.

The special EU Programmes body, working with the lead departments North and South, will take forward the PEACE II Programme and all of the Community initiatives, and will be responsible for promoting and monitoring implementation of co-operative actions through the medium of the Common Chapter.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- continue to develop, through the work of the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), a co-ordinated approach to the Community Initiatives to deliver mutual benefit. This will involve spending of almost 160 meuro (£100m) over 2000-2006 in Northern Ireland;
- ensure the provision of at least 400 meuro (some £240m) over 2000-2006, in the Northern Ireland and Irish Community Support Frameworks (CSFs) for North/South co-operation in joint fulfilment of the Common Chapter and to optimise the level of accompanying investment. Of this, 100 meuro (or some £60m) would be spent in the North. This objective will be monitored by the SEUPB; and
- within the 400 meuro for North/South co-operation in the Community Support Frameworks, the SEUPB will ensure that at least 15% of the Peace Programme is used to promote cross border reconciliation and to exploit the growing opportunities for cross border development. Areas will include business and culture, infrastructure, co-operation between public bodies and community reconciliation, particularly women, the young and the socially excluded.

6.5 Sub-priority 3: We will develop relations and co-operation within the United Kingdom

Under the Memorandum of Understanding and supplementary agreements between the UK Government, Scottish Ministers, the Cabinet for the National Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland Executive, a Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC), which comprises representatives of the above administrations, has been established. The committee's role is to consider non-devolved matters that impinge on devolved responsibilities and vice-versa. It can also consider devolved matters where all parties agree that there is mutual benefit to sharing information.

Sub-committees have already been established on:

- the knowledge economy;
- poverty; and
- health.

The Joint Ministerial Committee will also keep under review arrangements for liaison between the UK Government and the devolved administrations and consider disputes between the administrations.

The Executive will also play a role in other United Kingdom Committees as these evolve. These include the MINECOR Committee to co-ordinate the presentation of public policy towards Europe, the Sports Cabinet, the Creative Industries Task Force, the Drugs Task Force and the Agriculture Ministers Committee.

The outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease also required close co-operation by all Agriculture Departments in the UK and the Executive was also represented on the UK-wide Rural Task-Force set up in response to the Foot and Mouth Disease situation. The control of the disease in Northern Ireland demonstrates the effectiveness of the co-ordination arrangements.

In the coming year we will take forward work in the JMCs and in other UK committees on issues including health, poverty and the knowledge economy.

6.6 Sub-priority 4: We will develop relations and co-operation on an East/West basis

The British-Irish Council has been established under the Agreement to promote the harmonious and mutually beneficial development of the totality of relationships among the peoples of these islands. It includes representatives of the UK Government, the Irish Government, the Scottish Executive, the Welsh Assembly and the administrations in the Isle of Man and Channel Islands as well as the Northern Ireland Executive.

The British-Irish Inter-Governmental Conference has been established to bring together the British and Irish Governments and, where relevant, Executive Ministers to promote bilateral co-operation at all levels on all matters of mutual interest within the competency of both governments, including non-devolved Northern Ireland matters.

We will continue to play our role in the British-Irish Council, taking the lead on work on transport by convening a meeting of senior officials to examine options and prepare detailed recommendations for work in a number of initial priority areas. These would include exchanges of information and experiences, particularly in relation to Public Private Partnerships. Other

priorities will include regional air links and the potential for co-operation in relation to road safety and integrated transport.

In the environment sector, we will participate in initial work concentrating on three issues: radioactive waste from Sellafield; the impacts of climate change; and waste management.

In support of this sub-priority we will therefore:

- continue to co-operate with other administrations by participating fully in the British-Irish Council and the BIIGC;
- continue to take the lead on work in the British Irish Council on Transport;
- participate fully in the work on the environment (British Government in the lead); drugs (Irish Government in the lead); knowledge economy (Jersey in the lead), and social inclusion (Scotland and Wales lead administration);
- in the BIIGC, continue to pursue matters of importance to Northern Ireland;
- ensure coherence between developments in these bodies and our Programme for Government; and
- explore the more widespread availability of Irish language television channels in Northern Ireland.

6.7 Sub-priority 5: We will develop effective links in Europe

We intend to play our part in the future development of the European Union. The Union will face many challenges in the coming years - organisational reform, enlargement, and transition to a single currency for many of its Member States. Some of these changes may create challenges for us, including the likelihood of reduced financial support from the Union. But they also offer us an opportunity to influence change as a distinctive self-governing region.

An Executive strategy for Europe is being developed, which will take into account the changes within the Union. In the light of these it will focus efforts on areas of greatest potential benefit to Northern Ireland and guide our actions towards the aim of effective and appropriate participation in Europe. Opportunities will be sought for Northern Ireland to contribute positively from its own experience to tackling political, economic and ethnic problems in other parts of Europe, particularly the candidate countries of the East. We will also examine ways of forging mutually beneficial links with other regions in Europe, exchanging experience and developing joint working and will

develop our policy-making in such a way as to create an outward and forward-looking attitude across the region and across all sectors.

These efforts will be greatly assisted by the new office of the Executive in Brussels. The office will ensure that the administration is fully aware of developments in European policy and law which will affect it. It will also help us to influence the development of European Union policies in ways which are of benefit to Northern Ireland. This work enhances the existing work to ensure Northern Ireland interests are taken into account when UK policy on the EU is formulated. We will also work closely with our three Members of the European Parliament.

We will raise the positive profile of Northern Ireland in Europe. Our Ministers will attend European Councils of Ministers as part of the UK delegations.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- through the Brussels Office, facilitate visits to the European Institutions by Executive Ministers and Assembly Committees; and
- support Imagine Belfast in mounting a strong bid for Belfast to be designated European Capital of Culture 2008.

6.8 Sub-priority 6: We will develop effective representation in, and relations, with North America

The Executive recognises the considerable help it receives from the Washington administration and the recent strong flows of investment from North America. In July 2001 the Northern Ireland Bureau moved from the British Embassy to its own premises in downtown Washington. The move has helped to create a defined and clearly articulated regional voice for the Executive and gives physical expression to the separation of functions between Belfast and London, and staffing has been increased to this end.

In 2002/03 the Executive will consider how the Bureau might work with other agencies in North America to improve the image of Northern Ireland. In support of this sub-priority we will:

- by June 2002, launch a networking campaign on Capitol Hill focusing on areas of practical co-operation and engagement; and
- by September 2002, develop a strategy to promote Northern Ireland aimed at the wider US community, the Bush Administration and selected state governments which may have an interest in developing links with NI.

6.9 Sub-priority 7: We will present a positive international image of Northern Ireland

Our history has left the international image of Northern Ireland generally tarnished, although there is a growing awareness of the positive aspects of our society. It will be important that a consistent strategy is developed by a range of public and other organisations to help change perceptions world-wide.

In this work, the organisations promoting tourism, inward investment and the region generally all have important roles to play. Likewise the development of tourism and promotional activities within Northern Ireland, including sporting and cultural events and the promotional work carried out by the local councils, have important roles to play. The Executive Information Service also has a key communications role to play. There are also many organisations outside Northern Ireland which support our efforts. A high priority is the development of an agreed strategy on how we can co-operate to improve our international image.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- in 2002, support Tourism Ireland Ltd's first international marketing campaign;
- develop the activities of the Northern Ireland Events Company in line with its new marketing strategy; and
- by January 2003, have commenced a programme of showcasing aspects of creativity, through an annual conference and other recognition programmes.

7. WORKING TOGETHER

7.1 Introduction

A key aspect of the difference that the Executive wants to make is in how it runs government, creating effective, accountable and responsive government.

Through the creation of the institutions, with the important powers that it has given to Assembly Committees and the Assembly as a whole, and with the Section 75 requirement for consultation on the equality aspects of policy, the Belfast Agreement has created an extremely open and inclusive form of administration.

Over the last year we have continued to learn how to develop this approach, balancing the pressures for speed in decision-making with the very real need for wider involvement and debate. A wide range of issues, including the development of the Programme for Government, has been addressed by the Assembly and its Committees, while there have been many external consultations on policy development. There has been much progress made and a great deal of experience gained.

We have also established inter-departmental machinery to deal with policy reviews and, as in the case of the threat of Foot and Mouth Disease, to deal with operational issues that needed immediate action.

The challenge of the coming year is to continue this approach and to balance the needs of effectiveness, efficiency, economy and equality with greater accountability and openness.

7.2 Overview

The external and internal pressures driving this change process remain as before:

- the need to press for a fair allocation of UK public expenditure to Northern Ireland. The Barnett formula that is used to determine our levels of public expenditure results in lower public expenditure growth in Northern Ireland than in England, Scotland and Wales. Further, with the need for significant investment in our infrastructure, alternative finance will need to be sought.
- the need to improve policy making and the delivery of services. We are determined to provide services in a way that addresses public need, not the need of our departments or agencies, a requirement increased by the opportunities afforded by electronic delivery of public services, many of which require close co-operation between departments.

- the need to review public administration so that resources can be used best to serve the public rather than maintaining bureaucratic structures. We have inherited from the last 30 years a wide range of public bodies. Now that devolution has been achieved, there is an opportunity to provide greater accountability and to consider more coherent structures for delivering services.

In promoting a strong culture of joined up thinking leading to joined up working, both across the public sector and between the public sector and those in other sectors, we have identified a number of additional sub-priorities that support our work across the five priority areas.

7.3 Sub-priority 1: We will modernise government and make it more open and accessible to the public

We will ensure that public servants are appropriately skilled to provide better, more modern services, taking advantage of the opportunities posed by new technologies and taking account of rising public expectations, including those arising from Freedom of Information legislation.

We will review the skills and competences that Senior Civil Servants now need and our appointment and selection procedures will take account of this context. Similarly core competencies and a common performance management system are being developed for other staff. Investment in recruitment and development of Civil Servants should leave us better placed to meet the needs of the public in a coherent and effective way.

Benefits are increasingly being achieved from the use of business tools such as the EFQM Excellence Model and the Balanced Scorecard and we will continue to support the widespread use of these and other appropriate improvement tools.

Also in keeping with developing modern local government, and in the interests of transparency and accountability, we will work with local councils and others to introduce a new Code of Ethics for council members.

We have developed a Corporate Strategic Framework for e-Government which provides the foundation to co-ordinate the delivery of government services electronically taking account of such issues as social inclusion and Freedom of Information. We will implement Corporate IT Standards, facilitate work between departments and better enable the delivery of electronic services. We have set a target for all departments to make 25% of their key services available electronically by 2002 and 100% by 2005 and we will monitor progress towards achieving this target.

In support of this work we are developing the Public Service Network which will ensure the consistency, security, resilience and efficiency of our telecommunications.

From April 2002, the Public Records Office will be working in partnership with departments and non-departmental public bodies on the implementation of an agreed Northern Ireland Records Management Standard setting out the essential principles and practices of good records management. The implementation will support Freedom of Information principles and the particular needs of public bodies.

We also recognise the important contribution made by those who hold public appointments as we seek to modernise government and make it more open and accessible. We want to make sure that we encourage as wide a range of people as possible to participate in public life. For this reason, we plan a review of how we make public appointments.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- by summer 2002, develop and consult on new arrangements for making appointments to public bodies in Northern Ireland;
- by June 2002, develop a Code of Ethics for local councillors;
- by March 2003, have monitored progress on the 2002/03 Human Resource Action Plan which will give effect to the NICS Human Resource Strategy; and
- use new technology to develop better ways of consulting with the public including extending the scope of information services available through the new Government portal on the internet.

7.4 Sub-priority 2: We will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public services

Departments and their associated bodies collectively spend in excess of £1.2 billion each year on buying in goods, services, works and other supplies from outside the public service. The Executive recognises the importance of ensuring that value for money is achieved in this important activity, in a way which is both efficient and effective and in which equality issues are being addressed. Even modest savings could make a significant impact on departments' expenditure programmes. In 2001, an expert team was commissioned to look at ways of achieving more in this area and to bring forward proposals for consideration by the Executive to assist it in bringing about the improvements that are possible.

Working with local government, we will develop and promote good working practices and procedures under Best Value aimed at delivering effective, efficient and quality local services.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- by May 2002, bring forward detailed implementation plans to improve public procurement, including the policies, organisational and procedural actions that are needed, taking account of public consultation and an Equality Impact Assessment.

7.5 Sub-priority 3: We will reform public administration

The Executive remains committed to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of and accountability for, the administration and delivery of public services in Northern Ireland. We recognise the need for different structures under devolution, taking account of new relationships between local and regional government, as well as the full range of other bodies that function within the wider public sector. We are committed to a comprehensive and strategic review of all aspects of the public sector. We will also build on work now underway to examine, in the context of an accommodation review, the scope for decentralisation of civil service jobs.

In support of this priority we will:

- launch a comprehensive review of public administration by Spring 2002; and
- by June 2002, bring forward an implementation plan to reflect the outcome of the Government Office Accommodation Review, which includes an examination of the scope for decentralisation of civil service jobs.

7.6 Sub-priority 4: We will find new ways of financing our public services

The resources available from the taxpayer are finite and in particular are stretched by the need to provide services for a higher proportion of young people and to tackle higher levels of social disadvantage than the UK average. We have a major need for significant investment, in particular in areas of our infrastructure such as transportation, water and sewerage. However, the many other pressures on the Northern Ireland Block are such that the levels of required investment are unlikely to be solely achievable through public expenditure. Additional sources of investment will be secured including partnerships with the private sector as a means of tapping into expertise and new sources of finance; exploring other sources of revenue; and continuing to require developers to bear the cost of works needed to facilitate their development proposals.

In our first Programme for Government we made a commitment to review the opportunities for the use of private finance in all major service provisions and infrastructure projects to increase investment and provide innovative and value for money solutions through Public Private Partnership/Private Finance Initiative (PPP/PFI). This review is due to be completed by March 2002.

We must also ensure that we obtain maximum benefit from National Lottery, EU and international funding sources.

In addition, we shall put in place arrangements which ensure that the rates provide an appropriate level of contribution towards funding for public expenditure and that there is an equitable distribution of the rate burden on households and businesses.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- by September 2002, bring forward proposals on future strategy for PPP, taking account of public consultation and an Equality Impact Assessment;
- by July 2002, complete a review of rating policy, taking into account issues relating to equality of opportunity and New TSN, so as to have any relevant legislation in place to implement any policy changes by 2003/4.

7.7 Sub-priority 5: We will ensure that all public sector resources are used for the means intended

It will be important to ensure that proper systems of control operate and that checks are carried out in order to ensure that public sector resources are used for the means intended and that the risk of error and fraud is minimised. We will establish arrangements designed to deter fraudulent or other dishonest conduct and to detect any that occurs. We will ensure that there is proper accountability for the resources allocated and their actual consumption

We are on course to meet our 2003 target of reducing by 50% the level of prescription fraud, as measured against the 1997/98 level.

Fraud constitutes a particular threat to agriculture, as illegal activity can lead to disease outbreaks and undermine consumer confidence in the integrity of the supply chain. One of the lessons of the Foot & Mouth Disease outbreak has been the need for better co-operation on counter-fraud efforts across the island of Ireland. We will also continue to develop new mechanisms to prevent fraudulent claims for headage subsidies.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- while continuing to encourage strongly the uptake of benefits by those entitled to them, in each of the years 2002/03, 2003/04, 2004/05, reduce levels of Social Security fraud and error (including both over and underpayments) in Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance, Disability Living Allowance and Incapacity Benefit by 5%; and
- establish a formal sub-committee of the Joint Animal Health Steering Group to combat fraud and improve the exchange of information to highlight offenders who jeopardise public and animal health.

7.8 Sub-priority 6: We will seek to work in partnership with Local Government and the Social Partners

In tackling many of the Programme for Government issues we have the advantage of a vibrant and extensive community and voluntary sector which makes a significant and crucial contribution to many aspects of the social, economic, environmental and cultural life of Northern Ireland. We are committed to sustaining the work of the sector, building stronger partnerships with the voluntary and community sector and working together as social partners to maximise benefits to society.

We will also work with local councils, social partners, the North/South Special EU Programmes Body and other bodies through the Monitoring Committees on the EU Structural Funds, to ensure the Programmes are developed and implemented in a working partnership. Local Strategy Partnerships, (LSPs), are being established and these have representatives on an equal partnership basis from two strands: local government and the statutory agencies; and the business sector, trades unions, the voluntary and community sector and agriculture and rural development. They will combine with the new Regional Partnership Board to ensure that the partnership ethos becomes a key element of local and regional administration here in the delivery of the Programme.

We will continue to strengthen our links with the community and voluntary sector within the framework of the COMPACT and *Partners for Change*, the new government strategy for support of the sector launched in June 2001.

In support of this sub-priority we will:

- by the end of 2003, publish the first cross-departmental monitoring report on the implementation of *Partners for Change*, the Executive's strategy for support of the voluntary and community sector;
- by the end of 2004, publish the first independent evaluation of the impact of *Partners for Change*.

ANNEX A

PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT: ACTIONS COMPLETED

The first Programme for Government endorsed by the Assembly in March included a range of actions for taking forward in 2001/02 and subsequent years. A number of actions have been completed in the course of the last six months and are listed below. Many of the actions in the first Programme were for the longer term and work in these areas is continuing. The first Programme also contained some actions of an ongoing nature which did not have a specific date for completion. These are not included in the list below.

PRIORITY 1: GROWING AS A COMMUNITY

ACTION	DEPT	PFG REF (March 2001 Publication)
By June 2001, bring forward and consult on proposals for the establishment of a Commissioner for Children as part of a strategy for Children	OFMDFM	2.2.1
By April 2001, initiate consultation on a Single Equality Bill	OFMDFM	2.2.1
By May 2001, audit an initial 40 culture, arts and leisure venues and, by October 2001	DCAL	2.2.1
During 2001, ensure that capacity building takes place among victims' groups and also, importantly, among policy makers, to raise awareness of victims' issues	OFMDFM	2.2.2
During 2001, ensure that contact has been made with as many victims' groups and individuals as possible, including organisations working in the disability and trauma fields that provide services to victims as well as other people	OFMDFM	2.2.2
During 2001, inform the community about the presence and aims of the Victims Unit	OFMDFM	2.2.2
By June 2001, publish a new Index of Deprivation for Northern Ireland's electoral wards	DFP	2.3.1
During 2001, consult on future priorities under the Promoting Social Inclusion initiative	OFMDFM	2.3.1

ACTION	DEPT	PFG REF (March 2001 Publication)
From April 2001, introduce a new energy efficiency grant scheme to address fuel poverty in the private housing sector, providing insulation and heating	DSD	2.3.1
By June 2001, establish a Task Force on Employability and Long Term Unemployment. This task force will focus on the factors that make people employable; not just knowledge, skills and motivation but also considerations such as childcare and readiness or ability to travel to find work.	DEL	2.3.1
From April 2001, increase the programme of grant aid to the Housing Rights Service and the Northern Ireland Tenants' Action	DSD	2.4.2
By June 2001, establish a forum to co-ordinate and promote the cultural arts and leisure dimension to the "Cultural Quarter" concept of designated areas for locating cultural activity with a view to creating synergy and co-operation	DCAL	2.4.2
By June 2001, carry out a review of community-based arts and work with District Councils to enable them to develop integrated local plans for culture, arts and leisure	DCAL	2.4.2
From April 2001, extend the interim Safe Sports Grounds scheme to improve the physical infrastructure of sporting facilities	DCAL	2.4.2
By 2001, implement new viability criteria to help promote integrated education	DE	2.5.1
By May 2001, make key information available in languages other than English including the development of services for Irish and Ulster Scots in support of the Charter for Regional or Minority Languages	DCAL	2.5.2
By 2001, implement new viability criteria to help promote Irish-medium education	DE	2.5.2
From April 2001, extend the Diversity 21 initiative to promote greater respect and understanding of our cultural diversity and shared heritage through cultural and leisure activities and facilities	DCAL	2.5.2

PRIORITY 2: WORKING FOR A HEALTHIER PEOPLE

ACTION	DEPT	PFG REF (March 2001 Publication)
Ensure that, from April 2001, Health and Social Services Boards implement New TSN action Plans which include measures for tackling inequalities in areas of accidents, cancers, circulatory diseases, diabetes, immunisation, infant mortality, nutrition, smoking, physical activity and alcohol consumption	DHSSPS	3.2
By summer 2001, publish for consultation a new road safety strategy for the next decade	DOE	3.2

PRIORITY 3: INVESTING IN EDUCATION AND SKILLS

ACTION	DEPT	PFG REF (March 2001 Publication)
By September 2001, develop an action plan to identify the opportunities for the enhancement and development of individual creativity	DCAL	4.4
From September 2001, introduce a childcare grant to assist mature students on low incomes and reduce the disincentive to full-time higher education	DEL	4.4
From April 2001, bring into operation an enhanced New Deal 25+ which will contain specific Northern Ireland provision allowing early entry to the scheme for those returning to the labour market and lone parents	DEL	4.5
From April 2001, introduce an enhanced training and work experience period as part of New Deal 25+ which will last for up to 26 weeks	DEL	4.5
From April 2001, provide greater scope within New Deal 25+ for employers to avail of the Employers Subsidy at any stage in the programme	DEL	4.5

ACTION	DEPT	PFG REF (March 2001 Publication)
From the start of the 2001/02 academic year, abolish further education fees for full-time students, aged 19 or over, in vocational areas to promote economic development and introduce means-tested, non-repayable bursaries for full-time education students aged 19 or over	DEL	4.3

PRIORITY 4: SECURING A COMPETITIVE ECONOMY

ACTION	DEPT	PFG REF (March 2001 Publication)
During 2001, support the operation of 15 rural community transport partnerships	DRD	5.2.1
By summer 2001, working with our Southern counterparts, have appraised any private sector proposals received for North/South gas interconnection and a gas supply to the North West	DETI	5.2.2
The Executive will agree a Regional Development Strategy and seek the Assembly's agreement	DRD	5.2.3
Enhance the inward investment brand for Northern Ireland and, from June 2001 onwards, roll it out with agreed new marketing initiatives	DETI	5.3.2
By June 2001, develop a programme to enhance the range and quality of culture and leisure facilities including our maritime and industrial heritage	DCAL	5.3.3
By July 2001, have in place street trading legislation which provides for a fair and open licensing system and a degree of flexibility for District Councils to prevent undue nuisance, interference or inconvenience to the public and to deal with those who trade without a licence	DSD	5.3.4

ACTION	DEPT	PFG REF (March 2001 Publication)
By September 2001, open an ICT based Information and Advice Centre with regional outlets to provide easy access to information and advice relating to health and safety at work issues	DETI	5.3.4
From April 2001, ensure the conservation and protection of fish stocks by providing grant-aid to the Fisheries Conservancy Board to enable the Board to carry out effectively its statutory conservation functions	DCAL	5.5.1
Implement the new EQUAL initiative in Northern Ireland. Through this Community Initiative in Northern Ireland, transnational partners will be able to test innovative ways of promoting employment for disadvantaged individuals and groups.	DEL	6.5

PRIORITY 5: DEVELOPING NORTH/SOUTH, EAST/WEST AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

ACTION	DEPT	PFG REF (March 2001 Publication)
Implement a strategy for securing a programme of high profile international sporting and cultural events to Northern Ireland, attracting two world class events and four-six major international events annually	DCAL	6.7

FINANCING OUR WORK

ANNEX B

TABLE A

TOTAL DEPARTMENTAL EXPENDITURE LIMIT

£ million

	2001/02	2002/03
Total Departmental DEL	5,891.2	6,303.4
Unallocated EPFs	8.2	51.9
Regional Rate and Other Items	-140.2	-264.2
Total Overall DEL	5,759.2	6,091.2

TABLE B

EXECUTIVE PROGRAMME FUNDS

£ million

	2001/02 Plans	2002/03 Plans	2003/04 Plans
Social Inclusion/Community Regeneration	10	15	30
Service Modernisation	6	10	20
New Directions	7	40	55
Infrastructure/Capital Renewal	10	40	100
Children Fund	4	10	15
Total Funds	37	115	220

PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENTS

Introduction

1. Public Service Agreements, (PSAs), were produced for each of the eleven departments as part of the Programme for Government endorsed by the Assembly in March. They represented a start in setting out what was to be achieved and the Programme contains a commitment to developing them further. The Programme also explains that the PSAs would be reviewed annually as part of the review of the overall Programme and improvements incorporated.

Purpose of PSAs

2. The PSAs are intended to:
 - support the delivery of the Executive's Priorities and commitments;
 - set out each department's overall aim, its objectives, associated budget allocations and key targets; and thus
 - seek to link funding to achievement of agreed outputs and outcomes.
3. The PSAs should identify what departments are aiming to achieve next year and in the longer term, and how these relate to the overall Programme for Government.

Commitments

4. There are a number of Executive commitments in the Programme for Government which apply to all departments and are recorded in each PSA. These include meeting the objectives of the New Targeting Social Need policy, the promotion of equality of opportunity and good community relations, protection of human rights and the need to improve efficiency and effectiveness and modernise the provision of services. These aspects are addressed in the Programme and are therefore not repeated in detail in individual PSAs.

PSA Structure

5. Each PSA includes the following:
 - a short statement of the department's aim and its objectives;
 - the key targets for each objective;
 - the budget allocations associated with each objective; and

- references to the relevant sections of the Programme for Government to which the PSA objective and targets relate.
6. The PSAs have been revised this year so that they focus more clearly on the main targets which are to be achieved. The Executive intends that details on the related actions will be recorded in new Service Delivery Agreements, (SDAs) which will be developed in the next few months. The SDAs will also include information on customer services and improving performance in departments.
 7. The proposed budget allocations for 2002/03 for each Programme are set out in the draft Budget.
 8. The Programme for Government contained a commitment to improve the targets and provide information on benchmark positions. Work has been underway to ensure as far as possible that targets relate to outputs and outcomes that departments aim to achieve and this work will continue in the next few months.

Executive's Priorities

9. The PSAs set out the targets which each department will be pursuing in support of each of the Executive's five Priorities. The sections of the PfG to which the departmental objectives and targets most closely relate are identified in the individual PSAs by paragraph and sub-priority numbers from the main body of this document.

Actions and Targets

10. The main body of the Programme highlights a number of specific actions which cover, for example, new initiatives or developments on proposals in the first Programme document. It does not attempt to cover every activity undertaken by departments. The PSAs on the other hand seek to account for the wide range of activities across the main programmes by setting out the main targets which departments aim to achieve. Similarly, there are actions in the Programme which are not identified separately in the PSAs because, for example, they may account for only a very small proportion of the departmental budget.

Working Together

11. All departments have an involvement in contributing to the theme of Working Together that is covered in Chapter 7. In many areas departments will need to work in partnership with others to ensure the most effective contribution to the Executive's Priorities and that services are provided that meet the needs of the public. The introductory section to each PSA emphasises the importance of partnership working both with other departments and public sector bodies, and with the private and community and voluntary sectors.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

DRAFT PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT

Introduction: The Public Service Agreement (PSA) covers all the Department's main programmes and sets out how the Department will carry out its responsibilities under the Programme for Government (PFG) and within the resources allocated by the Assembly.

In delivering its aim and objectives, and in pursuing the targets presented below, the Department is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good community relations, protecting human rights and meeting the objectives of the Executive Committee's New Targeting Social Need policy. In particular the department will implement its Equality Scheme as approved by the Equality Commission and its New TSN Action Plan and these form an integral part of this PSA. The Department is also committed to modernising the provision of its services and improving efficiency and effectiveness. In discharging its responsibilities, the Department will work in partnership with others in the public, private and voluntary and community sectors, as appropriate.

Aim: To promote sustainable economic growth and the development of the countryside in Northern Ireland by assisting the competitive development of the agri-food, fishing and forestry sectors and being both proactive and responsive to the needs of consumers for safe and wholesome food, the welfare of animals and the conservation and enhancement of the environment.

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
<p><u>Objective 1</u> To promote sustainable development of the agri-food industry and the countryside and stimulate the economic and social revitalisation of disadvantaged rural areas.</p>	Resource 157.7 (+AME 164.3*)	1.1 Within the constraints of the CAP and National policy in relation to agriculture, encourage improvements in production efficiency, quality and marketing in the agri-food industry by implementing measures set out in the Action Plan derived from the exercise to develop a Vision for the future of the agri-food sector. Success will be measured by changes in the share of UK and EU output for the major commodities.	5.10 (Sub-priority 8)
	Capital 16.6 Total 174.3	1.2 Achieve the relaxation of beef export restrictions as soon as possible in the 2002/03 financial year.	5.10 (Sub-priority 8)

*Annually Managed Expenditure (AME) to funding from Common Agriculture Policy only.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PfG References
		<p>1.3 Maintain farming activity in the LFA and bring about the environmental improvements envisaged in the Northern Ireland Rural Development Regulation Plan. Success will be measured by the numbers engaged in Farming in the LFA and uptake of the three agri-environment schemes.</p> <p>1.4 During 2002/03 and subsequently, keep Northern Ireland free of Foot and Mouth Disease.</p> <p>1.5 During 2002/03, improve economic performance and social development of rural areas by meeting Rural Development Programme targets as published by the Department.</p>	<p>5.11 (Sub-priority 9)</p> <p>5.10 (Sub-priority 8)</p> <p>2.10 (Sub-priority 8)</p>
<p><u>Objective 2</u> To reduce the risk to life and property from flooding, promote sustainable development of the sea fishing industry and maintain, protect and expand forests in a sustainable way.</p>	<p>Resource 25.0 (+AME 1.2*)</p> <p>Capital 10.4</p> <p>Total 35.4</p>	<p>2.1 During 2002/03, secure an enhanced economic and environmental benefit by extending the area of woodland in Northern Ireland by 700 hectares and continuing to manage existing woodlands in a sustainable way.</p> <p>2.2 During 2002/03, reduce the number of homes and properties at risk from flooding by [figure available after Rivers Agency conducts a detailed analysis].</p> <p>2.3 During 2002/03, enhance the viability of the NI sea fishing industry as measured by progress towards a self-sustaining Cod Spawning Stock Biomass in the Irish Sea and the value of fish landed by NI vessels per >10m licensed fishing vessel.</p>	<p>5.11 (Sub-priority 9)</p> <p>5.11 (Sub-priority 9)</p> <p>5.10 (Sub-priority 8)</p>

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE ARTS AND LEISURE

DRAFT PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT

Introduction : The Public Service Agreement (PSA) covers all the Department's main programmes and sets out how the Department will carry out its responsibilities under the Programme for Government (PFG) and within the resources allocated by the Assembly.

In delivering its aim and objectives, and in pursuing the targets presented below, the Department is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good community relations, protecting human rights and meeting the objectives of the Executive Committee's New Targeting Social Need policy. In particular the department will implement its Equality Scheme as approved by the Equality Commission and its New TSN Action Plan and these form an integral part of this PSA. The Department is also committed to modernising the provision of its services and improving efficiency and effectiveness. In discharging its responsibilities, the Department will work in partnership with others in the public, private and voluntary and community sectors, as appropriate.

Departmental Aim: A confident, creative, informed and prosperous community

Baseline Information: In the Public Service Agreement published in March the Department set itself a key target that by October 2001, it will have established and agreed up to date baseline information to enable measurement of improvements in outputs, efficiency, access and promoting the quality of services for which it is responsible. This work is on-going and the Department is on target to establish the necessary baselines. This will finalise the targets in this PSA in time for the presentation of the revised PSA to the Assembly later this year.

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
Objective 1 To foster a creative, informed and active lifestyle which will act as a powerful catalyst for change and which will project a positive image of Northern Ireland both at home and abroad.	Resource 74.3 Capital 4.3 Total 78.6	1.1 To increase the recorded level of library usage by x% by deadline (against a baseline of X for 2000/01)	2.11 (Sub-priority 9)

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE ARTS AND LEISURE

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
		<p>1.2 To increase recorded levels active participation in sporting activities provided by bodies funded by DCAL by X% by [deadline] (against a baseline of X for 2000/01)</p> <p>1.3 To increase recorded levels of active participation in artistic activities provided by bodies funded by DCAL by X% by [deadline] (against a baseline for X for 2000/01)</p> <p>1.4 To increase the recorded number of visitors to MAGNI by X% by deadline (against a baseline of X for 2000/01)</p> <p>1.5 To increase the number of e-visits to web-sites of the main bodies funded by DCAL by X% by [deadline] (against a baseline of X for 2000/01).</p>	<p>2.11, 3.3 (Sub-priority 9 and Sub-priority 1)</p> <p>2.11 (Sub-priority 9)</p> <p>2.11 (Sub-priority 9)</p> <p>4.8 (Sub-priority 6)</p>

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE ARTS AND LEISURE

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
		<p>1.6 To have completed the production of a comprehensive archives policy for NI by 2002 (Baseline for 2000/01 – Work on this at preliminary stages).</p> <p>1.7 To increase the volume of the creative sector by x% by 2004 (Against a baseline of X% for 2000/01).</p> <p>1.8 To achieve an annual percentage of x% (across all bodies funded by DCAL) whose services users indicate that they are “fairly satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the quality of provision in relation to arts, sports, public libraries and museums (Against a baseline of X% for 2000/01).</p> <p>1.9 To achieve an annual average of x% of Diversity 21 Events and exhibitions view as a “positive community initiative”.</p>	<p>4.8 (Sub-priority 6)</p> <p>5.6, 4.4 (Sub-priority 4 and Sub-priority 2)</p> <p>2.11, 4.6 (Sub-priority 9 and Sub-priority 4)</p> <p>6.9 (Sub-priority 7)</p>

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE ARTS AND LEISURE

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
		<p>1.10 To achieve an annual average X% of attendees (resident in NI) who indicate that they are “fairly satisfied” or “very satisfied” that the major events funded and promoted by DCAL promote a positive image of NI. (Against a baseline of X% for 2000/01).</p> <p>1.11 To achieve an annual average X% of attendees (resident outside NI) who indicate that they are “fairly satisfied” or “very satisfied” that the major events funded and promoted by DCAL promote a positive image of NI. (Against a baseline of X% for 2000/01).</p>	<p>6.9 (Sub-priority 7)</p> <p>6.9 (Sub-priority 7)</p>

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE ARTS AND LEISURE

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
		<p>1.12 To achieve an annual average X% of non-attendees (resident in NI) who indicate that they are “fairly satisfied” or “very satisfied” that the major events funded and promoted by DCAL promote a positive image of NI. (Against a baseline of X% for 2000/01).</p>	<p>6.9 (Sub-priority 7)</p>

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DRAFT PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT

Introduction: The Public Service Agreement (PSA) covers all the Department's main programmes and sets out how the Department will carry out its responsibilities under the Programme for Government (PFG) and within the resources allocated by the Assembly.

In delivering its aim and objectives, and in pursuing the targets presented below, the Department is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good community relations, protecting human rights and meeting the objectives of the Executive Committee's New Targeting Social Need policy. In particular the department will implement its Equality Scheme as approved by the Equality Commission and its New TSN Action Plan and these form an integral part of this PSA. The Department is also committed to modernising the provision of its services and improving efficiency and effectiveness. In discharging its responsibilities, the Department will work in partnership with others in the public, private and voluntary and community sectors, as appropriate.

Aim: To provide for the education and development of all our young people to the highest possible standards, with equal access for all.

(a) Pre-school and Primary School Provision

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
<p><u>Objective 1</u> To ensure that all young people, through participation at school, reach the highest possible standards of educational achievement, that will give them a secure foundation for lifelong learning and employment; and develop the values and attitudes appropriate to citizenship in an inclusive society.</p>	<p>Resource 555.8 Capital* 53.4 Total 609.2 * Exact split between (a) pre-school and primary schools and (b) post primary schools will be subject to educational needs at the time.</p>	<p>1.1 Increase the percentage of 11 year olds at or above the expected standard of literacy and numeracy for their age: by 2004, 77% to achieve level 4 or above in the Key Stage 2 assessments in English and 80% in maths. (2000 position - 71.5% English, 75.4% maths.)</p>	<p>4.2 (Sub-priority 1)</p>

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

(b) Post Primary School Provision

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
	Resource 723.4 Capital* 53.4 Total 776.8 * Exact split between (a) pre-school and primary schools and (b) post primary schools will be subject to educational needs at the time	<p>1.2 Increase the percentage of 14 year olds at or above the expected standard of literacy, numeracy and science for their age:</p> <p>by 2004, 72% to achieve level 5 or above in each of the Key Stage 3 tests in English and maths, and 70% in science. (2000 position - 68.7% English, 70.1% maths, 66.7% science.)</p> <p>1.3 Increase the percentage of pupils obtaining GCSEs:</p> <p>by 2004, 62% of 16 year olds to obtain 5 or more GCSEs at grades A* to C (or equivalent). (2000 position - 57%)</p> <p>by 2004, 90% of 16 year olds to obtain 5 or more GCSEs at grades A* to G (or equivalent). (2000 position - 87%)</p>	4.2 (Sub-priority 1)

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
		<p>1.4 Increase the percentage of school pupils obtaining 2 or more A levels at grades A to E, or equivalent:</p> <p>by 2004, 96% of 18 year olds in school to achieve this standard (2000 position - 95% includes GNVQs)</p> <p>1.5 In support of the New TSN policy, reduce the percentage of pupils leaving school with no GCSEs (or equivalent):</p> <p>by 2004, 2.8% of 16 year olds without such qualifications. (2000 position - 3.6%)</p> <p>1.6 By 2004: Reduce by 40% the number of primary and by 20%, the number of post primary pupils identified as poor attenders, compared to 2000/01</p>	

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References						
<p><u>Objective 2</u></p> <p>To promote, through the youth service, the personal and social development of children and young people and assist them to gain knowledge, skills and experience to reach their full potential as valued individuals: and, through community relations measures for young people, to encourage the development of mutual understanding and promote recognition of and respect for cultural diversity.</p>	<table> <tr> <td>Resource</td> <td align="right">24.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Capital</td> <td align="right">2.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td align="right">26.8</td> </tr> </table>	Resource	24.7	Capital	2.1	Total	26.8	<p>Reduce by 20% the number of pupils (primary and post-primary) with multiple suspensions, compared to 2000/01</p> <p>2.1 Increase the membership of youth service organisations as a percentage of the youth population:</p> <p>by 2004, 34% of youth population in youth service organisations. (Baseline participation rate 32%)</p>	<p>4.4 (Sub-priority 1)</p>
Resource	24.7								
Capital	2.1								
Total	26.8								

DEPARTMENT FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING

DRAFT PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT

Introduction: The Public Service Agreement (PSA) covers all the Department's main programmes and sets out how the Department will carry out its responsibilities under the Programme for Government (PFG) and within the resources allocated by the Assembly.

In delivering its aim and objectives, and in pursuing the targets presented below, the Department is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good community relations, protecting human rights and meeting the objectives of the Executive Committee's New Targeting Social Need policy. In particular the department will implement its Equality Scheme as approved by the Equality Commission and its New TSN Action Plan and these form an integral part of this PSA. The Department is also committed to modernising the provision of its services and improving efficiency and effectiveness. In discharging its responsibilities, the Department will work in partnership with others in the public, private and voluntary and community sectors, as appropriate.

Aim: To promote a culture of lifelong learning, and to equip people for work in a modern economy.

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
<p><u>Objective 1</u></p> <p>To work with others to achieve the highest quality of education and training and seek the highest standards of learning, research, training and scholarship, thereby contributing to economic development.</p>	<p>Resource: 432.4 Capital 0</p>	<p>1.1 To achieve a total enrolment of 35,500 FTE students in Higher Education (HE) Institutions in 2002-03 academic year (32,828 in 99/00)</p>	<p>4.5 (Sub-priority 3)</p>

DEPARTMENT FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
		<p>1.2 To achieve, by March 2003, 1,500 additional student enrolments on vocational courses in Further Education (FE) Colleges, over the 2001/02 target of 94,000.</p> <p>1.3 To increase by March 2003, the number of FE Students achieving full or unit passes at NVQ levels 2 to 4 by 1,400, compared with 2001/02. (1999/00 outturn was 28,000).</p>	<p>4.5 (Sub-priority 3)</p> <p>4.5 (Sub-priority 3)</p>
<p><u>Objective 2</u></p> <p>To promote economic growth, improved living standards and an increased number of accessible employment opportunities.</p>	<p>Resource: 200.8</p> <p>Capital 0.2</p> <p>Total 201.0</p>	<p>2.1 During financial year 2002/03, to have provided support for 25,600 people engaging in learning to increase workforce skills. The number engaged in 01/02 of about 50,000 reflects an initial engagement and the deployment of Individual Learning accounts will become more focused</p> <p>2.2 By March 2003, to help 12,000 people from Welfare to Work (2000-01 outturn 11,596)</p>	<p>4.5 (Sub-priority 3)</p> <p>4.7 (Sub-priority 5)</p>

DEPARTMENT FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
		<p>2.3 To ensure that by March 03 at least 70% of those who began Jobskills training in 1999/00 achieve success at NVQ level 2 or above</p> <p>2.4 To ensure 55% of the 2000/01 intake to Jobskills will achieve at least an NVQ level 2 by March 2003 (and that 70% will achieve such a qualification by March 2004)</p>	4.5 (Sub-priority 3)

DEPARTMENT OF ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

DRAFT PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT

Introduction : The Public Service Agreement (PSA) covers all the Department's main programmes and sets out how the Department will carry out its responsibilities under the Programme for Government (PFG) and within the resources allocated by the Assembly.

In delivering its aim and objectives, and in pursuing the targets presented below, the Department is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good community relations, protecting human rights and meeting the objectives of the Executive Committee's New Targeting Social Need policy. In particular the department will implement its Equality Scheme as approved by the Equality Commission and its New TSN Action Plan and these form an integral part of this PSA. The Department is also committed to modernising the provision of its services and improving efficiency and effectiveness. In discharging its responsibilities, the Department will work in partnership with others in the public, private and voluntary and community sectors, as appropriate.

Aim: A balanced, competitive, innovative, knowledge-based and fast growing economy where there are plentiful opportunities for all.

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
Objective 1 To encourage growth of the economy by promoting knowledge-based business competitiveness and an enterprise culture in Northern Ireland	Resource 119.0 Capital 144.2 Total 263.2	1.1 Achieve export sales growth in NI manufacturing companies of (%) per year in real terms over the three year period to 31 March 2005 (as compared with (%) growth per year in the period [] to 1999/2000).	5.6 (Sub-priority 4)

DEPARTMENT OF ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
		<p>1.2 To increase net employment in larger NI companies by 0.5% over the three year period to 31 March 2005 (maintaining the 0.5% growth rate achieved over the three year period 1997/98 to 2000/01).</p> <p><i>[Figures to be supplied following publication of NIERC economic forecasts in October 2001].</i></p> <p>1.3 Attract 75% of all first time inward investment projects to New Targeting Social Need (New TSN) areas (as compared to 70%) in the three years ending March 2001.</p>	<p>5.6 (Sub-priority 6)</p> <p>5.7 (Sub-priority 5)</p>
		<p>1.4 For fast growing small businesses, to achieve, between 2002 and 2005:</p> <p>25% real terms increase in external sales (8% per year) (as compared with 6% in 1999/00);</p> <p>22% real terms increase in turnover (7% per year), (as compared with 5% in 1990/00); and</p> <p>19% increase in employment (6% per year), (a maintenance of the 1999/00 rate of 6%).</p> <p>1.5 Between the years 2002 and 2005, continue to support the start-up of 100 businesses per year with greater focus on growth potential.</p>	<p>5.6 (Sub-priority 4)</p> <p>5.6 (Sub-priority 4)</p>

DEPARTMENT OF ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
		<p>1.6 Over the period 2002 to 2005, (210) small companies (70) per year), of which (150) will be drawn from New TSN areas, to undertake programmes to enhance qualifications and skills and (120) medium/large companies ((40) per year) to initiate qualifications/skills improvement programmes, related to high growth projects.</p>	<p>4.6 (Sub-priority 4)</p>
		<p>1.7 Between April 2001 and March 2004, stimulate a 25% increase in private sector investment in Research and Development. (The baseline against which this target will be measured is £78million (real terms, 1995 prices) taken from the most recent survey of R&D investment for the calendar year 1999)</p> <p>1.8 Increase the number and percentage of discretionary visitors from 0.860 million (51.4% of total visitors) in 2000 to 1.251million(59.1%) of total visitors) by 31 December 2004, at an average annual increase of (0.098) million visitors, and to increase total visitor revenue (in real terms) by, on average, 12.5% per annum.</p>	<p>5.6 (Sub-priority 4)</p> <p>5.8 (Sub-priority 6)</p> <p>6.9 (Sub-priority 7)</p>

DEPARTMENT OF ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References						
		<p>1.9 Achieve an increase in the number of Northern Ireland based businesses using trading “e-commerce” website technology from 24% in 2000/01 to 40%, by 31 March 2004, an annual increase of 5%.</p> <p>1.10 Achieve an increase in the number of recognised “e-business” businesses in Northern Ireland, from 10% in 2000/01 to 15% by 31 March 2004, an annual increase of 1.6%.</p>	<p>5.6 (Sub-priority 4)</p> <p>5.6 (Sub-priority 4)</p>						
		<p>1.11 Work with other Northern Ireland departments, district councils and other social partners towards the implementation of a better, co-ordinated delivery of all current support services to small businesses in Northern Ireland and develop targets in support of this.</p>	<p>5.6 (Sub-priority 4)</p> <p>7.1</p>						
<p>Objective 2 To develop and maintain the equality, policy and regulatory environment necessary to achieve high levels of enterprise and fairness.</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Resource</td> <td align="right">12.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Capital Receipts</td> <td align="right">- 0.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td align="right">12.3</td> </tr> </table>	Resource	12.4	Capital Receipts	- 0.1	Total	12.3	<p>2.1 Develop an Occupational Health Strategy and associated targets for Northern Ireland by April 2003.</p> <p>2.2 Develop and implement a new energy policy and legislative framework within a European Framework by March 2004.</p>	<p>3.5 (Sub-priority 3)</p> <p>5.9 (Sub-priority 7)</p> <p>5.4 (Sub-priority 2)</p>
Resource	12.4								
Capital Receipts	- 0.1								
Total	12.3								

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT

DRAFT PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT

Introduction : The Public Service Agreement (PSA) covers all the Department’s main programmes and sets out how the Department will carry out its responsibilities under the Programme for Government (PFG) and within the resources allocated by the Assembly.

In delivering its aim and objectives, and in pursuing the targets presented below, the Department is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good community relations, protecting human rights and meeting the objectives of the Executive Committee’s New Targeting Social Need policy. In particular the department will implement its Equality Scheme as approved by the Equality Commission and its New TSN Action Plan and these form an integral part of this PSA. The Department is also committed to modernising the provision of its services and improving efficiency and effectiveness. In discharging its responsibilities, the Department will work in partnership with others in the public, private and voluntary and community sectors, as appropriate.

Aim: To improve quality of life in Northern Ireland, now and for the future, by promoting a better and safer environment and supporting effective and efficient local government.

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
<p><u>Objective 1</u></p> <p>To protect, conserve and enhance the natural environment and built heritage.</p>	<p>Resource 44.1</p> <p>Capital 0.4</p> <p>Total 44.5</p>	<p>1.1 To deliver progress against the integrated social, economic and environmental objectives of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy¹ by working with other Departments and public bodies, and with the private, voluntary and local government sectors.</p>	<p>3.4 (Sub-priority 2)</p>

¹ Progress will be measured for the present against the 15 headline indicators set out in the UK Strategy, pending the production of local NI indicators as part of the development and implementation of a Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PfG References
		<p>1.2 To maintain or improve Year 2000 levels of river water quality (both chemical and biological) with no deterioration in the classification of individual river systems, year on year.</p> <p>1.3 To improve air quality by progressing towards the UK Air Quality Strategy targets for carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, particles, sulphur dioxide, benzene and 1-3 butadiene.</p> <p>1.4 To promote by 2005: the recovery of 25% of household waste; and a reduction, to 85% of 1995 levels, in the landfilling of industrial and commercial waste, by working, through District Council Waste Management Plans, and with the private and voluntary sectors.</p> <p>1.5 To maintain or improve the conservation condition of 95% of the features underlying the designation of internationally important wildlife sites and Areas of Special Scientific Interest by 2010.</p>	<p>3.4 (Sub-priority 2) & 5.1 (Sub-priority 9)</p> <p>5.11 (Sub-priority 9)</p> <p>5.11 (Sub-priority 9)</p>

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
		1.6 To maintain the archaeological and architectural/historical quality of [500] archaeological sites and [300] listed buildings annually, through development control, statutory protection and grant aid.	5.11 (Sub-priority 9)
<p><u>Objective 2</u></p> <p>To ensure that development takes place in ways which will contribute to a quality environment and meet economic and social aspirations.</p>	<p>Resource 9.4</p> <p>Capital 0.7</p> <p>Total 10.1</p>	<p>2.1 To eliminate the backlog of planning applications by end of 2002.</p> <p>2.2 Full development Plan coverage by 2005 by adopting and publishing 11 further Area Plans.</p> <p>2.3 To complete the current programme of Planning Policy Statement preparation by end December 2004.</p>	<p>5.5 (Sub-priority 3)</p> <p>5.5 (Sub-priority 3)</p> <p>5.5 (Sub-priority 3)</p>

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
<p><u>Objective 3</u> To reduce road casualties.</p>	<p>Resource 7.6 Capital 0.3 Total 7.9</p>	<p>3.1 To reduce road deaths and serious injuries in line with the targets for 2010 in the Road Safety Strategic Plan for Northern Ireland, working with the other road safety Departments and agencies, particularly DRD and the RUC.</p> <p>3.2 To conduct around 500,000 vehicle and 80,000 driver tests, issue around 124,000 driver and 915,000 vehicle licenses and register 120,000 new vehicles, in order to ensure compliance with driver competence and vehicle safety standards.</p>	<p>3.1 (Sub-priority 3)</p> <p>3.5 (Sub-priority 3)</p>
<p><u>Objective 4</u> To support a system of local government which meets the needs of residents and ratepayers.</p>	<p>Resource 47.6</p>	<p>4.1 Introduce a simpler formula for 2003/04 that provides for a fairer distribution of the resources element of General Exchequer Grant to District Councils.</p>	<p>7.5 (Sub-priority 3)</p>

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
		4.2 To develop a Best Value framework for improving transparency and accountability of district council services.	7.5 (Sub-priority 3)
		4.3 To introduce a new Code of Conduct for councillors, working together with Local Government.	7.3 (Sub-priority 1)
		4.4 To deliver an audit programme for the 26 district councils and NIHE; Fire Authority; Local Government Staff Commission; NI Local Government Officers Superannuation Committee	7.7 (Sub-priority 5)

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

DRAFT PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT

Introduction: The Public Service Agreement (PSA) covers all the Department’s main programmes and sets out how the Department will carry out its responsibilities under the Programme for Government (PFG) and within the resources allocated by the Assembly.

In delivering its aim and objectives, and pursuing the actions and targets presented below, the Department is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good community relations, protecting human rights and meeting the objectives of the Executive Committee’s New Targeting Social need policy. In particular the department will implement its Equality Scheme as approved by the Equality Commission and its New TSN Action Plan and these form an integral part of this PSA. The Department is also committed to modernizing the provision of its services and improving efficiency and effectiveness. In discharging its responsibilities, the Department will work in partnership with others in the public, private and voluntary and community sectors, as appropriate.

Aim: To help Ministers secure the most appropriate and effective use of resources and services for the benefit of the community.

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
<p><u>OBJECTIVE 1</u></p> <p>To enable and ensure the funding of public services.</p>	<p>Resource 9.3 Capitol .1 Total 9.4</p>	<p>1.1 Working with the Economic Policy Unit, agree with the Executive and the Assembly, financial procedures and timetables for the development of a Budget and associated monitoring processes to enable the Executive and Assembly to decide upon an optimal allocation of Budget Resources for 2003/04 and beyond, within the agreed timescales</p>	<p>Relevant to all PFG priorities.</p> <p>7.4 (Sub-priority 2)</p>

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
		<p>1.2 Ensure the completion by relevant Managing Authorities of mid-term evaluations of European Structural Funds Programmes and Initiatives by no later than 31 December 2003 drawing, inter alia, upon the monitoring and performance indicators specified in the Operational Programmes and Programme Complements and identifying the extent to which the targets are being attained.</p> <p>1.3 To complete the review of rating policy by July 2002 and to put in place arrangements which ensure that the responsibility and powers of the devolved administration for regional revenue are used to best effect.</p>	<p>7.8 (Sub-priority 6 & Sub-priority 2)</p> <p>7.6 (Sub-priority 4)</p>
<p><u>OBJECTIVE 2</u></p> <p>To support and enhance the business performance of Northern Ireland Departments, their Agencies and the wider public sector</p>	<p>Resource 71.9 Capitol 17.4 Total 89.3</p>	<p>2.1 To make available initial Census outputs to inform decision making by summer 2002 and to have completed analysis and publication by June 2003.</p>	<p>Relevant to all PFG priorities</p>

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
		<p>2.2 To ensure the provision of a suitably skilled and motivated NICS workforce by:</p> <p>(i) Implementing key targets in the Human Resource Strategy by Spring 2003; and</p> <p>(ii) Implementing the agreed recommendations emanating from the Senior Civil Service review by Autumn 2002.</p> <p>2.3 By March 2005 to complete the implementation of new policy and organizational and procedural arrangements for public procurement which will support the achievement of the Executive's priority in the Programme for Government to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public services.</p> <p>2.4 By June 2002 to bring forward an implementation plan to reflect the outcome, as agreed by the Executive, of the Government accommodation review which includes an examination of the scope for decentralization of civil service jobs.</p>	<p>7.3 (Sub-priority 1)</p> <p>2.3 (Sub-priority 1)</p> <p>7.4 (Sub-priority 2)</p> <p>7.5 (Sub-priority 3)</p>

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
<p><u>OBJECTIVE 3</u></p> <p>To efficiently administer, for the ultimate benefit of all Northern Ireland public, certain specialized services.</p>	<p>Resource 17.6 Capitol 1.6 Total 19.2</p>	<p>3.1 To ensure the continued equity of the current Valuation List.</p> <p>3.2 To review specific areas of the civil law as agreed by the Executive, in order to establish whether law is in need of modernization and reform.</p>	<p>Relevant to a range of PFG references.</p> <p>2.6 (Sub-priority 4)</p>

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

DRAFT PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT

Introduction : The Public Service Agreement (PSA) covers all the Department's main programmes and sets out how the Department will carry out its responsibilities under the Programme for Government (PFG) and within the resources allocated by the Assembly.

In delivering its aim and objectives, and in pursuing the targets presented below, the Department is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good community relations, protecting human rights and meeting the objectives of the Executive Committee's New Targeting Social Need policy. In particular the department will implement its Equality Scheme as approved by the Equality Commission and its New TSN Action Plan and these form an integral part of this PSA. The Department is also committed to modernising the provision of its services and improving efficiency and effectiveness. In discharging its responsibilities, the Department will work in partnership with others in the public, private and voluntary and community sectors, as appropriate.

Aim: To improve the health and well-being of the people of Northern Ireland.

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
Objective 1: to develop and promote policies, the efficient, economic and effective implementation of which will lead to good health and wellbeing, a reduction in preventable disease and ill-health, and greater social justice.	Resource 33.9	1.1 To improve the levels of life expectancy here to the levels of the best EU countries, by increasing life expectancy by at least three years for men and two years for women by 2010 (currently 73.9 males; 79.3 females). 1.2 To reduce the gap in life expectancy between those living in the fifth most deprived electoral wards and the average life expectancy by 50% for both men and women by 2010 (currently males 3 years; females 2.4 years) 1.3 To reduce the death rate from accidents to people of all ages by at least 20% by 2010.	3.2
	Capital 1.1		3.3
	Total 35		Sub-priority 1
			3.5 Sub-priority 3

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PfG Reference
		1.4 By April 2003, the Department and its associated bodies to have achieved the targets set out in their New TSN Action Plans, to have reviewed and rolled forward the plans and to have thereby ensured that policy development and policy delivery take the fullest account of the New TSN dimension.	3.6 sub-priority 4
Objective 2: to ensure the delivery of effective, high quality health and social care.	Resource 2,333.8 Capital 61.0 Total 2,394.88	<p>2.1 By December 2002, publish plans for the modernisation and improvement of hospital services to make them more responsive to people's needs.</p> <p>2.2 By March 2003, to have constrained hospital waiting lists to the March 2002 level.</p> <p>2.3 By March 2003, use the findings of the Review of Community Care to establish appropriate timeframes for the completion of community care assessments and the delivery of community care packages following assessment.</p> <p>2.4 By March 2003, draw on the findings of the Review of Community Care to establish a baseline and set targets for future reductions in avoidable hospitalisation, and in the number of people who are inappropriately detained in hospital.</p> <p>2.5 From April 2002, put in place new arrangements in primary care that will support co-operation between primary care professionals to enhance high quality primary care services in local communities.</p>	<p>3.6 sub-priority 4</p> <p>3.6 sub-priority 4</p> <p>3.6 sub-priority 4</p> <p>3.6 sub-priority 4</p> <p>3.6 sub-priority 4</p>

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Objective	Budget £m	Targets	PfG Reference
		<p>2.8 By March 2003, to have in place a high level Performance Management Framework within which the HPSS as a whole can be held accountable against agreed standards for service delivery and organisational management.</p>	<p>Chapter 3 Sub-priorities 1, 3, 4 & 5</p>
<p>Objective 3: to create a safer environment for the community by providing an effective fire fighting, rescue and fire safety service.</p>	<p>Resource 51.7 Capital 5.1 Total 56.8</p>	<p>3.1 By March 2003, to maintain the percentage of incidents at which the number of appliances meets standards of fire cover in 2002-03 at a minimum of 96%.</p>	<p>3.5 sub-priority 3</p>
		<p>3.2 By March 2003, to maintain the percentage of incidents at which the number of fire crew (riders) meets standards of fire cover in 2002-03 at a minimum of 94%.</p>	<p>3.5 sub-priority 3</p>

DEPARTMENT FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

DRAFT PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT

Introduction: The Public Service Agreement (PSA) covers all the Department's main programmes and sets out how the Department will carry out its responsibilities under the Programme for Government (PFG) and within the resources allocated by the Assembly.

In delivering its aim and objectives, and in pursuing the targets presented below, the Department is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good community relations, protecting human rights and meeting the objectives of the Executive Committee's New Targeting Social Need policy. In particular the department will implement its Equality Scheme as approved by the Equality Commission and its New TSN Action Plan and these form an integral part of this PSA. The Department is also committed to modernising the provision of its services and improving efficiency and effectiveness. In discharging its responsibilities, the Department will work in partnership with others in the public, private and voluntary and community sectors, as appropriate.

Aim: To improve the quality of life for everyone in Northern Ireland by maintaining and enhancing a range of essential infrastructure services and by shaping the region's long-term strategic development.

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
<p><u>Objective 1</u></p> <p>To contribute to the health and well being of the community and the protection of the environment through the provision and development of cost-effective water and sewerage services.</p>	<p>Resource 108.1</p> <p>Capital 112.7</p> <p>Total 220.8</p>	<p>1.1 In 2002/03, maintain 98.2% compliance with the drinking water standards set in the Water Quality Regulations (NI) 1994. Attaining 99% compliance by March 2006. (Target in 2001/02: 98.2% compliance)</p>	<p>1.6, 5.2, 5.11 (Securing a Competitive Economy – Sub-priority 9)</p>

DEPARTMENT FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
		1.2 In 2002/03, achieve 65% compliance with the wastewater treatment works discharge standards set by Environment and Heritage Service, with the aim of achieving 80% compliance by 2005. (2001/02 target: 65% compliance)	1.6, 5.2, 5.11 (Securing a Competitive Economy – Sub-priority 9)
<u>Objective 2</u> To maintain and develop transportation networks, airport and harbour services, shape the long term development of the region and provide other services to the public and other Departments.	Resource 196.4 Capital 136.1 Total 332.4	1.3 To improve the regional development of Northern Ireland in 2002/03 and in subsequent years by:	5.5 (Securing a Competitive Economy – Sub-priority 3)
		(i) Ensuring that detailed Departmental strategies and targets are in place to support the delivery of the key objectives of the Regional Development Strategy (RDS).	

DEPARTMENT FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
		<p>(ii) Achieving in co-operation with other Departments a more sustainable pattern of development. 60% of urban housing growth should be provided within urban limits, without town cramming, by 2010. This is against a baseline of 25/30% achievement in the 1990s.</p> <p>(iii) Facilitating the working relationships between DRD, DOE and DSD in support of the RDS through new Strategic Planning legislation to be made by December 2002</p> <p>(iv) The introduction of Regional Planning Policy Statements in the following areas:</p>	

DEPARTMENT FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
		<p>a) Housing in Settlements and Transportation and Land Use. To be published by June 2002;</p> <p>b) Retailing and Town Centres. To be published by June 2003; and</p> <p>c) The Countryside. To be published by September 2003.</p> <p>1.4 Improve transport in the Region addressing improvements to strategic routes, enhanced roads maintenance and public transport through a series of transport plans in support of the 10-year Regional Transportation Strategy. (This will include the need to identify and secure new funding sources).</p>	<p>1.6, 5.2, 5.3 (Securing a Competitive Economy – Sub-priority 1)</p>

DEPARTMENT FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
		<p>1.5 Address the improvement of transportation in Belfast through the publication of the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan by December 2002. (Also contributing to the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan being developed by DOE).</p> <p>1.6 Improve the road network through:</p> <p>a) A number of strategic route improvement schemes. Network improvements will include 13km of single carriageway and 4km of dual carriageway.</p>	<p>1.6, 5.2, 5.3 (Securing a Competitive Economy – Sub-priority 1)</p> <p>1.6, 5.2, 5.3 (Securing a Competitive Economy – Sub-priority 1)</p>
		<p>b) Investing approximately 50% of the structural maintenance budget on resurfacing or reconstructing roads. This will allow the resurfacing of 350 lane km in each of the next three years.</p>	

DEPARTMENT FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
		<p>Continue to consider the feasibility of developing targets based on national road condition indicators e.g. UK Pavement Management System (UKPMS)</p> <p>1.7 To improve the accountability of trust ports, publish a short Harbours Bill by April 2002.</p>	<p>1.6, 5.2, 5.3 (Securing a Competitive Economy – Sub-priority 1)</p> <p>5.3 (Securing a Competitive Economy – Sub-priority 1)</p>

DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

DRAFT PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT

Introduction: The Public Service Agreement (PSA) covers all the Department's main programmes and sets out how the Department will carry out its responsibilities under the Programme for Government (PFG) and within the resources allocated by the Assembly.

In delivering its aim and objectives, and pursuing the actions and targets presented below, the Department is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good community relations, protecting human rights and meeting the objectives of the Executive Committee's New Targeting Social need policy. In particular the department will implement its Equality Scheme as approved by the Equality Commission and its New TSN Action Plan and these form an integral part of this PSA. The Department is also committed to modernizing the provision of its services and improving efficiency and effectiveness. In discharging its responsibilities, the Department will work in partnership with others in the public, private and voluntary and community sectors, as appropriate.

Aim: Together, tackling disadvantage, building communities.

Departmental Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References						
<p><u>Objective 1</u></p> <p>To provide a fair system of financial help to those in need and to ensure that parents who live apart maintain their children; encouraging personal responsibility and improving incentives to work and save.</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;">Resource</td> <td style="text-align: right;">190.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Capital</td> <td style="text-align: right;">14.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td style="text-align: right;">204.7</td> </tr> </table>	Resource	190.5	Capital	14.2	Total	204.7	<p>1.1 To introduce the reformed child support scheme for new cases by April 2002 ensuring that by April 2003 for such cases:</p> <p>The accuracy rate for assessments and reviews is not less than 90%.</p> <p>Payment rates will have been established on average within 6 weeks.</p>	<p>2.8 (Sub-priority 6) & 7.7 (Sub-priority 5)</p>
Resource	190.5								
Capital	14.2								
Total	204.7								

DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Departmental Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
		<p>The level of compliance will be at least 75%.</p> <p>1.2 To implement the Government's programme of Welfare Reform and Modernisation aimed at providing work for those who can and security for those who cannot, by:</p> <p>(i) Commencing full implementation of the ONE service by October 2002, in conjunction with the Department for Employment and Learning and other government agencies, following evaluation and modification of the 2001-02 pilot as necessary.</p> <p>(ii) Introducing, in conjunction with the Department for Employment and Learning the new joint Jobseekers Allowance process in up to 11 locations by March 2003; and</p> <p>(iii) Introducing the Pensioner Credit to provide help t those on lower incomes by October 2003.</p>	

DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Departmental Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References						
		<p>1.3 To continue to improve customer service and the provision of secure and accurate social security systems by:</p> <p>(i) maintaining overall customer satisfaction levels at 90% and improving services in individual areas;</p> <p>(ii) In each of the years 2002/03, 2003/04, 2004/05 reducing levels of Social Security fraud and error (including both over and underpayments) by 5% in Income Support, Jobseekers' Allowance, Disability Living Allowance and Incapacity Benefit and improving accuracy and clearance times.</p>							
<p>Objective 2</p> <p>To promote measurable improvements to housing in Northern Ireland.</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Resource</td> <td>91.8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Capital</td> <td>107.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>199.2</td> </tr> </table>	Resource	91.8	Capital	107.4	Total	199.2	<p>2.1 By December 2004, reduce by 20,000, the numbers of fuel poor households in the private sector by providing energy efficiency low cost heating/insulation systems. (The overall level of fuel poor households will not be confirmed until the results of the NI House Condition Survey 2001 are analysed in Spring 2002.)</p>	<p>2.9 (Sub-priority 7)</p>
Resource	91.8								
Capital	107.4								
Total	199.2								

DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Departmental Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
		<p>2.2 Over the period 2002 to 2004 ensure that the housing occupied by tenants of the NIHE is kept at recommended standards of fitness. (Current unfitness level in NIHE stock is 2.4% (NI House Condition Survey 1996).)</p> <p>2.3 Over the period April 2002 to 2004, address the assessed need from homelessness and the urgent waiting list by building around 1,400 low cost affordable homes, per year, for people on lower incomes. (Over the previous three years, Housing Associations have started, on average, 1,500 new dwellings per year towards a higher assessed need in that period.)</p>	

DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Departmental Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
<p>Objective 3</p> <p>Tackling disadvantage amongst individuals, communities and neighbourhoods, with particular emphasis on greatest need and encouraging, developing and supporting community development.</p>	<p>Resource 57.1</p> <p>Capital 12.4</p> <p>Total 69.5</p>	<p>3.1 By September 2002 draw up strategy frameworks and agreed appropriate delivery structures within each neighbourhood. (The Department is presently consulting interested parties on its neighbourhood renewal strategy and is about to engage consultants to assist it in establishing the present baseline and determining the measures which will be used to measure success).</p> <p>3.2 To have introduced from April 2002 Community Support Plans for all 26 District Councils which will target resources on the basis of local social need to improve community services in the area. (Performance measures to assess effectiveness will be developed as part of the community support plans.)</p> <p>3.3 To have in place from April 2002 a new strategy for improving the relationship between the Government and the community sector. This will include targets for improvement and establishing monitoring mechanisms..</p>	<p>2.10 (Sub-priority 8)</p>

DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Departmental Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PFG References
		A monitoring report will be produced by April 2003	

OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER

DRAFT PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT

Introduction : The Public Service Agreement (PSA) covers all the Department's main programmes and sets out how the Department will carry out its responsibilities under the Programme for Government (PFG) and within the resources allocated by the Assembly.

In delivering its aim and objectives, and in pursuing the targets presented below, the Department is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good community relations, protecting human rights and meeting the objectives of the Executive Committee's New Targeting Social Need policy. In particular the department will implement its Equality Scheme as approved by the Equality Commission and its New TSN Action Plan and these form an integral part of this PSA. The Department is also committed to modernising the provision of its services and improving efficiency and effectiveness. In discharging its responsibilities, the Department will work in partnership with others in the public, private and voluntary and community sectors, as appropriate.

Aim: A cohesive, inclusive and just society governed effectively through fully representative and well-informed structures.

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PfG References
<p>Objective 1 To assist the Executive in making and implementing well-informed and timely policy decisions and improving public services by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting OFMDFM Ministers and the Institutions of Government; and 	<p>Resource 13.5*</p> <p>*indicative figure</p>	<p>1.1 The efficient and effective operation of all the Institutions.</p> <p>1.2 Well-developed relations, both internationally and within these islands.</p> <p>1.3 Effective communication of the</p>	<p>6.2 to 6.9 All Sub-priorities</p>

OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PfG References
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> building a Programme for Government and Modernising Government Programme; 		<p>1.4 policies and activities of Ministers and the Institutions of Government.</p> <p>A well-developed Programme for Government, with Executive agreement and Assembly endorsement sought within the published timescales.</p>	<p>All PfG References</p> <p>All PfG References</p>
		<p>1.5 Improved policy development, implementation and evaluation across the Administration.</p> <p>1.6 Excellence in the management of the Northern Ireland public sector.</p> <p>1.7 Effective policies, standards and guidelines for e-Government.</p>	<p>7.2 to 7.5 All Sub-priorities</p> <p>7.5 (Sub-priority 3)</p> <p>7.3 (Sub-priority 1)</p>

OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PfG References
<p>Objective 2 To promote equality of opportunity, human rights and improved community relations, tackle poverty and social disadvantage, and meet the needs of victims.</p>	<p>Resource 18.2* *indicative figure</p>	<p>2.1 By December 2002, bring forward proposals to develop and harmonise anti-discrimination legislation as far as practicable.</p> <p>2.2 By December 2002, develop a strategy to implement the Executive's response to the Disability Rights Task Force recommendations.</p> <p>2.3 The implementation of a cross-departmental strategy, by the end of 2002, to improve community relations.</p> <p>2.4 Begin the implementation of a cross-departmental strategy to address the needs of victims.</p> <p>2.5 A commissioner for children in place by June 2002, and consultation initiated on a strategy for children.</p>	<p>2.3 (Sub-priority 1)</p> <p>2.3 (Sub-priority 1)</p> <p>2.4 (Sub-priority 2)</p> <p>2.5 (Sub-priority 3)</p> <p>2.6 (Sub-priority 4)</p>

OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER

Objective	Budget £m 2002/03	Targets	PfG References
		<p>2.6 Cross-departmental policies to promote gender and racial equality in place.</p> <p>2.7 The effective implementation of New Targeting Social Need policy.</p>	<p>2.3 (Sub-priority 1)</p> <p>2.7 (Sub-priority 5)</p>

PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT EQUALITY IMPACT

1. Background

1.1 Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

1.2 In addition, without prejudice to the above obligation, public authorities are also required, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

1.3 Schedule 9 of the Act requires public authorities to prepare Equality Schemes stating how they propose to fulfil these duties. In February/March 2001, the Equality Commission approved the Equality Schemes of each of the eleven government departments. These Equality Schemes, which have been widely publicised, include commitments to carry out equality impact assessments, in line with Equality Commission guidance, on a range of policies and programmes included within the Programme for Government. A number of these equality impact assessments are currently underway.

1.4 At the time of preparation of the Programme for Government last year, a meeting was held with the Equality Commission to discuss arrangements for the integration of the equality dimension into the Programme for Government. The Commission recognised the particular difficulties, especially in relation to timing, in the preparation of an equality impact assessment at that time. The OFMDFM Equality Scheme, which was approved in March 2001, included a commitment to “keep under review how it intends to meet its obligations in the future” as the methodology for carrying out equality impact assessments was developed.

1.5 Taking account of this commitment and discussions with the Equality Commission, the following actions have been taken to build on and develop the process of ensuring that equality considerations are fully integrated into the development of the Programme for Government.

Preliminary Consultation

- 1.6 A key change has been the development of a more comprehensive pre-consultation phase on the review of the Programme for Government and the preparation of the Budget. The process was begun in May and June 2001 by using Recall Seminars to seek views from a wide range of stakeholders.
- 1.7 In June 2001, the Executive's Position Report on the Programme for Government and Budget were published. The Position Report was circulated widely. All of those listed in the OFMDFM and DFP Equality Schemes were sent a copy and consultees were invited to comment on equality and community relations aspects of the Programme for Government. In August 2001, in association with the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA), a Round Table discussion was held involving the social partners and officials from OFMDFM and DFP.

Equality considerations in the review of the Programme for Government

- 1.8 As departments developed proposals for inclusion in the Programme for Government, they considered the overall equality impact of the various sub-priorities. This review aimed to build on the analysis of equality impact included in the Programme for Government published last year. In particular departments considered if the overall policies, programmes and actions within the sub-priorities would promote equality of opportunity and/or redress an inequality for any of the Section 75 categories and also if any adverse impact would be produced. Where adverse impact was identified, departments were asked to consider how this might be mitigated.
- 1.9 This exercise has been helpful in identifying programmes and actions which should contribute to equality of opportunity for a number of groups in our community. However, it has also demonstrated that since the key aspect of the Programme and the budget is the relative balance of expenditure between different programmes, it is not practicable to properly assess the equality impact of the various sub-priorities nor of the **overall** Programme for Government using the same approach as that for an individual policy.
- 1.10 The Programme for Government is a **high level** statement of the Executive's key priorities and programmes which inform decisions on the Budget. Within each of its Priorities, there are a range of policies and associated actions which are taken forward by individual departments or by departments working together. Individual policies will be subject to full equality impact assessment by departments in accordance with their approved Equality Schemes. This programme of impact assessments will include key policies such as the Acute Hospitals Review, the Review of Public Administration, the review of Rating Policy and the Review of the use of Public Private Partnerships. A list of ongoing equality impact assessments and those planned for 2002/03 is included in an Annex to this document.

- 1.11 We recognise that much of our work has significant implications for equality of opportunity and are committed to ensuring that this is fully taken into account as we progress our work. The extensive programme of equality impact assessments, as outlined in our approved Equality Schemes, will be the key mechanism through which we will fulfil our statutory equality obligation to have due regard to the promotion of equality of opportunity in carrying our functions through the Programme for Government. Attached at Annex D(i) is a list of EIAs to be completed during this period.
- 1.12 In addition, as part of our annual review of the Programme for Government, we will continue to update our analysis of the broad impact of our work on equality of opportunity. An overview of equality impact, which follows the format recommended in the Equality Commission's Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment, is included below. This draws on information provided in the reviews completed by individual departments and the analysis included in last year's Programme for Government.
- 1.13 We also recognise that a key measure of the impact of our work is the extent to which it leads to greater equality of opportunity for each of the Section 75 categories. As is recognised in the Equality Commission's Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment, there are considerable gaps in information available on some groups. During the incoming year, we will work with other public bodies, the Equality Commission and the voluntary and community sector to develop a strategic framework for increasing our research and information on equality and social need to enable us to fully assess the equality impact of our work.

2. Overview of Equality Impact

Consideration of available data and research

- 2.1 We are conscious of the need to be informed of the positions and experiences of members of the various groups within the section 75 categories. The Equality Commission's Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment reminds public authorities that they will "need to consider how they will collect the information which will enable them to make a judgement of the extent of impact on excluded groups".
- 2.2 The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency has worked with all departments to audit the extent and quality of coverage of section 75 groups in key Departmental data sources. This audit demonstrates that the data available in relation to the respective categories varies in extent and quality. While there is a wealth of good quality data in relation to categories such as religious belief, men and women and age, there is less information available on racial group, dependants and disability and little or none about sexual orientation and political opinion.
- 2.3 We will further develop our information base and will established a new Steering Group in conjunction with the Equality Commission and the

Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action to drive this work forward. The Statistics and Research Agency will develop and publish a series of papers illustrating in detail the relative positions of groups within the section 75 categories. This work will be helpful to the Executive and to individual Ministers and their departments in considering the future direction of policy.

- 2.4 It is not possible here to summarise all of the information available about all of the section 75 categories. However, the paragraphs below highlight some information on the position of Section 75 groups related to key issues in the Programme for Government priorities. Further information about related data and research is available from Alan McClelland, Research Unit, Equality Directorate, OFMDFM

Growing as a Community

- 2.5 There is a wide range of equality and community relations issues dealt with under this Priority:
- Existing anti-discrimination provisions do not apply to all of the Section 75 categories.
 - While in terms of statements of general principle, a significant majority of those in Northern Ireland tend to hold quite positive and liberal attitudes towards race relations, when specific minority ethnic groups are named, racial attitudes tend to be significantly more negative. The most negative attitudes appear to be reserved for Travellers (Connolly and Keenan 2000).
 - Recent academic analyses of social attitudes have suggested that while there has been a general improvement in community attitudes between Protestants and Catholics since the late 1980s, over the most recent period (1996 onwards), there are suggestions of a decrease in levels of liberal views associated with a perceived sense of mistrust and unease within the Protestant community, (Hughes et al, 2001).
 - People from minority ethnic communities and people with disabilities experience particular difficulties in accessing some public services.
 - In relation to housing, equality issues are raised by the findings that
 - Some people with disabilities and their carers have particular housing needs,
 - Fuel poverty arises where households spend more than 10% of income on fuel. Some sections of the community, for example pensioner households, are more at risk of experiencing fuel poverty than others,
 - There are more owner-occupied or privately rented dwellings that are unfit, than public sector housing,

- The Catholic community is more likely to live in Housing Executive accommodation than the Protestant community,
- Minority ethnic households are, on average, larger compared to the average household size in Northern Ireland as a whole,
- The 1993 census of Travellers indicated that most Travellers expressed interest in alternative accommodation, with the largest proportion identifying extended amenity units as their preference. The next most popular option was for grouped housing,
- In relation to tackling disadvantage the Noble indicators of relative deprivation rank electoral ward areas in relation to their level of deprivation on a range of measures. Generally speaking, wards whose populations are predominantly Catholic are more likely to be more deprived than those that are predominantly Protestant, (Measures of Deprivation in Northern Ireland, NISRA 2001).

Working for a healthier people

2.6 This PfG priority recognises that our general health record is not good. There is clear evidence that levels of ill-health, long-term illness and other health-related issues such as teenage pregnancy rates, are closely linked to social disadvantage. For example:

- Only one percent of Travellers is aged 65 or over, compared to a Northern Ireland average of 13%. Combining this with the finding that there is a higher proportion of dependent children among the Traveller community, implies a relatively high birth rate together with a relatively low life expectancy among Travellers;
- Men are more likely than women to die from cancer while women are more likely than men to die from respiratory diseases;
- While roughly the same proportions of men and women smoke, men are more than twice as likely as women to consume levels of alcohol that are above sensible levels;
- Suicide rates for males are six times greater than that for females.

Investing in education and skills

2.7 Educational outcome is fundamental to the ability to exploit the employment and other opportunities that are available and for the quality of people's lives. Some examples of equality issues are that:

- Girls tend to do better at schools than boys in key stage tests and in public examinations;

- More young women than males leave school to go into Further or Higher Education, while young males were more likely to leave school to go into training or employment;
- Educational performance and outcome vary with ethnic background, and the patterns exhibited are complex. On average, Travellers have lower levels of numeracy and literacy skills and lower levels of enrolment at Year 12 with more than half leaving school with no GCSEs, (Department of Education, May 2001);
- The proportion of school leavers achieving no GCSEs who are entitled to free school meals, is twice that of all school leavers,(Department of Education, May 2001);
- Those whose first language is not English will have particular problems in communicating until support to improve their fluency takes effect and often have to rely on family members or friends to translate for them.

Securing a competitive economy

2.8 Key to the creation of a cohesive, inclusive and just society is the creation of a vibrant economy, recognising the needs of all. Examples of the equality concerns relating to this PfG priority are that:

- Economic activity is lower among women than men. Women with children have a lower economic activity rate compared to those women without children. Economic activity rates decrease even further for women with three or more children. Women are more likely than men to say that they are unavailable for work because they are looking after the family home;
- The male unemployment rate is higher than the female unemployment rate;
- Lower proportions of working age Catholics are in employment compared to Protestants. Catholics comprise a higher proportion of both the short-term and long-term unemployed.
- The probability of being unemployed is highest among the 18-24 age group;
- One third of working age people with disabilities are in employment compared to three quarters of people without disabilities;
- Being out of work impacts directly on income, meaning that, on average, the groups who are particularly subject to unemployment will also be the poorest;

- As people grow older, income and wealth decline and as a result of reduced earning power combined with increased longevity, women and disabled people may be particularly subject to poverty in old age.

3. Assessment of Impacts

- 3.1 The Programme for Government published last year included an analysis of the equality impact of the different priority areas. This remains valid for this new draft. A review by individual departments has shown that within each priority, there are a range of programmes and actions which may lead to positive equality outcomes for a number of Section 75 categories. This is summarised in the following section. It must be emphasised however, that this analysis is incomplete since many of these policies and programmes are currently subject to full equality impact assessment or will be in the future. Departments have highlighted that a number of programmes and actions are targeted at specific Section 75 categories and that it may be argued that prioritising spending on these may have an adverse impact on other Section 75 categories. Since these policies are designed to increase equality of opportunity or to redress disadvantages, they should not conflict with the statutory equality obligation.
- 3.2 The following section summarises key policies and programmes within each of the Priorities, which should directly promote equality objectives.

Growing as a community

- All Section 75 categories should benefit from the effective implementation of equality schemes, the harmonisation and up-dating of anti-discrimination and equality legislation, the development of a strategic framework on research and information on equality and social need and the measurement of progress on inclusion in NICS employment.
- Men and women, people from minority ethnic groups and people with disabilities should benefit from the development and implementation of cross-departmental strategies in these areas.
- The implementation of the Executive's response to the Promoting Social Inclusion, (PSI), Working Group on Travellers should have a positive impact on equality for that group.
- Through a Victims' strategy, equality of opportunity will be increased and disadvantage addressed for people in a number of Section 75 categories including women, children and people with dependants and children.
- Actions to tackle divisions in our society will specifically promote good relations for people of different religious belief, political opinion and racial group but should also have a positive effect on all section 75 categories.

- The establishment of a Children’s Commissioner and a strategy on children will increase equality of opportunity for children and young people and those with dependants.
- Our work to increase residential child care places will help to reduce inequalities for children and young people, and those with dependants. Experience of unemployment and poverty varies according to factors such as geographic area, gender, community background, age and disability. Our New TSN policy including Promotion Social Inclusion aims to contribute to the reduction of inequalities and to redress disadvantage. New indicators of relative deprivation will assist in ensuring that targeting is done fairly with those in greatest social need being identified objectively.
- The work of the Task Force on Employability and Long –Term Unemployment will have positive equality outcomes for people from a number of section 75 categories who are over-represented among those who are not in employment especially Catholics, women and those with disabilities.
- A full equality impact assessment on the introduction of concessionary travel is currently underway. Particular consideration is being given to impacts on gender, disability, age, marital status and dependants.
- Social security benefits will continue to be targeted at those in greatest need and our work to ensure improved delivery of services will have particular benefit for older people, those with disabilities, those with dependants and those from minority ethnic groups.
- Our work on housing will aim to provide high quality and accessible housing especially for those in greatest need. Our work with the Housing Executive to increase the number of properties that meet the needs of people with disabilities and older people will increase equality of opportunity for these groups. Through the introduction of “Supporting People” we will particularly address the needs of older people, people with disabilities, victims of domestic violence and other vulnerable groups.
- Our work with the Housing Executive to improve the living conditions of Travellers will help to redress the particular inequalities and disadvantages of the Traveller community.
- Action to renew the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and to build community participation is specifically concerned with redressing inequality and disadvantage. Targeted action through programmes in this sub-priority does not conflict with our statutory equality obligation. A full equality impact assessment of our Rural Development Programme will be carried out.

Working for a Healthier People

While everyone in the community benefits from prioritised spending on health, our work in this Priority will help to address inequalities for people with specific health needs for example younger and older people, women, people with disabilities and people with dependants. Specific equality issues arising from this priority include the following:

- Our “Investing for Health” strategy will specifically target those who are marginalised in society or suffer inequalities in health. Some of this strategy’s associated policies and programmes will benefit certain Section 75 categories. For example, the strategy will focus on factors impacting on the health of children, unplanned births among women and impacts on seriously disadvantaged groups such as Travellers.
- Policies and programmes to promote public safety will benefit everyone in the community but particularly children and younger people and older people.
- Recommendations included in an implementation arising from a recent review of the Ambulance Service will be subject to a full equality impact assessment.
- A full impact assessment will be conducted on proposals for the future of Acute Hospitals. Specific issues will include access to emergency care services, (with particular relevance to children and elderly people) and access to women, children and people with dependants.
- We will address health inequalities for people with disabilities, particularly those with mental health difficulties by bringing forward new mental health policies and legislation. Section 75 groups particularly affected will be people with disabilities, those with dependants, older people, women and younger people.

Investing in Education and Skills

Policies and programmes in this Priority, which is specifically focussed on improving standards and access to education both in our schools and in further and higher education, will enhance equality of opportunity for a number of Section 75 groups but particularly children and young people, men and women and those with disabilities.

- The range of measures we are introducing to improve standards in schools will particularly focus on remedying low and under-achievement wherever it is found. Boys, children and people from the Catholic community and minority ethnic communities, especially the Traveller community will specifically benefit.
- Legislation promoting disability rights in schools and further and higher education will significantly redress existing disadvantage experienced by people with disabilities in education.

- The introduction of a common funding formula for grant aided schools will bring about more equitable funding arrangements. An equality impact assessment in this area is currently underway.
- Increased provision of pre-school education will promote greater equality for women and those with dependants.
- Actions to promote a culture of tolerance including the phased implementation of a Citizenship Programme will help to promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion, sexual orientation and racial group.
- Improving standards and access to further and higher education and life-long learning opportunities will particularly benefit young and older people, women and those with disabilities.
- Actions to enable socially excluded people to enter or return to the workforce will help redress disadvantage for people with disabilities, women and Catholics, who are over-represented among those not in employment.

Securing a competitive economy

Within this Priority we have included a number of policies and programmes which aim to create conditions for economic growth. Full equality impact assessments are already underway in a number of areas.

- Key actions to improve our public transport services will have particular benefits for younger and older people, women, those with dependants, people with disabilities and those from minority ethnic communities. The Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan and the Regional Transportation Strategy will be subject to full equality impact assessment.
- Through the Regional Development Strategy we will give careful consideration to where people live and work and other key factors so that we can effectively plan the development of our towns and countryside. Full equality impact assessments will be carried out on the various Planning Policy Statements which will define strategic planning policy.
- Equality impact assessments are currently underway on specific policies relating to support for business, inward investment and company development.

Developing North/South, East/West and International Relations

Within this Priority, co-operation on European Funding will have an important impact on equality of opportunity and good relations. Funding through European programmes makes an important contribution to programmes which aim to promote equality of opportunity, good relations and to tackle social exclusion. A Community Support Fund working group has been established to specifically monitor the equality impact of all the European Structural Funds as they are rolled out.

Working Together

This Priority focuses on how we do our business, how we will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our public services and administration and on how we fund our public services. We will ensure that equality considerations are fully integrated in taking forward work, in particular, plans to improve public procurement, the reform of public administration, rating policy and policy on the use of Public Private Partnerships (PPP) will all be subject to equality impact assessments.

4. Consultation

4.1 To assist us to fully assess the overall impact of our work, we would appreciate your views on any equality aspect of our proposals. In particular, we would welcome views on the following:

- Do you consider that any of the proposals are likely to have a positive or negative equality impact on any of the groups included within section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998?
- If you have identified any impact, do you have any suggestions as to how this might be mitigated or alternative approaches which we might adopt to the promotion of equality of opportunity for these groups?

5. Decision and publication

5.1 Responses from Public consultation will be taken into account in finalising the Programme for Government. A report of the review of equality impact, which will take account of consultation responses, will be made available as an annex to the finalised Programme for Government which will be published following approval by the Executive.

LIST OF EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS PLANNED OR UNDERWAY

The following tables detail by department the policies on which Equality Impact Assessments have been completed, are underway or will begin by 31 March 2002, and those planned for 2002/2003.

Policies marked with an asterisk (*) relate specifically to commitments in the Programme for Government.

DEPARTMENT	EIA Complete	Underway	To Commenced by 31 March 2002	Planned for 2002 -2003
OFMDFM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Equality (Disability ETC.) NI Order 2000 Equality Commission (Time Regulations). • Implementation of the Burden of Proof Directive in NI. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic plan for victim policy issues including relations with voluntary sector victims organisations*. • Corporate Strategic Framework for delivering government services electronically*. • Commissioner for Children*. • Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 • Proposals for legislative changes on disability discrimination law arising from Disability Rights Task Force report*. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainstreaming community relations within the public sector and other institutions. • EU support for community relations and reconciliation initiatives. • Review of support for the Community Relations Council. • PSI review on access to information by disadvantaged people. • Revision of guidance on evacuation (CEPU). • Programme for Government*. • Strategic plan for gender policy issues including relations with voluntary sector women's and men's organisations*. • Strategic plan to tackle racial inequality including targeted support for minority ethnic groups*. • Policy for Modernising Government. • Strategic report on Travellers*. • Improving performance in Northern Ireland public sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single Equality Bill.* • The promotion of implementation within the devolved administration of obligations arising under the Human Rights Act*. • The promote of human rights considerations in the development of policy within the devolved administration*. • Corporate IT Standards*. • Support for voluntary sector community relations initiatives. • Cultural diversity. • Equal pay. • Support for Equality Commission. • Policy on honours. • Freedom of information. • Dissemination of information. • Policy on publication of adverts etc

DEPARTMENT	EIA Complete	Underway	To Commence by 31 March 2002	Planned for 2002 -2003
DFP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Civil Law – Family Law Act 2000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing European Union programmes.:- Structural Funds. Review of Civil Law - Marriage Laws Review of Civil Law – Aspects of law on domestic violence. Review of Civil Law – Physical punishment of Children. Formulating future procurement policy and purchasing arrangements*. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing policy on location of Northern Ireland Civil Service jobs*. Rating Policy.* Quinquennial Review of Rate Collection Agency. Review of Civil Law - Divorce Process of Resource Allocation*. Children's Fund*. Policy on Public Private Partnerships*. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing policy on Recruitment Developing policy on Promotion Review of Civil law – family property Ownership <p>.*</p>

DEPARTMENT	EIA Complete	Underway	To Commence by 31 March 2002	Planned for 2002 -2003
DCAL		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ELFNI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soccer Strategy Local Museums Library Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irish Language Translating and Interpreting Services

DEPARTMENT	EIA Complete	Underway	To Commence by 31 March 2002	Planned for 2002 -2003
DE		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements for School Funding (Local Management of Schools)* • Promotion of Personal and Social Development of Young People through Leisure Activities* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selective Structure of Post Primary education: Transfer Procedure Tests*. • Differential Eligibility for Retirement from Teaching for men and women. • Payment of Benefits to Surviving Family or Other Nominated Beneficiaries. • Promotion of Inclusion of Children with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Schools and Classes. • School Building Programme*. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home to school transport • Raising standards of Literacy/numeracy through Literacy/ numeracy Strategy*. • Support for low and underachieving Schools*. • Promotion of inclusion for pupil groups in danger of Education Underachievement*. • Maintenance of Statutory NI Curriculum*. • Maximising learning opportunities for children with learning difficulties / special educational needs.

DEPARTMENT	EIA Complete	Underway	To Commence by 31 March 2002	Planned for 2002 -2003
DRD		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of concessionary fares scheme* • Rural Transport Fund • Regional Planning Policy Statement on Housing • Fares pricing policy • Proposed discontinuance of services on Antrim/Knockmore Railway Line • Regional Transportation Strategy • Infrastructure Charges 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operation and delivery of bus and rail services • Operational Transport Planning • Provision of pedestrian facilities • Operation and management of car parks • Two Regional Planning Policy Statements on (a) Transport; and (b) Retail • Transport for disabled people • Households not connected to mains water or sewerage • Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan*

DEPARTMENT	EIA Complete	Underway	To Commence by 31 March 2002	Planned for 2002 -2003
DHSSPS		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral Health Strategy/General Dental Services • Tobacco Control • Mental Health Promotion Strategy/Prevention of Suicide* • Teenage Parenthood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific Children's Services*: Adoption, Children at Risk of Offending; Leaving and After Care Services; Independent Visitors Scheme; Looked after Children; Complaints and Representation Procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Support/Children in Need; Social Services for Children with a disability.* • Funding for Voluntary and Community organisations • Charging for Residential Care • Learning Disability.*

DHSSPS continued			<p>for Children; Recruitment of Foster Carers; Residential Care for Children; Secure Accommodation for Children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment and Care Management, including Carers' Strategy, Respite Care, Community Care, Direct Payments; and Right to a Carer's Assessment.* • Sub-Fertility Treatment* • Acute Care-Acute Hospitals Review.* • New Central Maternity Unit.* • Strategic Review of Cardiac Services. • Renal Services Review • Investing for Health* • Information and Communication Technology (ICT) strategy for the HPSS* • Sure Start.* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of Hours arrangements for General Medical Services. • -Alcohol Strategy; Drug Strategy • Procurement and Supplies.* • Procurement (Buildings, Plant and Equipment).* • Private Finance Initiative/Private Public Partnership.* • Capital Investment Strategy; General Capital Review. • Strategic Review of the Ambulance Service.* • Annual Allocation of Resources. • Agenda for change relating to pay and conditions of HPSS staff • Regional Human Resources Strategy.*
------------------	--	--	--	---

DEPARTMENT	EIA Complete	Underway	To Commence by 31 March 2002	Planned for 2002 -2003
DOE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Government Compensation for redundancy and premature retirement Regs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedures relating to the issue of a licence to drivers with a medical condition likely to affect their fitness to drive. • Driving theory test procedures. • Review of General Exchequer Grant (Resources Element) • Review of Planning Fees* • 2 Planning Development Control Advice Notes – Hot Food Bars* and Small Unit Housing* (New development in existing residential areas). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derry Airport Local Plan* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application for the issue of a driving licence (age and race) • Road safety Advertising and Education*. • Local Government Pension Scheme • Ards/ Down Development Plan* • Banbridge/ Newry and Mourne Development Plan* • Magherafelt Development Plan* • Planning Development control advice – On Access for people with disabilities* • Access to Built Heritage • Qualifying procedures for registration as an approved driving instructor • Pollution Control*

DEPARTMENT	EIA Complete	Underway	To Commence by 31 March 2002	Planned for 2002 -2003
DARD			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less Favoured Area Support. • Payment of Agricultural Grants and Subsidies • Implementation of Agenda 2000. • Peace II (Natural Resource Tourism Measure) * • Forestry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk Quotas • Research & Education Policy. • Sea Fisheries- Policy- Enforcement and Conservation • People Development through Higher and Further Education Courses * • Lifelong Learning through Short Courses* • Lifelong Learning to enhance Competitiveness* • Lifelong Learning to develop environmentally responsible farming and rural enterprise*

DEPARTMENT	EIA Complete	Underway	To Commence by 31 March 2002	Planned for 2002 -2003
DSD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Support Agency Northern Ireland Field Operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of relevant accurate and timely information and advice about social security benefits; • Compact between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector* • Private Sector Housing Grants* • Accommodation for Travellers* • Urban Regeneration – Belfast* • Town/city centre reinvigoration.* 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Council's Community Services Programme* • Peace II* • Urban Regeneration/Neighbourhood Renewal Overarching Strategy.*

DEPARTMENT	EIA Complete	Underway	To Commence by 31 March 2002	Planned for 2002 -2003
DETI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restructuring of DETI Agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attracting new inward investment • Supporting local investment • Raising the level of research and development • Increasing the use of new technologies • Promoting management development and encouraging employers to develop the skills and versatility of those in employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilities – Primary Legislation* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective regulation of gas and electricity industry in NI and diversification. • Energy efficiency/ alternative energy sources. • Electricity and gas legislation • EU energy directives • Mineral and petroleum exploration and development • Business industry and commerce regulator framework. • Administration of affairs of bankrupts and companies in compulsory liquidation. • Consumer and business trading environment.

DEPARTMENT	EIA Complete	Underway	To Commence by 31 March 2002	Planned for 2002 -2003
DEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Finance 			

The Department of Employment and Learning is in the process of preparing its timetable of Equality Impact Assessments for the next three years following the completion of the consultation on its screening exercise. The timetabling of policies will take account of the responses received and the agreed timetable will be available on the Department's website.

GLOSSARY

British-Irish Council (BIC)	The Council promotes the harmonious and mutually beneficial development of relationships among the people of these Islands.
BIIGC	British-Irish Inter-Governmental Conference
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DCAL	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
DE	Department of Education
DEL	Department for Employment and Learning
DETI	Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment
DFP	Department of Finance and Personnel
DHSSPS	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
DOE	Department of the Environment
DRD	Department for Regional Development
DSD	Department for Social Development
EC	European Commission
EFQM	European Foundation for Quality Management
EIA	Equality Impact Assessment
EURES	European Employment Service
EU	European Union
EQUAL	European Union funding programme to promote new approaches to combating all forms of discrimination and inequality in connection with access to the labour market.
FÁS	The training and employment authority in the Republic of Ireland

FE	Further Education
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HE	Higher Education
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
INTERREG 111	European Union funding programme to encourage co-operation either side of a national border
JMC	Joint Ministerial Committee
New TSN	The New Targeting Social Need policy, through which the Executive is taking forward its commitment to tackling deprivation. The policy recognises and seeks to reduce inequalities in the life experiences of citizens in terms of poverty, health, housing, educational and economic opportunity and disability.
NICS	Northern Ireland Civil Service
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
OFMDFM	Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
ONE	ONE brings together the Social Security Agency, the Training and Employment Agency and other partner organisations at a single point of contact for new customers claiming a specified range of benefits. Its main focus is to achieve a fundamental shift in the way the benefit system treats customers, with the overall aim to increase economic activity by encouraging more people into work. In cases where the customer is not fit for work or is not ready to take up a job, ONE will aim to provide him or her with a flexible, professional and personalised service which takes account of all his/her social needs.
PEACE 11	EU funded programme to encourage Peace and Reconciliation.
SEUPB	Special EU Programme Body
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises