



House of Commons
Northern Ireland Affairs
Committee

**The Work of the
Committee in 2007**

Second Report of Session 2007–08

Report, together with formal minutes

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The Northern Ireland Affairs Committee

The Northern Ireland Affairs Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Northern Ireland Office (but excluding individual cases and advice given by the Crown Solicitor); and other matters within the responsibilities of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (but excluding the expenditure, administration and policy of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Northern Ireland and the drafting of legislation by the Office of the Legislative Counsel).

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Sammy Wilson MP (*Democratic Unionist Party, East Antrim*)

John Battle MP (*Labour, Leeds West*) was a member of the Committee during 2007.

Powers

The committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No 152. These are available on the Internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publication

The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including press notices) are on the Internet at www.parliament.uk/niacom. A list of Reports of the Committee in the present Parliament is at the back of this volume.

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Contents

Report	<i>Page</i>
1 Introduction	3
2 The Committee's activities in relation to the 'core tasks'	4
To consider major policy initiatives	4
Political developments	4
Community-based Restorative Justice	4
To consider the Government's response to major emerging issues; and to propose changes where evidence persuades the Committee that present policy requires amendment	6
Organised Crime	6
Tourism	7
Prisons	7
To conduct pre-legislative scrutiny of draft bills	8
To examine and report on main Estimates, annual expenditure plans and annual resource accounts	8
Redundant military and police sites	9
To monitor performance against targets in the public service agreements	9
To take evidence from each Minister at least annually	9
To consider the reports of Executive Agencies	10
To consider, and if appropriate report on, major appointments by the Secretary of State or other senior ministers	10
To examine treaties within the Committee's subject area	10
Follow-up of previous recommendations	10
Appendix 1	12
Memorandum submitted by the Northern Ireland Office on 17 December 2007 in response to Questions from the Committee in connection with previous recommendations	12
Appendix 2	15
Letter from Paul Goggins MP, Minister of State, to Sir Patrick Cormack MP, Chairman of the Committee, 5 July 2007, re Community-based Restorative Justice Schemes	15
Appendix 3	16
Memorandum submitted by the Northern Ireland Office on 9 July 2007 in response to Questions from the Committee relating to the Northern Ireland Office Autumn Performance Report 2006	16
Appendix 4	24
Memorandum submitted by the Northern Ireland Office on 22 October 2007 in response to Questions from the Committee relating to the Departmental Report 2007	24

Appendix 5	36
Memorandum submitted by the Northern Ireland Office on 23 October 2007 in response to Questions from the Committee in connection with the Spring Supplementary Estimates 2006/07	36
Appendix 6	38
Memorandum submitted by the Northern Ireland Office on 23 October 2007 in response to Questions from the Committee relating to the Winter Supplementary Estimates 2006/07	38
Appendix 7	41
Letter from Rt Hon Shaun Woodward MP, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, to Sir Patrick Cormack MP, Chairman of the Committee, 18 December 2007, re Redundant Military and Security Sites in Northern Ireland	41

1 Introduction

1. This Report reviews the work of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee during 2007, a year which has seen significant developments in both the apparatus of government and the conduct of politics in Northern Ireland. With the restoration to the Northern Ireland Assembly of responsibility for scrutiny of the work of the Departments of the Northern Ireland Executive, this Committee's responsibilities shrank in May 2007 to cover policing, criminal justice and political and constitutional developments in Northern Ireland.

2. As a Committee we are of course delighted that responsibility for the majority of policy areas has been restored to a body which is directly accountable to the people of Northern Ireland. For us, however, this has meant a considerably reduced remit, with inevitable consequences for our ability to carry out the 'core tasks' set by the House for all departmentally related select committees. Nevertheless, 2007 was a busy year for the Committee, made especially so in its early months by the need to complete our major Report on Tourism in good time for devolution of responsibility for such matters.

3. The Committee's visits to Northern Ireland are an important aspect of its work. Such visits allow us to meet and talk to key personalities who are directly involved in carrying out or in monitoring the areas of policy that we as a Committee scrutinise. In some cases, we have been able to hear formal, public evidence from organisations or individuals; in other cases, we have held private discussions. Both formats, in their different ways, contribute greatly to our understanding of the matters into which we inquire and of political developments in Northern Ireland more generally.

4. We like to visit Northern Ireland at least six times a year, but important political developments meant that in 2007 we visited Northern Ireland on just three occasions, travelling not only to Belfast but to Bangor and to Limavady. A further visit took place in January 2008.

5. We also visited the Republic of Ireland in January and October 2007, and again in January 2008. Although they are slightly less frequent than our visits to Northern Ireland, these visits are an important opportunity for members of the Committee to meet senior figures in the Irish government, Parliament and other organisations to discuss the many matters of mutual interest. We wish to place on record our thanks to all those whom we have met in the Republic of Ireland for the warmth of their welcome and the quality of their discourse. We are also grateful to the British Ambassador in Dublin, David Reddaway, and other Embassy staff who have been of great assistance on every visit.

2 The Committee's activities in relation to the 'core tasks'

6. In 2003, the Liaison Committee proposed a set of 'core tasks' for select committees, in response to a Resolution of the House of 14 May 2002.¹ Committees are expected to engage in activity relating to each of these core tasks, where appropriate. We report below on how our activities during 2007 have contributed towards carrying out each core task.

To consider major policy initiatives

Political developments

7. As a Committee, we keep abreast of political developments relating to Northern Ireland through our meetings with the Secretary of State and with other senior figures in the NIO, and through discussions with many of those closely involved in such developments. Our public evidence sessions, the transcripts of which may be viewed on our website, are supplemented by private briefings.² Both formats are of great value to us and we are grateful to Ministers, officials and others for the time and trouble they go to in order to ensure that the currency and breadth of our knowledge of political developments is maintained.

8. We believe that the House is well served by having a body of back-bench Members from most parties and from across the United Kingdom who are well informed on political developments in Northern Ireland. In 2007, the Chairman and other members of the Committee asked numerous oral and written questions on Northern Ireland, intervened in oral statements by Northern Ireland Office Ministers, and spoke in debates in the House on Northern Ireland affairs.

Community-based Restorative Justice

9. Through a Report made in January 2007, the Committee contributed to the Northern Ireland Office's consultation on its draft Protocol for Community-based Restorative Justice Schemes.³ The draft Protocol replaced previous guidelines that had been the subject of a consultation exercise, during which a number of serious concerns had been raised.

10. Community-based Restorative Justice (CBRJ) is a process based in the community in which low level crime and anti-social behaviour is addressed through mediation. CBRJ schemes have operated in Northern Ireland since 1996 under two main umbrella organisations: Northern Ireland Alternatives (based in mainly loyalist areas); and Community Restorative Justice Ireland (based in predominantly republican areas). The

¹ Liaison Committee, First Report of Session 2002-03, Annual Report 2002, HC 558, para 13; HC Deb, 14 May 2002, cols 648-715

² The Committee's website is at www.parliament.uk/niacom

³ First Report of Session 2006-07, Draft Protocol for Community-based Restorative Justice Schemes, HC 87

schemes emerged in response to a growth in ‘punishment attacks’ carried out by republican and loyalist paramilitary organisations on young people who had allegedly engaged in anti-social behaviour. The stated primary aim of the schemes was to provide a non-violent alternative to such attacks through activity in which anti-social behaviour is addressed through a process of mediation between perpetrators and victims.

11. In our Report, we endorsed the draft Protocol as the basis for encouraging the development of community-based restorative justice schemes and building confidence in them, but we did so with a number of reservations. Chief among these were concerns about the funding of the proposed scheme, the dangers of an overly formal and bureaucratic approach, and the need for any scheme to be as transparent as possible and to gain the confidence of the public.

12. The Government responded positively to our Report, accepting many of its recommendations.¹ However, not all our concerns were allayed. In particular, by the end of 2007 we were disappointed that only four CBRJ schemes, all of them operating in predominantly loyalist areas, had received accreditation under the Protocol. We wrote to the NIO, asking them what progress was being made with accrediting further such schemes, particularly those operating in mainly republican areas. The NIO replied that a further eleven schemes operating in mainly republican areas had expressed interest in accreditation, but that none had so far met the criteria. The NIO informed us that as at December 2007 these schemes were implementing recommendations made by Criminal Justice Inspection, with a view to reapplying for accreditation “in a few months.”² We welcome this modest progress towards fuller implementation of the Protocol, and look forward to hearing that further schemes have been accredited early in 2008.

13. On funding, we received a letter from the Minister of State, Paul Goggins MP, in July 2007 in which he stated that “there is currently no budget within the Northern Ireland Office for the activities of CBRJ groups and all funding streams will be subject to the constraints of the current Comprehensive Spending Review.”³ We asked the NIO to provide us with further information, following the end of the Review. They told us in December 2007 that they had agreed to provide accredited schemes with “some resources to meet identified shortfalls in funding in order to maintain operations during the remainder of the current financial year.” They hoped to make an announcement of a longer-term package early in 2008.⁴ At the time of preparing this Report, that announcement is still awaited. It is important that accredited schemes are able to plan their work on the basis of a stable and assured funding package and we trust that such a package will be in place by the beginning of financial year 2008-09.

¹ First Special Report of Session 2006-07, *Draft Protocol for Community-based Restorative Justice Schemes: Government Response to the Committee’s First Report of Session 2006-07*, HC 475

² Appendix 1, para 5

³ Appendix 2

⁴ Appendix 1, para 6

To consider the Government's response to major emerging issues; and to propose changes where evidence persuades the Committee that present policy requires amendment

Organised Crime

14. As noted in our Annual Report for 2006, the Committee's major inquiry of that year was into Organised Crime in Northern Ireland.¹ The Government has since implemented a number of welcome changes in response to recommendations made in our Report. In some cases, however, action has been less apparent. In the last year, we have followed up some of these recommendations in correspondence with the NIO.

15. One major focus for organised criminals in Northern Ireland has been the illegal resale of fuel supplied for legitimate uses at a discounted rate of duty, often by laundering it to remove the marker dyes; another has been cross-border fuel smuggling, which can be made lucrative by the differences in duty either side of the border. Since 2003, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) have operated a Registered Dealer in Controlled Oils (RDCO) scheme, which is intended to reduce such crime. The PSNI is also very active in pursuing, together with HMRC, the criminal gangs which engage in this activity, although conviction rates are low. The Committee felt that the RDCO scheme was failing to produce results and that an alternative method of levying duty at the point of sale should be tried. The Government rejected this proposal, but did undertake to review the operation of the scheme.² We asked the NIO about the outcome of this review, but as at December 2007 it had still not been published.³ We understand the report of the review will be published soon; we will study it with great interest.

16. We also called in our Report for a broader membership base and for more frequent meetings of the Organised Crime Task Force (OCTF). The NIO has informed us that the OCTF's 'Stakeholder Group' now meets quarterly, examining a specific type of crime at each such meeting. Other interested parties have been participating in these meetings by invitation and there has also been some expansion of membership of other OCTF groups.⁴ We welcome these developments.

17. In response to our recommendation for a review of the legislation relating to the proceeds of crime, the NIO listed the legislative changes made or planned to be made since our Report was published.⁵

18. We followed up one particular aspect of our Report by hearing oral evidence from the Ministers of State in the Northern Ireland Office and Home Office on the proposal to subsume within the new Serious Organised Crime Agency the existing Assets Recovery

¹ Third Report of Session 2005-06, *Organised Crime in Northern Ireland*, HC 886

² Ninth Special Report of Session 2005-06, *Organised Crime in Northern Ireland: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report of Session 2005-06*, HC 1642, para 4

³ Appendix I, para 1

⁴ *Ibid.*, para 2

⁵ *Ibid.*, para 5

Agency.¹ We had a good exchange of views with the Ministers, obtaining important assurances about the level of resources dedicated to assets recovery work in Northern Ireland and about the appointment of a designated officer for Northern Ireland. We welcome these assurances, and will monitor their implementation.

Tourism

19. In March 2007, the Committee produced its Report of a major inquiry into Tourism in Northern Ireland.² The Report contained 25 substantive recommendations. The NIO's response, received just before the restoration to the Northern Ireland Executive of responsibility for tourism, showed a wide measure of agreement between Committee and Government.³

20. With responsibility for scrutiny of the Northern Ireland Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment's tourism policies now resting with our colleagues in the Northern Ireland Assembly, it is not for us to follow up our Report. We earnestly hope, however, that the Report's recommendations are borne in mind and that the relevant Assembly committee will maintain parliamentary involvement in tourism matters. The future prosperity of Northern Ireland depends in large degree on the success of efforts to attract tourists to spend more time in what we recognised in our Report is "a beautiful part of the UK and the island of Ireland."⁴

Prisons

21. Our major inquiry post-devolution was into the Northern Ireland Prison Service. We began work on this inquiry in March 2007, when we resolved to examine:

whether the existing prison estate is adequate and appropriate for the secure accommodation of Northern Ireland's prisoners, and whether the Prison Service appropriately meets the health and education and training needs of prisoners.⁵

Our aim in carrying out the inquiry was to take a broad, strategic view which we hoped would enable the prison service to move forward constructively, in anticipation of the future transfer of responsibility for scrutiny of the criminal justice system to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

22. During the course of the inquiry, the Committee took formal evidence from a wide range of governmental and non-governmental agencies and from eminent experts in the field. We met the Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for Health, Social Services and Public Safety to discuss the arrangements for transferring responsibility for prison health care from the prison service to the health service and we visited each of the establishments

¹ Oral evidence taken before the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee on 21 March 2007, *The Assets Recovery Agency*, HC 417

² Third Report of Session 2006-07, *Tourism in Northern Ireland and its Economic Impact and Benefits*, HC 119

³ Second Special Report of Session 2006-07, *Tourism in Northern Ireland and its Economic Impact and Benefits: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report of Session 2006-07*, HC 545

⁴ Third Report of Session 2006-07, *Tourism in Northern Ireland and its Economic Impact and Benefits*, HC 119, para 125

⁵ First Report of Session 2007-08, *The Northern Ireland Prison Service*, HC 118, para 4

in the Northern Ireland Prison Service, meeting prisoners and staff in April 2007 at the Prisoner Assessment Unit in Crumlin Road, Belfast before visiting HMP Magilligan and the accommodation for women prisoners at Ash House in HMP Hydebank Wood. In July 2007, the Committee visited HMP Maghaberry and the accommodation for male young offenders at YOC Hydebank Wood in Northern Ireland. We also visited the Dochas Centre for women prisoners and Wheatfield Prison in the Republic of Ireland and HMP Belmarsh in London, to compare practices and operations. We found the opportunity to talk informally to governors, prison officers, welfare workers and prisoners at these establishments was of great value to us.

23. As our Report shows, we found that the Northern Ireland Prison Service is hampered by the inefficiencies of its buildings. Further capital investment is required to produce a first class, modern prison service. However, the Report commended the work that the service is doing and recognised that the implementation of efficiency measures has not been easy.

24. We concluded that the prison service must continue with its drive to introduce a culture which encourages prison officers to engage with prisoners to a greater extent and to view their role as one of preparing for resettlement rather than solely enforcing security. We also called for an end to the separation regime, under which some loyalist and nationalist paramilitary prisoners are accommodated separately from other prisoners, and for the building of new prison facilities, including a new prison at the Magilligan site.

25. At the time of preparing this Report, we await the response of the Northern Ireland Office to our recommendations. That response is expected well before May 2008, which is the earliest date by which devolution of responsibility for the prison service can take place. We will certainly be monitoring progress on implementation of our conclusions and recommendations for as long as it remains within our remit to do so.

To conduct pre-legislative scrutiny of draft bills

26. No draft Bills were published by the Northern Ireland Office in 2007, but two NIO-sponsored Bills were taken through the House: the Northern Ireland (St Andrews Agreement) (No. 2) Bill, the sole purpose of which was to extend from 26 March to 8 May 2007 the deadline for the restoration of the Northern Ireland Assembly and formation of a power-sharing Executive; and the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Bill, which repealed Part VII of the Terrorism Act 2000, replacing the 'Diplock' system of non-jury trials with a presumption in favour of jury trials. The Chairman and other members of the Committee participated fully in proceedings on both Bills.

To examine and report on main Estimates, annual expenditure plans and annual resource accounts

27. In 2007, the Committee raised questions in correspondence with the Northern Ireland Office in connection with its Autumn Performance Report 2006, its Winter Supplementary Estimate 2006-07, its Spring Supplementary Estimate 2007 and its Departmental Report for 2006-07. Our questions to the Department and the responses are published at Appendices 3 to 6.

Redundant military and police sites

28. In a separate exchange of correspondence between the Chairman of the Committee and the Secretary of State, we pursued the question of the disposal of redundant military and police sites. As at November 2007, there were 14 military or joint military/PSNI sites awaiting disposal.¹ We understand that at the same time about 60 police sites throughout Northern Ireland were under review for possible disposal.² Some of the sites were identified as part of the 2002 programme for reinvestment and reform, which is intended to reverse the damage caused to Northern Ireland's public services by 30 years of focus on security issues.³ Sites listed in that programme have been transferred free of charge to the Northern Ireland Executive. Other sites were identified following the April 2003 Joint Declaration between the British and Irish governments, which accepted the need for "the vacation and demolition of security installations [and] the closure of designated military bases."⁴

29. The Joint Declaration was not specific on the question of what would happen to sites vacated in accordance with this undertaking. There is no presumption that the sites will be transferred free of charge, although an Annex to the Joint Declaration suggested that "many" of them might be. However, the Government is under a general obligation to dispose of surplus assets at their full market value. This has created uncertainty in some cases. As the Secretary of State frankly acknowledged in his letter to our Chairman of 18 December 2007, "There is clearly scope for ambiguous interpretation" of the Joint Declaration.⁵

30. We intend to maintain a close interest in the future of redundant military and police sites in Northern Ireland. Their potential value to the people of Northern Ireland as a whole and to some local communities is great.

To monitor performance against targets in the public service agreements

31. The Committee has again carried out examinations by correspondence of the Northern Ireland Office's performance against its Public Service Agreement targets (PSAs) and its performance in achieving efficiency savings in the course of its scrutiny of the Estimates and the Department's Annual Report. The NIO's responses are appended to this Report.⁶

To take evidence from each Minister at least annually

32. In 2007, we heard oral evidence from the Secretary of State on one occasion (further evidence is being heard in January 2008), from the Minister of State on two occasions and from the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State once.⁷ We also held informal

¹ Sixteenth Report of the Independent Monitoring Commission, 17 September 2007, Annex XIII

² Information supplied by the Northern Ireland Office, not published

³ See www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk/index/economic-policy/reinvestment-and-reform-initiative.htm

⁴ See www.nio.gov.uk/joint_declaration_between_the_british_and_irish_governments.pdf

⁵ Appendix 7

⁶ Appendices 3 to 6

⁷ Oral evidence taken before the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee on 18 April 2007, *Political Developments in Northern Ireland*, HC 476; Oral evidence taken before the Committee on 21 March 2007, *The Assets Recovery*

exchanges with the Secretary of State and other Ministers during visits to Belfast and at Westminster.

To take evidence from independent regulators and inspectorates

33. We heard oral evidence in 2007 from the following regulatory or inspection bodies: Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland; the Life Sentence Review Commissioners; and the Prisoner Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.¹ We also received written evidence from these and from other, similar groups.

To consider the reports of Executive Agencies

34. Our inquiry of 2007 into the Northern Ireland Prison Service involved close scrutiny of the work of the NIO's major executive agency. We did not find it necessary to pursue any matters arising from our consideration of the annual reports of the NIO's other agencies—the Compensation Agency for Northern Ireland, Forensic Science Northern Ireland and the Youth Justice Agency. However, we did raise questions about the funding of the Youth Justice Agency in correspondence with the NIO about the Estimates.²

To consider, and if appropriate report on, major appointments by the Secretary of State or other senior ministers

35. The main appointment to a public office made by the Secretary of State in 2007 was that of Al Hutchinson to be the new Police Ombudsman, in succession to Nuala O'Loan. The Committee did not consider that this appointment raised any issues that required investigation. We welcome Mr Hutchinson's appointment and we look forward to regular meetings with him.

To examine treaties within the Committee's subject area

36. The most notable treaty between the Governments of the United Kingdom and of the Republic of Ireland in 2007 was the Agreement of 22 March, implementing aspects of the St Andrews Agreement on the restoration of the political institutions of Northern Ireland.³ Much of our work in 2007 was related, directly or indirectly, to this treaty; the same will be true in 2008.

Follow-up of previous recommendations

37. As is evident from the preceding paragraphs of this Report, the Committee follows up previous recommendations in a systematic way. We do not believe that the Government's responses to our Reports should be the last word, and where we are not content with a response, or where further information is required, we will continue to pursue matters.

Agency, HC 417; Oral evidence taken before the Committee on 21 November 2007, *The Northern Ireland Prison Service*, HC 118-II, Q 678 – Q 733; and Oral evidence taken before the Committee on 21 February 2007, *Tourism in Northern Ireland and its Economic Impact and Benefits*, HC 119, Q 359 – Q 447

¹ First Report of Session 2007-08, *The Northern Ireland Prison Service*, HC 118-II

² Appendix 6

³ Cm 7078, Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Ireland, 22 March 2007

38. However, it is also clear that devolution of responsibility for large areas of policy to the Northern Ireland Executive, and of responsibility for scrutinising those policies to Committees of the Northern Ireland Assembly, has deprived us of the ability to follow up the recommendations made in many of our previous Reports—for example, our stated intention to continue to monitor the effectiveness of the petroleum licensing regime in Northern Ireland cannot be sustained, because the matter has been devolved.¹ Similarly, and as noted above, any follow-up to our Report on tourism will have to be carried out by our colleagues in the Northern Ireland Assembly, and not by this Committee.

39. In due course, the Assembly will take on responsibility for scrutiny of policing and criminal justice matters. We hope that, following devolution of this responsibility, our colleagues at Stormont will pursue outstanding questions raised in our Reports on these matters. For the time being, we will continue to do so ourselves.

¹ Appendix I, para 4

Appendix 1

Memorandum submitted by the Northern Ireland Office on 17 December 2007 in response to Questions from the Committee in connection with previous recommendations

Session 2005-06

Organised Crime in Northern Ireland [HC 886-I]

1. *In its Report, the Committee called on the Government to reconsider its opposition to payment of duty on rebated fuels at the point of sale (Recommendation 4, para 37). The NIO responded that it planned to review the existing rebate scheme “next year”—i.e., in 2007. The Committee wishes to know what has been the outcome of this review.*

Response:

In December 2006 the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, John Healey MP, wrote to the Committee separately to confirm the Government’s thinking on the ‘Danish’ model, and to explain why we continue to reject this recommendation at this time.

As Paul Goggins informed the Committee in the Government response to the report, we would review the effectiveness of the Registered Dealer in Controlled Oils (RDCO) scheme. HM Revenue & Customs have conducted a review, which is due for publication soon. The scheme is an important element of HM Revenue & Customs UK Oils Strategy, and has been key to HM Revenue & Customs meeting its PSA target of reducing the illicit market share for GB diesel to 2% by 2006.

2. *The Committee recommended a broader membership base and more frequent meetings of the Organised Crime Task Force (Recommendations 28 and 29, paras 135 and 136). The Government responded that the OCTF would be invited to discuss these recommendations. What further action has since been taken?*

Response

The OCTF Stakeholder Group now meets quarterly, on foot of the Committee’s recommendation. The current format at meetings is to examine in detail one specific crime type. In addition to the standing business representatives, other relevant parties are invited to meetings as appropriate. At the June 2007 meeting, the topic of Intellectual Property Crime was discussed and representatives of the film, music, gaming and tobacco industries participated in the discussion. In September the Borders and Immigration Agency joined the group for a discussion on human trafficking.

Membership of the OCTF Sub and Expert Groups will be kept under review; the Anti-Counterfeiting Group has been invited to join OCTF's Expert Group on Intellectual Property Crime along with representatives of BSkyB, Gallaher plc and the Movie Picture Association of America; and the Social Security Agency and Environmental Heritage Service joined the Criminal Finance Expert Group in December 2007.

The structures of the Organised Crime Task Force are kept under constant review in line with the evolving nature of the threat posed by organised crime in Northern Ireland.

3. *The Committee called for a review of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (Recommendations 39, 42 and 43, paras 162, 170 and 171). The Government replied that this legislation is kept under review, both in Northern Ireland and, together with the Home Office, in England and Wales and Northern Ireland. The Committee wishes to know what changes to the legislation have been proposed as part of this ongoing review; and when it is expected that these changes will be implemented.*

Response

The Serious Crime Act 2007, which received Royal Assent on 30 October, makes a number of amendments to the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and supporting legislation.

The Act will merge the Assets Recovery Agency with the Serious Organised Crime Agency and will increase the effectiveness of assets recovery work in Northern Ireland and across the UK as a whole by combining the expertise and range of powers available to these agencies in the fight against organised crime. In addition, the ability to undertake civil recovery will be extended to prosecutors, including the Director of Public Prosecutions in Northern Ireland.

Other changes to proceeds of crime legislation brought forward by the Serious Crime Act 2007 include the extension of powers of accredited civilian financial investigators and the provision of additional investigation powers in respect of cash forfeiture.

The Serious Crime Act will also provide law enforcement agencies with new tools in the fight against organised crime by way of Serious Crime Prevention Orders.

4. *The Committee gave notice of its intention to monitor the petroleum licensing regime (Recommendation 49, para 196). In order to fulfil that commitment, the Committee wishes to receive an update on the implementation and operation of the scheme.*

Response

This recommendation relates to an issue that has now transferred to the Northern Ireland Assembly, and as such I recommend that the Committee follow up progress on this matter with the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment.

Session 2006-07

Draft Protocol for Community-based Restorative Justice Schemes [HC 87]

5. *In its Report, the Committee expressed disappointment that schemes operating in mainly republican areas had not signed up to the draft CBRJ Protocol. (Recommendation 1, para 44). The Committee notes from Janice Smiley's letter to James Rhys, dated 6 August, that as at August 2007 just four schemes, all of them affiliated to Northern Ireland Alternatives, had received accreditation under the Protocol as implemented. What progress is being made with accrediting further schemes, particularly schemes affiliated to Community Restorative Justice Ireland?"*

Response

In addition to the Northern Ireland Alternatives schemes accredited in July 2007, 11 schemes operating under the auspices of Community Restorative Justice Ireland have expressed their desire for accreditation, and have been subject to an initial inspection by Criminal Justice Inspection. That inspection identified a number of issues for schemes to address before accreditation may be considered. Schemes are currently implementing the Inspector's recommendations and intend to put themselves forward for a further accreditation inspection in a few months.

6. *The Committee recommended the provision of public funds for schemes meeting the requirements of the draft Protocol (Recommendation 5, para 62; see also recommendation 18, para 90). In its response, the Government was unable to give an undertaking that funding would be available, pending the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review. In his letter of 5 July 2007, the Minister of State reiterated that "there is currently no budget within the Northern Ireland Office available for the activities of CBRJ groups and all funding streams will be subject to the constraints of the current Comprehensive Spending Review." Now that that Review has been completed, what is the position on funding for CBRJ schemes? "*

Response

NIO has agreed to provide accredited CBRJ schemes with some resources to meet identified shortfalls in funding in order to maintain operations during the remainder of the current financial year.

Additionally, statutory Criminal Justice agencies are currently considering a potential funding package for CBRJ schemes for the next three financial years. This will provide a stable base for accredited schemes to develop a fully rounded long-term funding strategy to underpin all of the activities in which schemes are engaged. It is hoped to make an announcement on the details of this when negotiations are finalised early in the New Year.

Appendix 2

Letter from Paul Goggins MP, Minister of State, to Sir Patrick Cormack MP, Chairman of the Committee, 5 July 2007, re Community-based Restorative Justice Schemes

Thank you for your letter of 14 June to the Secretary of State regarding funding for Community-based Restorative Justice schemes. As the Minister with responsibility for Community-based Restorative Justice I have undertaken to reply.

The Secretary of State and my predecessor David Hanson were very grateful to the Committee for their comprehensive and thorough inquiry into the provisions of the draft Protocol. As David noted in his formal response to the Committee's report there is currently no budget within the Northern Ireland Office available for the activities of CBRJ groups and all funding streams will be subject to the constraints of the current Comprehensive Spending Review.

Schemes work in a variety of disciplines, for example in neighbourhood mediation, community support and youth diversion as well as with offenders and victims on issues of low level crime. It is therefore to be expected that their funding will necessarily need to come from a variety of potential statutory, voluntary and charitable sources.

I am keenly aware of the very difficult financial circumstances of their current operation and am seeking to move forward with the process of accreditation as quickly as possible.

Northern Ireland Alternatives (NIA) are currently entering the final stages of the process leading to accreditation. On successful completion of that process statutory agencies will be free to fund those activities which meet their funding criteria. Indeed, I am aware that NIA are already liaising with a number of agencies on the opportunities to form strategic partnerships in delivery services.

Appendix 3

Memorandum submitted by the Northern Ireland Office on 9 July 2007 in response to Questions from the Committee relating to the Northern Ireland Office Autumn Performance Report 2006

Efficiency targets

The report contains an update on progress against efficiency targets established under the 2004 Spending Review (SR04). The results are reported clearly, and the use of tables helpfully builds on the presentational approach of the Efficiency Technical Note. However, only very brief mention is made of the Department's measures to monitor and maintain service quality and validate figures, with the report directing the reader to the Efficiency Technical Note.

The efficiency gains for 2005/06 listed in the Autumn Performance Report show that overall the NIO outperformed those forecast in the Efficiency Technical Note. The Police Service Northern Ireland (PSNI), Northern Ireland Prison Service, and the Criminal Justice Directorate especially performed well beyond expectations. The PSNI gains come from above-expectation savings through corporate services; policy, funding and regulation; and increased productivity. For instance, the outcome for productivity for 2005/06 was £17,227,000, far above the forecast of £11,695,000. However, the forecast for 2007/08 has been revised down from that in the Efficiency Technical Note.

1. *What has enabled the Department to achieve efficiency savings in excess of initial forecasts, particularly in corporate services; policy, funding and regulation; and increased productivity?*

Answer:

The Department's efficiency programme has been structured using a series of efficiency delivery groups, each of which reports progress on a quarterly basis. As a result, the focus on efficiency created by regular reporting and an increased awareness of the issue as the programme has progressed throughout the SR2004 period has resulted in more efficiencies being delivered than originally forecast. In some cases efficiencies have also been delivered more quickly than originally planned. In particular, the PSNI has continued to be the biggest contributor to the Department's efficiency programme and savings from FTR officer reduction, civilianisation strategies and reduced overtime - covering corporate services, policy, funding and regulation and increased productivity - have contributed significantly to the Department achieving efficiency savings in excess of initial forecasts.

2. *What has the Department done to ensure that these gains have not had a negative impact on services?*

Answer:

To ensure the maintenance of service quality a process of self-assessment has been adopted within the Department - in line with best practice outlined by the National Audit Office. A

verification and challenge role has been embedded within the Department's Financial Services Division (FSD). The self-assessment methodology has incorporated key performance indicators, customer surveys and feedback, PSA targets and service level agreements. In addition, the Department reports on the maintenance of service quality to HMT on a quarterly basis.

3. *Is there scope for increasing the final efficiency gains total by 2007/08 beyond those forecast?*

Answer:

The Department considers that the efficiency targets set by HMT were stretching and has focused on achieving and, where possible, exceeding these targets. The current forecast of £98m efficiency savings by March 2008 is in excess of the £90m target and, whilst it is unlikely that the Department will generate further significant savings, the focus on efficiency will continue to ensure that current forecasts are delivered.

4. *Why have gains from productivity increases been so far above forecast for 2005/06, while the forecast for 2007-08 has been revised down since the publication of the Efficiency Technical Note?*

Answer:

Efficiency savings from the Chief Constable's decision to reduce the Full Time Reserve have been realised quicker than originally planned, hence the over-achievement against 2005/06 forecasts. In addition, the Northern Ireland Prison Service's initiative for the early and successful introduction of Night Custody Officers has also had a significant impact on the Department's ability deliver productivity gains. The forecast for 2007/08 is only marginally down (£1m) from the Efficiency Technical Note forecast due to more accurate forecasting as the efficiency programme has progressed.

The Efficiency Technical Note specifies headcount reduction targets of 1,446 public servant posts, a figure which includes 128 civil servant posts, leaving a target of 1,318 for public servant reduction. While the 2006 Annual Report made this clear, the Autumn Performance Report does not explain that the figure of 1,446 public servants is inclusive of the civil servant target. At September 2006 there was a forecast reduction of 272 civil servant posts and 1,077 public servant posts by March 2008. The NIO admits in the Efficiency Technical Note and the Autumn Performance Report that the decision of the Chief Constable in September 2004 to retain 680 Full-Time Reserve Officers in the PSNI has had a negative impact on the Department's ability to meet these targets. In response to questions posed by the Committee following review of the 2006 Annual Report, the Department said it was seeking headcount reductions elsewhere in order to offset this. The Department also noted that the Treasury considered the civil servant target to be the more important, and that it was on course to exceed this target. The Autumn Performance Report states that 'measures are in place across all programmes to ensure that service quality is at least maintained, if not improved' as a result of staff reductions.

5. *What are the measures in place to ensure a continued level of service quality despite staff reductions? How is the Department monitoring the effectiveness of these measures?*

Answer:

As described above (answer to question 2) a process of self- assessment has been adopted which incorporates key performance indicators, customer surveys and feedback, PSA targets and service level agreements to ensure a continued level of service quality. For example, the PSNI has in place a number of robust measures to ensure service quality is maintained and effectiveness monitored. These include:

- Accountability to District Policing Partnerships;
- District audit and accountability requirements to chief officers;
- Best Value Reviews;
- Local Financial Management and appointment of professional financial management teams in districts and HQ Departments; and
- Measurement and reporting of performance against policing plan objectives to the Policing Board.

6. *What steps are the Department taking to offset the Chief Constable's decision to retain 680 Full-Time Reserve officers?*

Answer:

Original efficiency forecasts factored in the decision to retain 680 Full Time Reserve Officers. Therefore, this decision has not impacted on the forecast delivery of efficiency savings. In relation to headcount, HMT's public servants' reduction target was predicated on all FTR officers leaving. The Department has informed HMT that the public servant staff reduction target is unlikely to be achieved given the decision to retain 680 officers. Higher than target staff reductions elsewhere will assist in minimising the extent to which this target is not achieved.

7. *More broadly, I would be grateful if you could let me know what impact the restoration of devolution in Northern Ireland will have on the NIO's performance against its efficiency targets and whether the targets will be revised in light of these developments?*

Answer:

It is not expected that the restoration of devolution in Northern Ireland will have an adverse impact on the NIO's performance against its efficiency targets. Therefore, targets have not been revised.

Public Service Agreement targets

PSA Target 1 (part 1), which aims to increase confidence in the police by 3% by April 2008, relies on a composite suite of measures of public views taken from the Northern Ireland Crime Survey (NICS) and the Northern Ireland Omnibus Survey. The PSA SR04 Technical Note recorded the baseline confidence level at 71%, and the Department therefore aimed at

a figure of 74% by March 2008. The Autumn Performance Report draws on new data from NICS fieldwork for the period July 2005 to June 2006. This has meant the baseline is now raised to 73% and therefore the target to 76%. Progress against PSA Target 1 (part 1) has slipped from 76% in March 2006 to 75% as of June 2006. The Autumn Performance Report describes the target as 'on track with confidence currently up by 2%'.

8. *Does the Department expect that by April 2008 public confidence in the police will have ceased to fluctuate in the manner of the current trend since June 2005, and therefore avoid dropping below target?*

Answer:

Maintaining levels of confidence in policing remains a significant challenge for all the key stakeholders in policing, including the NI Policing Board and the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

As the influences on the delivery of this target are extremely complex the Department believes that it is unlikely that public confidence figures will have ceased to fluctuate in the manner of the current trend since June 2005. Although the latest confidence figures from the NI Crime Survey (NICS) show a slight upward movement, the rounded composite measure for the period April 2006 – March 2007 remains at 75%.

The NICS continuous fieldwork tends to evidence gradual change over a longer period and confidence figures can be significantly affected by public opinion (based on perception rather than actual personal experience) which in turn can be influenced by various external factors, including the media reporting of historic / unresolved cases and high profile incidents.

Other positive factors such as the recent restoration of the NI Assembly, a more stable political climate and the decision by Sinn Fein to support the PSNI and take their seats on the Policing Board and District Policing Partnerships may also have an impact on the level of public confidence in policing. Overall, confidence levels remain high and the Department will continue to work collaboratively and co-operatively with the key stakeholders to achieve this PSA target by April 2008.

The NIO met the PSA Target 1 (part 2) interim target of 18.5% Catholic representation in the police service by March 2006. The Autumn Performance Report sets a new interim target of 23.5% by March 2008.

9. *How did the Department decide upon the new March 2008 interim target figure for Catholic representation in the police service?*

Answer:

The target was set according to an assessment of projected trends in the composition of the PSNI in the period ahead. In making the assessment, consideration is given to the overall goal of achieving the target of 30% Catholic officers by 2010/11; the PSNI establishment remaining at 7500; the severance programme; recruitment continuing at a rate of 440 per year and the variable of natural wastage.

PSA Target 2 requires that public confidence in the criminal justice system rise three percentage points against the baseline figure by April 2008. The Technical Note, using NICS 2005/06 data, set this baseline at 38%. The Autumn Performance Report, drawing on the newer NICS results, raises this figure to 39%. Confidence has been recorded every three months as standing at 42-43% consistently since June 2005, and has been steady at 43% since December 2005. The NIO is therefore currently exceeding this target.

The NICS employs a 'composite suite of measures' on public views on policing and the criminal justice system for PSA Targets 1 (part 1) and 2, respectively.

10. *Could the Department provide a breakdown of results for the components of the composite suites used for PSA Target 1 (part 1) and Target 2?*

Answer:

PSA Target 1 (Confidence in the Police and Policing Arrangements)¹

	Jul-05
	Jun-06
Police do a good job	61
Police provide ordinary day to day policing service	80
Police treat Catholics and Protestants equally	76
NIPB independent of police	75
NIPB helps police do a good job	76
OPONI independent of police	90
OPONI helps police do a good job	86
Composite Confidence Measure	75

¹ Source: Northern Ireland Crime Survey. All figures exclude don't knows and refusals.

 PSA Target 2 (Confidence in the Criminal Justice System)¹

	Jul-05
	Jun-06
Bringing those who commit crimes to justice	43
Meeting the needs of victims of crime	34
Respecting rights of people accused and treating them fairly	79
Dealing with cases promptly and efficiently	38
Reducing crime	34
Dealing with young people accused of crime	28
Composite Confidence Measure	43

¹ Source: Northern Ireland Crime Survey. All figures exclude don't knows and refusals.

The NIO has far surpassed its targets within PSA Target 3 (part 1) for reducing domestic burglary and vehicle theft. Burglary has diminished by 20% and vehicle theft 48%, against targets of only 15% and 10%, respectively, by April 2007.

11. *Does the Department plan to revise the surpassed PSA Target 3 (part 1)?*

Answer:

These were challenging targets agreed with HM Treasury some five years ago and were based on similar targets set for the Home Office. Working in partnership with a range of organisations we have successfully over-achieved with reductions of 24.6 % for domestic burglary and 52.5% for car crime. The Department has no plans to revise these particular targets. However, as part of the current Comprehensive Spending Review, the Department will set new testing targets in other crime areas. These are currently being worked on and will apply during the CSR07 years.

The NIO cannot provide an outturn for PSA Target 3 (part 2), which aims to reduce the rate of reconviction compared to the predicted rate by 5% by April 2008. The performance measure is based on the 2005 cohort, and an outturn can only be identified once the data for that cohort on reconviction over two years following discharge is available. Although reconviction rates for 2001 and 2002 were lower than predicted, the rate rose from 41.4% to 43.1% over those years.

12. *How does the Department account for the increasing reconviction rate between 2001 and 2002?*

Answer:

Personal characteristics such as age, gender, offence type and number of previous offences (criminal history) are closely associated with reconviction rates. Consequently, direct comparisons cannot be made with previous years as the personal characteristics of those who receive a non-custodial disposal or are released from custody will vary year on year. The reconviction rates referred to above are actual reconviction rates. As these are not directly comparable, a statistical model has been developed to provide predicted rates to act as yardsticks in assessing progress towards reducing re-convictions. Statistical modelling of the criminological characteristics of offenders contained in the 2003 cohort predicted a reconviction rate of 48.5%. The actual reconviction rate at the end of the two-year follow-up period was 43.7%. This represents a reduction in reconviction of 10% compared to the predicted rate. The comparable reductions for 2001 and 2002 were 11% and 7% respectively.

13. *Has the Department drawn any lessons from the results for reconviction for 2001 and 2002 which will help it meet PSA Target 3 (part 2)?*

Answer:

The substantial reductions in reconviction indicate that the current interventions from inter alia the Probation Board for Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Prison Service and the Criminal Justice System are effectively impacting on reconviction levels. The aim is to build upon and refine current practice to exert further downward pressure on re-conviction rates. However, the multi-faceted nature of re-offending means that it is not possible to directly attribute the reductions to individual or discrete interventions.

The 2005/06 outturn for PSA Target 4, which aims to reduce cost per prisoner place in Northern Ireland, has been verified since the 2006 Annual Report. The target for 2005/06 of £86,290 was met, with the actual outturn £85,900. However, the NIO admits that the 2006/07 target of £85,250 is at risk because the number of prisoner places has not increased as planned. The six strand Strategic Development Programme is intended to help the NIO meet future targets.

14. *What are the exact gains, or projected gains, from each strand of the Strategic Development Programme?*

Answer:

Strand 1 reviewed a number of areas including the future prisoner population, security classification, needs of inmate groups and the future prisoner role of each establishment.

For the first time this permitted NIPS to examine its future prison requirements strategically against the projected population levels and the needs of the individual categories of prisoner.

Strand 2 examined the current state of the prison estate, alternative design solutions and the effect on local areas should the Service take a decision to relocate an establishment. This data has already been utilised in the design and delivery of new contingency cell accommodation. The report by consultants on the economic effect has been published.

Strand 3 examined the potential for contestability and the associated risks. This covers the option to use private sector provision in services provided by NIPS – it remains confidential.

Strand 4 looked at the current and future provision of escorting services. This led to the Ministerial decision to unite the escorting and court custody functions under a single management structure. This led to the transfer in February of 100 private sector staff into the newly created Prisoner Escorting Court Custody Service (PECCS). After full implementation, it is anticipated that savings of over £2m per annum will be achieved from 2008/09 onwards.

Strand 5 covered personnel issues including staff pay, grading, reward and HR Strategy. A major achievement has been a 3-year pay and efficiency deal, which has just been approved by the Pay Review Body (PRB). This led to the cutting of the equivalent of 150 staff in April. Through a large reduction in overtime, this will save the Service up to £5m per annum and permit the reallocation of financial resources to meet the increasing level of prisoner numbers and staffing of new facilities. Also agreed is the introduction of lower cost Operational Support Grades (OSGs) who will replace Main Grade Officers (MGOs) in support posts and release them to the front line. This will commence in late 2007.

Strand 6 covers a number of areas including the relocation of NIPS central training, which our Minister announced in February would be collocated with the PSNI and Fire & Rescue in a new integrated training college for Northern Ireland. This will most probably be available from 2011/12 onwards. The NIPS is currently seeking Outline Planning Permission (OPP) for its existing college to maximise its disposal value. Other work already completed includes the recruitment and deployment of Night Custody Officers (NCOs) to replace MGOs during the night, permitting their redeployment to front line daytime duties. A Management Development Programme to train future uniformed managers commenced in March 2007. The budget for prisoner Healthcare transferred to the DHSSPS in April, which will have the effect of reducing Cost per Prisoner Place by 3.5% from 2007/08 onwards, which is similar to what occurs in England and Wales. The HPSS will take lead responsibility for prisoner healthcare.

Other work currently includes an Options Appraisal for late summer 2007 building upon the work in Strands 1-3 which will permit the Service and Ministers to identify the options for replacement of Magilligan Prison, at the current or at an alternative site. Additional cellular accommodation to meet the growing population needs is underway with two new blocks being delivered in 2008/09. Before then further accommodation will also be available from June 2007 at Magilligan.

Appendix 4

Memorandum submitted by the Northern Ireland Office on 22 October 2007 in response to Questions from the Committee relating to the Departmental Report 2007

Q1. There are no PSA targets in support of Objective 1 or Objective 4. How does the Department measure how well it is achieving its objective to “support the devolved institutions and encourage further political development” (objective 1) and “uphold and maintain the rule of law” (objective 4)?

Response

Objective 1: The Department’s overall measure of success in respect of its objective of supporting the devolved institutions and encouraging further political development was restoration of the Institutions. Overall progress towards that goal was monitored through regular contact with the NI parties and counterparts in the Irish Government, including through the British Irish Inter-governmental Secretariat. In addition, there are specific measures and targets for individual areas of work; for example, successful and timely delivery of necessary legislation, including during 2006/2007 legislation to make changes to the arrangements for party funding and political donations in Northern Ireland (contained in the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006).

Objective 4: Although there are no specific targets associated with PSA Objective 4 the Department maintains a statistical database to monitor the trends in major security incidents. The Secretary of State meets regularly with his security advisers, who brief him on the full range of security issues and the steps they are taking to tackle them. In addition, the Independent Monitoring Commission monitors levels of paramilitary activity in Northern Ireland and reports publicly every six months.

To assist in the greater understanding of community/interface issues the Department employs a number of staff who also play an important role in the oversight of the general security infrastructure.

Q2. With the restoration of devolution in May 2007, will there be a specific performance target set for Objective 1 for the remainder of the current Spending Review period?

Response: The Department set two key targets for the current financial year (2007/2008) which are “the restoration and full operation of the institutions” and “growing preparedness for further devolution”. Overall progress is monitored through regular contact with the devolved administration and counterparts in the Irish Government, including through the British Irish Inter-governmental Secretariat.

As the Committee is aware, devolution was restored on 8th May this year, and all parties are participating in the institutions. An Assembly committee has been established to advise the Assembly on the preparation of its report to the Secretary of State, as required by section 18(1) of the Northern Ireland (St Andrews Agreement) Act 2006, on progress towards devolution of policing and justice. The NIO has also initiated a programme of work to prepare for the structural and organisational changes which will be required for the effective and efficient running of the future NIO and a devolved department responsible for policing and justice. The target date for completion of this programme of work is May 2008.

Q3. Page 33 of the Departmental Report indicates that the percentage of respondents who think the PSNI does a good job as a whole (60%) is considerably lower than the percentage that have confidence in the day to day policing abilities of the PSNI (78%). What is the Department's view on the possible reasons for the difference between these two figures? Last year, the Department informed the Committee that it envisaged adding follow-up questions in the NI Crime Survey for July-December 2006 to better understand what influences public confidence¹, and the Departmental Report notes that further questions have now been added². When will the additional questions in the NI Crime Survey provide the further analysis on what affects public confidence in the criminal justice system?

Response: The reason for the difference between these two figures may relate to the format of the survey questions - for example the question in relation to the PSNI's ability to provide an 'ordinary day to day service' has three positive options which invites the survey respondent to choose either 'some', 'a lot of' or 'total confidence', whereas the question in relation to the PSNI 'doing a good job' offers the respondent two positive options (very/fairly good) plus a 'neither good nor poor' option. It is also possible that respondents interpret the 'ordinary day to day' question as excluding how the police deal with other issues such as counter terrorism, organised crime, public order etc.

However, the Department will continue to track progress on a consistent basis using the composite measure. In addition the Department is currently analysing the results of the follow-up questions on policing confidence (which were included in the NI Crime Survey during the period July - December 2006) and this information is being shared with the key stakeholders in policing to help develop future policing strategies.

¹ The Work of the Committee in 2006, Second Report of 2006-07, HC 294, Appendix 2, page 17.

² Northern Ireland Office Departmental Report 2007, paragraph 3.17.

Q4. *The Departmental Report 2007 states that the NIO has met “its updated interim target” of increasing Catholic representation in the police service to 21.5% by March 2007. When was this updated interim target set, and when and where was it first published?*

Response: Following the recommendation in the Report of the Independent Commission on Policing (Patten Report) that the police service should be representative, the Government set a the target of 30% regular officer s to be Catholic by 2010/11. In order to monitor this target and ensure it is achieved, a number of interim targets have been set. Progress on meeting the 30% overall target, including an interim target of 13.5% by March 2004, was published in the Departmental Report 2003. Progress on meeting the overall target, including an interim target of 18.5% by March 2006, was then published in the Departmental Reports for 2004, 2005 and 2006. Having met these targets and to continue monitoring progress toward the 30% within the timescale a further interim target of 21.5% by March 2007 was set and first published in the Departmental Report for 2007.

Q5. *In response to the Committee’s review of the 2006 Departmental Report, the Department provided the Committee with a breakdown of the results for the composite measures used for PSA Target 2. ¹ The Committee would be grateful for a similar breakdown for the 2006-7 results.*

Response: Please see the attached table.

% Confident in the Criminal Justice System ^{1,2}	Northern Ireland Crime Survey		
	2003/04	2005/06	2006/07
Bringing those who commit crimes to justice	38	42	42
Meeting the needs of victims of crime	33	35	33
Respecting rights of people accused and treating them fairly	77	78	80
Dealing with cases promptly and efficiently	33	38	38
Reducing crime	28	34	34
Dealing with young people accused of crime	26	29	29
Composite Measure	39	43	43

Source: Northern Ireland Crime Survey

1. All figures exclude don't know responses and refusals.
2. 2006/07 out-turn relates to fieldwork for January to December 2006.

¹ Second Report of 2006-07, *The Work of the Committee in 2006*, HC 294, Appendix 2, page 20.

Q6. *In the 2007 Departmental Report, there appears still to be no inclusion of data on the proportion of crimes which are brought to justice, as envisaged in the Technical Note and the Department's responses to the Committee's questions on the 2006 Departmental Report.¹ When is such data expected to be available?*

Response: There is no immediate prospect of end-to-end reporting on individual crimes brought to justice, as this will require the completion of further modules of the Causeway programme. Causeway is a joint undertaking by the criminal justice organisations (CJOs) in Northern Ireland which aims to improve the integration of criminal justice information systems based on electronic storage, transfer and retrieval of information which will be captured once and then shared and reused by all the CJOs.

While it would be the Department's intention to generate and validate end-to-end information in the longer term, inevitably it will take a minimum of a year's fresh data following delivery of the Causeway module (expected June 2008) for statistically robust comparators to be generated. On this basis any expectation of imminent delivery of information in this area would be premature

Q7. *For PSA Target 3, on reconviction rates, the Departmental Report appears not to provide predicted reconviction rates against which the reductions in reconvictions of 7% in 2004 and 10% in 2005 have been measured. What were the predicted rates underpinning this reported performance? What was the reconviction rate for the 2003 cohort?*

Response: The predicted reconviction rates underpinning the 7% and 10% reductions were, respectively, 46.4% and 48.5%. The actual reconviction rate for the 2003 cohort is 43.7%.

Q8. *What is the Department's latest (unaudited and unverified) estimate of the cost per prisoner place for 2006-07? When are audited and verified figures expected to be available? What is the Department's latest assessment of the likelihood of meeting the overall target of £82,500 for 2007-08?*

Response: The Northern Ireland Prison Service's audited accounts were laid in Parliament and ordered to be printed on 11 July 2007. The actual cost per prisoner place in 2006-07 was £90,298. The Service came in within its allocated budget; the higher CPPP was due solely to the decision to defer the building of accommodation, which had been anticipated in the 2004 Spending Review when the targets were set. The target for 2007-08 is £82,500 and steps are being taken to achieve this target, including the implementation of a pay and efficiency package in April 2007.

¹ Ibid.

Q9. What sort of new Public Service Agreement or Departmental Strategic Objective targets are being considered for the Department's activities under the Comprehensive Spending Review? What consultations have been undertaken in developing these targets?

Response: The Public Service Agreement (PSA) and Departmental Strategic Objectives (DSOs) for the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR07) have been agreed with Treasury. The PSA Delivery Agreements have been published on the NIO's website. Within the CSR07 PSA framework it has been agreed that the Northern Ireland Office will not contribute directly to any of the cross-government PSAs but will develop two NIO PSAs which will reflect the **Make Communities Safer PSA outcome** for which the Home Office (HO) has the lead and the **Justice for All PSA outcome** for which the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has the lead. You will wish to note that both sets of PSA outcomes are works in progress and that while the NIO has agreed to reflect the HO/MoJ priorities, we have, with the agreement of Treasury, focussed some of our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) on priorities specific to Northern Ireland.

The proposed PSA outcomes and underpinning KPIs and targets are attached at **Annex B**. The proposed DSOs are attached at **Annex C**.

The Department has consulted with all principal stakeholders throughout the process of developing the PSA Key Performance Indicators and targets.

Q10. PSNI increased productivity is expected to generated over £50m of the Department's efficiency savings by 2007-08. What sort of productivity improvements are planned? How will the Department ensure that the increased productivity does not have an adverse effect on service delivery?

Response: A large proportion of PSNI efficiency savings have been achieved through reduction of Full-Time Reserve Officers. The ongoing process of 'normalisation' has meant that demands for policing are changing, for example in a reduction of public order duties.

Other significant savings will be achieved through the civilianisation of posts i.e. replacing police posts with civilian staff. Restructuring of back office functions and the effects of the Review Public Administration (RPA) will result in further efficiency savings. RPA allows for greater economies of scale and more efficient use of staff due to restructuring of functions and sharing of services.

The Department and PSNI ensure that efficiencies do not have an adverse affect on service delivery in a number of ways, for example, accountability to District Policing Partnerships; district audit and accountability requirements to Chief Officers; Best Value Reviews; Local Financial Management and appointment of professional financial management teams in districts and HQ Departments; measurement and reporting of performance against policing plan objectives to the Policing Board.

Q11. *The Committee would be grateful if the Department could provide a breakdown of the reported efficiency savings split into the OGC classifications of 'provisional', 'interim' and 'final', and outline the extent of validation of the recorded efficiency savings?*

Response: The Department's most recent efficiency savings reported to HMT for the quarter ended 30 June 2007 totalled £83.2m.

These were classified as:

Preliminary £0m

Interim £6.3m

Final £76.9m

Efficiency savings are validated through a self assessment process – as recommended by the Office of Government Commerce – which includes review of savings by each delivery group and Director sign-off.

Q12. *The Departmental Report reports increases in the number of civil service staff, including an increase in plans for 2007-08.¹ How is this figure reconciled with the expected civil servant headcount reduction of 378 forecast at paragraph 3.29 of the Report? How many posts have been cut to date, and in which areas of the Department have the reductions been made?*

Response: Between 1 April 2005 and 31 March 2008, the Department plans to increase by 286 civil servant posts, hence the increased civil service staffing plans for 2007/08 reported in the Departmental Report. However, the workforce planning figures reported under the Department's efficiency programme show a reduction of 378 civil servant posts during the same period. This is because the SR2004 efficiency programme permits the Department to discount staff increases in certain front line growth areas when reporting staffing forecasts. The Department is permitted to discount 664 posts, therefore, the reported net reduction in civil servants between 1 April 2005 and 31 March 2008 is 378 [286 less 664].

The principal areas of civil service growth, and therefore discounted posts are in the following areas of the Department: PPS; NI Prison Service; Forensic Science NI; and Youth Justice Agency.

¹ Northern Ireland Office Departmental Report 2007, Appendix F, Table 6.

Q13. The Department appears to be on course to miss its target of reducing the staff headcount by 1,446 posts by around a hundred. In the process, it expects by March 2008 to have cut civil servant posts by almost three times the 128 original reduction target. What is the expected impact on service delivery of this greater than planned cut in civil servant posts?

Response: As noted in question 12 above, as at December 2006, the Department planned to increase by 286 civil servants by March 2008. The reported decrease of 378 posts takes into account allowable increase of 664 posts.

Therefore, service delivery will not be affected.

Q14. Why is the expected Resource outturn for 2006-07 so much higher than for 2005-06 and for 2007-08?¹

Response: The figures included in the 2007 Departmental Report are based on the Department's 2007/08 Main Estimates. But, in addition to the baseline funding included in the Main Estimates, the Department has agreed with HMT a draw down of end year flexibility totalling £97m to supplement baselines. This cannot be drawn down until the in-year Supplementary Estimates. The planned drawdown will increase the Department's resource DEL budget to £1,238k. This is comparable with the actual 2006/07 outturn.

The main increases between 2006/07 and 2005/06 are as follows:

Direct Policing Costs – increase £29m. Mainly due to the transfer of injury on duty provisions from police pension accounts to direct policing costs and increased depreciation caused by capital assets.

Public Prosecution Service – increase £9m. mainly due to the roll-out of the service, resulting in higher staffing levels and increased accommodation costs.

Prisons – increase £9m. mainly due to non-cash costs for the revaluation of the prison estate.

Youth Justice Agency – increase £10m. mainly due to impairments and higher capital charges on the new Juvenile Justice Centre.

Other – increase £40m. The Department creates a contingency for unexpected costs which may emerge between the final Supplementary Estimates and the year end. The 2006/07 Estimates Outturn is based on the Department's final 2006/07 budget which included this contingency. But, the contingency is not included in the 2005/06 actual outturn as it was not spent in that year.

¹ Northern Ireland Office Departmental Report 2007, Appendix F, Table 2.

Q15. The Departmental Report shows an expected reduction in the paybill element of Administration costs by £8 million in 2007-8. What reductions in civil servant and other public servant numbers does this represent? At what level does the Department believe administration costs (and staff numbers) will eventually settle?

Response: The reduction in administration staff costs is not primarily due to less administration staff. Between 2006/07 and 2007/08, the following front line areas in the Department were classified from administration expenditure to programme expenditure:

Causeway project (£3.6m administration staff costs transferred to programme); and

Compensation Agency (£2.0m administration staff costs transferred to programme).

Also, as noted in response 13, the Department plans to draw down end year flexibility funding in 2007/08 to supplement baselines. £2.9m of this is planned to be for administration staff costs.

The comparable 2007/08 staff costs are therefore:

£40,943k (per Departmental Report)

plus £5,592k (reclassified as programme in 2007/08)

plus £ 2,880 (EYF to be drawn down)

equals £49,415k (adjusted 2007/08 administration costs for comparison with 2006/07)

The adjusted 2007/08 administration staff costs figure of £49,415k is comparable to 2006/07.

Regardless of the Department's Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 settlement, it will be required to make 5% per annum efficiency savings. Therefore, the Department's administration costs are planned to be the 2007/08 baseline (£78,824k) plus inflation (currently forecast at 2.7% per annum) less 5% per annum savings.

The Department is currently finalising plans to achieve 5% per annum savings. Administration staff levels will settle at the 2007/08 figure per the Departmental Report less any staff savings resulting from these plans, together with staffing changes as a result of business needs.

Annex B

Make Communities Safer

PSA Outcome	Aims	Key Performance Indicator	Target/Minimum Standard	Measurement Summary
<p>Our vision for the 'Safer Communities' PSA outcome is that by 31 March 2011:</p> <p>"Northern Ireland will be a safer place to live"</p>	Reduce more serious violence, including e.g. tackling serious sexual offences.	The level of more serious violent crimes	Reduce by 2012/13*	Police Service of Northern Ireland Recorded Crime Statistics
	Determine and reduce the harm caused by organised crime.	The level of harm caused by organised crime	To establish by 2009 a baseline and methodology; and reduce harm caused by organised crime by 2012/13	Organised Crime Task Force Strategy Group
	Enable people to feel safer in their communities.	The level of anti-social behaviour incidents	Reduce by 15% by 2011 (based on 2007/08 data)	PSNI Anti-Social Behaviour Incident Statistics
	Reduce re-offending	level of overall re-offending level of serious re-offending	Reduce re-offending by all offenders by x% by 2011	NIO Statistics Branch data
	Normalise the policing environment throughout NI, increasing confidence in police	levels of confidence in policing in all communities levels of police engagement with people in local communities	Increased confidence in policing** Increased levels of police engagement with local people	Northern Ireland Crime Survey

* Target will be refined once the Home Office work in this area is complete.

** The Northern Ireland Crime Survey can be used to continue measuring confidence against the 2004 PSA Target (to achieve the target of 76% (composite measure) public confidence in policing by March 2008). However, our intention is to consider the work being taken forward by the Ministry of Justice with a view to considering if we need to change our indicators. Should we change the indicators, we would be intending to establish a baseline between October 2007 and March 2008.

Justice for All

PSA Outcome	Aims	Key Performance Indicator	Target/Minimum Standard	Measurement Summary
<p>Our vision for the Justice for All PSA outcome is that by 31 March 2011:</p> <p>“The public of Northern Ireland have confidence that the Criminal Justice system is delivering effective and timely justice for everyone.”</p> <p>A more efficient, effective and joined-up criminal justice system will be achieved through increasing public confidence, improving victim and witness satisfaction, and reducing the time taken to trial in dealing with offenders.</p>	Increase public confidence in the criminal justice system.	Confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of criminal justice system.	Increase public confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of criminal justice system by 2011.*	Northern Ireland Crime Survey
	Improve victim/witness satisfaction with criminal justice agencies and process.	Victim and witness satisfaction.	Increase victim and witness satisfaction with criminal justice system by 2011**	Northern Ireland Witness and Victim Experience Survey (WAVES)
	Shorten the time taken to progress criminal cases.	Time taken to trial in Crown Court Cases	Achieve average timescale: Charge to decision to prosecute – 140 days***	Public Prosecution Service database
	Shorten the time taken to progress criminal cases.	Time to trial in Magistrates’ Court Cases	Achieve average timescales: Charge cases (Charge to decision to prosecute) – 54 days Summons cases (Report to first appearance) – 146 days***	Public Prosecution Service database
Shorten the time taken to progress criminal cases.	Time to trial in Youth Court cases.	Achieve average timescale: Charge cases (Charge to decision to prosecute) – 35 days Summons cases (Report to first appearance) – 132***	Public Prosecution Service database	

*There is a current (SR2004) Public Service Agreement (PSA) target which we could use to continue to measure confidence through the existing composite measure using the NICS which is currently comparable with E&W. However, our intention is to consider the work being taken forward by the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) with a view

to considering if we need to change our indicators to maintain comparability with E&W. Should we change the indicators, we would be intending to establish a baseline between Oct 07 and Mar 08.

***This target will be based on the results of the soon to be established Northern Ireland Witness and Victim Experience Survey (WAVES); a cross-cutting satisfaction survey which will measure all levels of satisfaction at key points in the criminal justice process – from the time a crime is reported until it is disposed off. Performance will be measured on all answers to a question which asks a random sample of victims and witnesses: "Overall, were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the contact you have had with the CJS?" The question is assessed on a seven point scale ranging from completely satisfied to completely dissatisfied. Satisfaction is defined as all victims and witnesses who are very, completely or fairly satisfied with the service they receive.*

****Achievement of these targets depends on the relevant agencies working jointly in partnership. With the focus on time taken to trial there will be an increased need for organisations to ensure cases are processed to the agreed required standard.*

Annex C

Proposed Departmental Strategic Objectives for the Northern Ireland Office.

Departmental Strategic Objective	
1.	To support a stable devolved government in Northern Ireland with responsibility for policing and justice, and a society reconciled with its past.
2.	To manage offenders securely, safely and humanely.
3.	To deliver an independent, fair and effective criminal justice system which supports and protects the community. <i>(Justice for All PSA maps onto this DSO)</i>
4.	To work with PSNI and other Policing partners to deliver effective and accountable policing services that can secure the confidence of the whole community. <i>(Safer Communities PSA maps onto this DSO)</i>
5.	To delivery Value for Money savings and to live within annual available funding.

Appendix 5

Memorandum submitted by the Northern Ireland Office on 23 October 2007 in response to Questions from the Committee in connection with the Spring Supplementary Estimates 2006/07

General points raised by the Committee:

The Committee has reviewed the Spring Supplementary Estimate, which was laid on 20th February, along with the accompanying Estimate Memorandum. The Memorandum provided much useful information and explanation, meeting most of the presentational requirements of the guidance produced by the Treasury and the House of Common's Scrutiny Unit. I would, however, draw your attention again to the Scrutiny Unit's guidance. For example, it could have included tables showing past changes and outturns in Departmental Expenditure Limit figures and the balance of different types of End-Year Flexibility drawn on in the Estimate and carried forward to next year.

Departmental Response:

Thank you. These points have been noted and the next Supplementary Estimate Memorandum will address the issues raised.

Specific Questions:

NIO – Request for Resources (RfR) 1

1. *The 'Central Administration' subhead is increased by £28m, mainly to provide for potential over-spends throughout the NIO resource during the financial year. The Committee would like further information on whether the NIO envisages such potential overspends are likely to be concentrated in particular sub-heads or programmes (and if so which ones).*

£28m was drawn down as a contingency fund to cover potential over-spends. Various factors influenced the draw down of this additional funding. Within Political Directorate (Subhead C2) the post Cory inquiries have in recent years been subject to cost fluctuation in their forecasts, it was considered prudent to hold a reserve for such costs. Compensation Agency claim levels (Subhead G3) and impairment costs for IT and buildings (various subheads) have also been areas in which additional resource can be required towards year end. Again, it was considered prudent to hold a contingency for such additional costs. In all, this additional £28m funding represents only 2.1% of the total NIO budget.

2. *There is a £9 million increase in provision for the Compensation Agency mainly in relation to Criminal Damage claims. The Committee would like further information on the reasons for this increased liability.*

Of the £8.7m increase, the largest pressure (£6m) related to criminal damage (CD) claims. The Agency received quite a number of claims as a result of incendiary attacks on business premises in Newry, Shane Retail Park and Newtownabbey. Also, the average value of Criminal Damage awards had increased by 23%. The provision is calculated based on the number of claims and average values.

There was also a pressure of £3.5m for criminal injury claims under the 1988 legislation. The main cause of the increase was as the result of a rise in the value of awards made both by the agency in general settlements and at Court. There was also one case cleared amounting to £1.5m, and another case of similar value was expected to be paid out before the end of the financial year. The pressure in provision was offset by an unexpected easement of £0.8m in Tariff. Tariff has been relatively stable over the past few years, and the number of likely awards had fallen by approximately 8% from the beginning of the year.

3. *The Estimate increases provision for the 'Police' subhead by £15m, primarily due to the NIO opting to use an earlier provision for full time reserve severance costs. With this additional expenditure, what progress is the NIO making in meeting its FTR headcount reduction targets?*

As at 31 March 2006, the FTR headcount stood at 1144 officers. By 31 March 2007, the headcount had been reduced by 393 officers to 751. This is 71 officers short of the 680 target.

4. *The Committee would like further information on the £3m increase in gross provision for Forensic Science Northern Ireland, which the Memorandum does not discuss.*

FSNI increased their gross provision and offsetting receipts by £3m in the Spring Supplementary Estimate. This meant that there was no increased resource requirement, and therefore the memorandum did not highlight this change.

The main reason for the increase is that the original budget for expenditure to be offset by receipts was set in SR2004 at the level of £5m. This has become out-dated due to the growth in service provided by FSNI which at the Spring Supplementary Estimate was reforecast to the level of £8m.

This has been addressed in the opening main estimate for 2007/08 where FSNI have forecast gross expenditure which will be offset by receipts at a total of £9m. This is much more in line with expectations.

Appendix 6

Memorandum submitted by the Northern Ireland Office on 23 October 2007 in response to Questions from the Committee relating to the Winter Supplementary Estimates 2006/07

General points raised by the Committee:

I would draw your attention to the recent Liaison Committee report on Estimate Memoranda which recommends that departments follow the Scrutiny Unit guidance in preparing such memoranda, which is available online. In particular the Committee would like to see:

- Detailed explanation of changes: more substantial explanation of the reasons for changes;
- Impact on priority areas: under the PSA section, explanations of the impact of additional resources on the Department's priority areas to assist in understanding the changes requested;
- Disclosure of comparatives: for the three previous years and future years Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) and Administration Budget Limit (ABL), and the amount of DUP which can be called on; and
- End Year Flexibility (EYF): the total stock of EYF and how it has been built up, whether any of the EYF is ring-fenced for a specific future use and what the Department's plans are for the remaining EYF.

This information would help the Committee to fully understand all the changes to resources that the Department was requesting.

Departmental response:

Thank you. These points have been noted, and in preparation of the next Memorandum, we will include these aspects.

Specific questions:

The Winter Supplementary Estimate for 2006-07 contains a significant number of changes to RfR1. The Committee would be grateful for further explanation for the most significant movements, including:

1. *An increase of £26.2 million for Police expenditure and £5.5 million for the NI Prison service. These are described in the WSE 06-07 as being "part of overall SR2004 allocation".*

The Committee requests further explanation for why these additional funds are necessary and how they go towards achieving the Office's priorities.

The Department's strategy for the SR2004 period was always to supplement baseline funding, as per the SR2004 settlement, with end year flexibility funding. This is drawn down and allocated during the Supplementary Estimate rounds to enable the Department to meet its key service delivery objectives.

2. *Increase of £3.7 million for the Youth Justice Agency and a reduction in the Estimate of £4.7 million for Criminal Justice.*

Youth Justice Agency

The total of £3.7million was transferred by Criminal Justice Directorate to the Youth Justice Agency (£1.1m from Administration and £2.6m programme). Of this, £2.1million was for Community Services funding for prevention and development activities and £1.6m was for the Youth Conferencing Service.

Criminal Justice

£1.1m administration was released by the Criminal Justice Directorate and was transferred to the Youth Justice Agency as programme.

£2.6m was transferred to Youth Justice Agency from programme budget.

This total of £3.7m was then used for prevention and development funding (£2.1m) and the Youth Conferencing Service (£1.6m) as described above.

£1.4m was transferred to create a new estimates line for the Criminal Justice Inspectorate which was set up as an NDPB.

This was partly offset by a transfer of £0.4m received from the Probation Board NI as the opening budget was adjusted in line with their stated requirements.

3: *Significant number of movements between subheads in the estimate. Why have so many movements been necessary?*

Movements of the subhead totals in the estimate relate to the drawdown of EYF and realignment of the budget since the Main Estimate. There are three main reasons for this.

1. The Department established three new lines on our estimate for the NI Human Rights Commission, the Criminal Justice Inspectorate and the Policing Board. Funding for these bodies was previously held in other estimate lines. The NI Human Rights Commission funding was removed from the Political Directorate, the Policing Board funding from Policing and Criminal Justice Inspectorate funding from the Criminal Justice Directorate.

2. In some cases, a service which was budgeted for in the SR2004 settlement has now moved to another part of the organisation. As an example, the Youth Conferencing Service, whose funding was originally budgeted for within Criminal Justice Directorate, was transferred to the Youth Justice Agency. For the 2007-08 Main Estimate we have tried, where possible, to align such expenditure and thus reduce the number of transfers of this nature which will need to take place through Supplementary Estimate.

3. All Directorates can reforecast funding requirements in-year. In some cases this requires a draw down of end year flexibility funding to increase the Main Estimate budget allocation. In the case of a reduced Directorate requirement, resources are surrendered to the centre (Central Administration) or redistributed to other Directorates.

Appendix 7

Letter from Rt Hon Shaun Woodward MP, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, to Sir Patrick Cormack MP, Chairman of the Committee, 18 December 2007, re Redundant Military and Security Sites in Northern Ireland

Thank you for your letter of 25 October, enclosing one from Pat Doherty, MP, about the sites of vacated military installations at Lisanelly and St Lucia barracks, Omagh. I am, as you know, extremely sorry you have waited this long for a reply.

These installations are two of a number of military sites, no longer being used by the military following the normalisation programme, as set out in the 2003 Joint Declaration, which has been successfully completed.

The Reinvestment and Reform package of 2002 included certain such sites for free transfer to the Executive but the joint Declaration was not precise about which other sites might be made available or indeed about the terms on which they might be made available.

As Pat Doherty notes in his letter, the question of how these sites might be disposed, was raised in the Joint Declaration. Annex 1 of the Declaration outlined the planned security normalisation programme, paragraph 10 of that Annex states.

‘Many of the vacated military and police (subject to the agreement of the Policing Board) sites might be made available to the OFM/DFM’s Reinvestment and Reform Initiative to ensure that the process of normalisation generates a new public asset base for those communities most directly affected by the security arrangements to date.’

There is clearly scope for ambiguous interpretation. As you will appreciate the financial value of many of these sites is considerable, disposal below market value would be contrary to normal government accounting rules. It is already the case that such sites are normally offered to the Northern Ireland Executive at a price valued by the independent Valuation and Lands Agency rather than sold on the open market. It should also be noted that the Northern Ireland CSR settlement included a significant capital budget of £18bn for strategic capital investment spread over the period 2005 to 2017. Nonetheless, the Northern Ireland Office, and the Ministry of Defence (the disposal of vacated military sites, including the Lisanelly and St Lucia barracks sites, is of course a matter for MOD), remain committed to working closely with the Northern Ireland Executive, ensuring maximum benefit is derived from the development of these vacated sites.

For your information, Pat Doherty has written separately about the Omagh sites, also seeking a meeting which I will be happy to arrange in the New Year.

Formal Minutes

Wednesday 23 January 2007

Members present:

Sir Patrick Cormack, in the Chair

Mr Gregory Campbell
Rosie Cooper
Lady Hermon
Kate Hoey

Dr Alasdair McDonnell
Mr Denis Murphy
Stephen Pound
Sammy Wilson

Draft Report (*The Work of the Committee in 2007*), proposed by the Chairman, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 39 read and agreed to.

Several papers were appended to the Report as Appendices 1 to 7.

Resolved, That the Report be the Second Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chairman make the Report to the House.

[Adjourned till 2.30 pm on Wednesday 30 January.]

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

Session 2007–08

First Report	The Northern Ireland Prison Service	HC 1181
Second Report	The Work of the Committee in 2007-08	HC 286

Session 2006–07

First Report	Draft Protocol for Community-based Restorative Justice Schemes	HC 87
Second Report	The Work of the Committee in 2006	HC 294
Third Report	Tourism in Northern Ireland and its Economic Impact and Benefits	HC 119
First Special Report	Draft Protocol for Community-based Restorative Justice Schemes: Government Response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2006-07	HC 475
Second Special Report	Tourism in Northern Ireland and its Economic Impact and Benefits: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report of Session 2006-07	HC 545

Session 2005–06

First Report	Education in Northern Ireland	HC 726
Second Report	The Work of the Committee in 2005	HC 928
Third Report	Organised Crime in Northern Ireland	HC 886
First Special Report	The Work of the Committee in 2004: Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2004-05	HC 393
Second Special Report	The Functions of the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland: Responses by the Government and the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland to the Committee's Fifth Report of Session 2004-05	HC 394
Third Special Report	The Parades Commission and Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report of Session 2004-05	HC 395
Fourth Special Report	The Challenge of Diversity: Hate Crime in Northern Ireland: Government Response to the Committee's Ninth Report of Session 2004-05	HC 396
Fifth Special Report	Air Transport Services in Northern Ireland:	HC 529

	Government Response to the Committee's Eighth Report of Session 2004-05	
Sixth Special Report	Ways of Dealing with Northern Ireland's Past: Interim Report – Victims and Survivors	HC 530
	Government Response to the Committee's Tenth Report of Sessions 2004-05	
Seventh Special Report	The Functions of the Northern Ireland Policing Board Responses by the Government and the Northern Ireland Policing Board to the Committee's Seven Report of Session 2004-05	HC 531
Eight Special Report	Decision to Cease Stormont Prosecutions	HC 814
Ninth Special Report	Organised Crime in Northern Ireland: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report of Session 2005-06	HC 1642