

**Draft Programme for Government, draft Budget and the draft
Investment Strategy**

Analysis of Responses to the Joint Public Consultation Exercise

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Introduction

This paper aims to provide a summary of the formal responses received to the Executive's public consultation on the draft Programme for Government (PfG), Budget and Investment for Strategy for 2008 – 2011. The focus of the paper is on the key strategic issues identified by respondents.

A large number of the comments received also addressed specific issues in relation to capital projects, local issues, key sectors and delivery of strategies and initiatives. All responses in this regard have been copied to relevant departments to inform both the delivery of the Executive's priorities and departmental plans and capital projects over the 2008-11 period and beyond.

1. SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

Overview of Consultation Process

- 1.1 On 25 October, the Executive launched a 10-week joint public consultation exercise on the draft PfG, draft Budget and draft Investment Strategy. The aim of the consultation exercise was to provide an opportunity for the public and interested parties to comment on the draft documents and assist the Executive in reaching final decisions on the priorities, programmes and spending proposals to be taken forward.
- 1.2 At that time approximately 700 packs and a consultation letter were issued to key stakeholders on the department's consultation list. Copies of the documents were also issued to MLAs, MPs and MEPs. A further 99 requests were received for copies of the documents¹ and nearly 55,000 copies (total figure for the three documents) were downloaded from the web.
- 1.3 To ensure an open and transparent process in line with the Executive's objectives, officials held a number of public consultation seminars across Northern Ireland. Details of the seminars are as follows:
- i. **Thursday 29 November**, Guildhall, Derry/Londonderry
 - ii. **Monday 3 December**, The Clinton Centre, Enniskillen
 - iii. **Wednesday 5 December**, Spires Conference Centre, Belfast
 - iv. **Tuesday 11 December**, Southern Education and Library Board Headquarters, Armagh.
- 1.4 The public consultation events were well attended, ranging from approximately 65 – 100+. Officials also attended a public consultation

¹ Many of these requests were for multiple copies. As a result approximately 1500 copies of each document were distributed.

