



Sinn Féin

Sinn Féin
in Government
Delivering Jobs



11. Sinn Féin in government – delivering jobs

Over the last number of years, Sinn Féin made job creation a key priority in government in the Six Counties. This policy focus can be seen in the joint Programme for Government which highlights the actions the Assembly is taking and will continue to take to deliver the number one priority – a vibrant economy which can transform society while dealing with the deprivation and poverty which has affected some Northern communities for generations.

Sinn Féin has been the strongest proponent of growth in the Six Counties, despite the financial constraints faced by the area as a result of a diminishing block grant. We have argued for fiscal decision-making powers to be fully devolved from Westminster so that elected representatives in the North are not impeded in deciding how best resources can be raised and used. Despite the continued cuts by Britain, we are committed to mitigating the worst impacts of these imposed cuts to ensure that the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our society are protected and that the creation of jobs and strengthening of the economy is achieved.

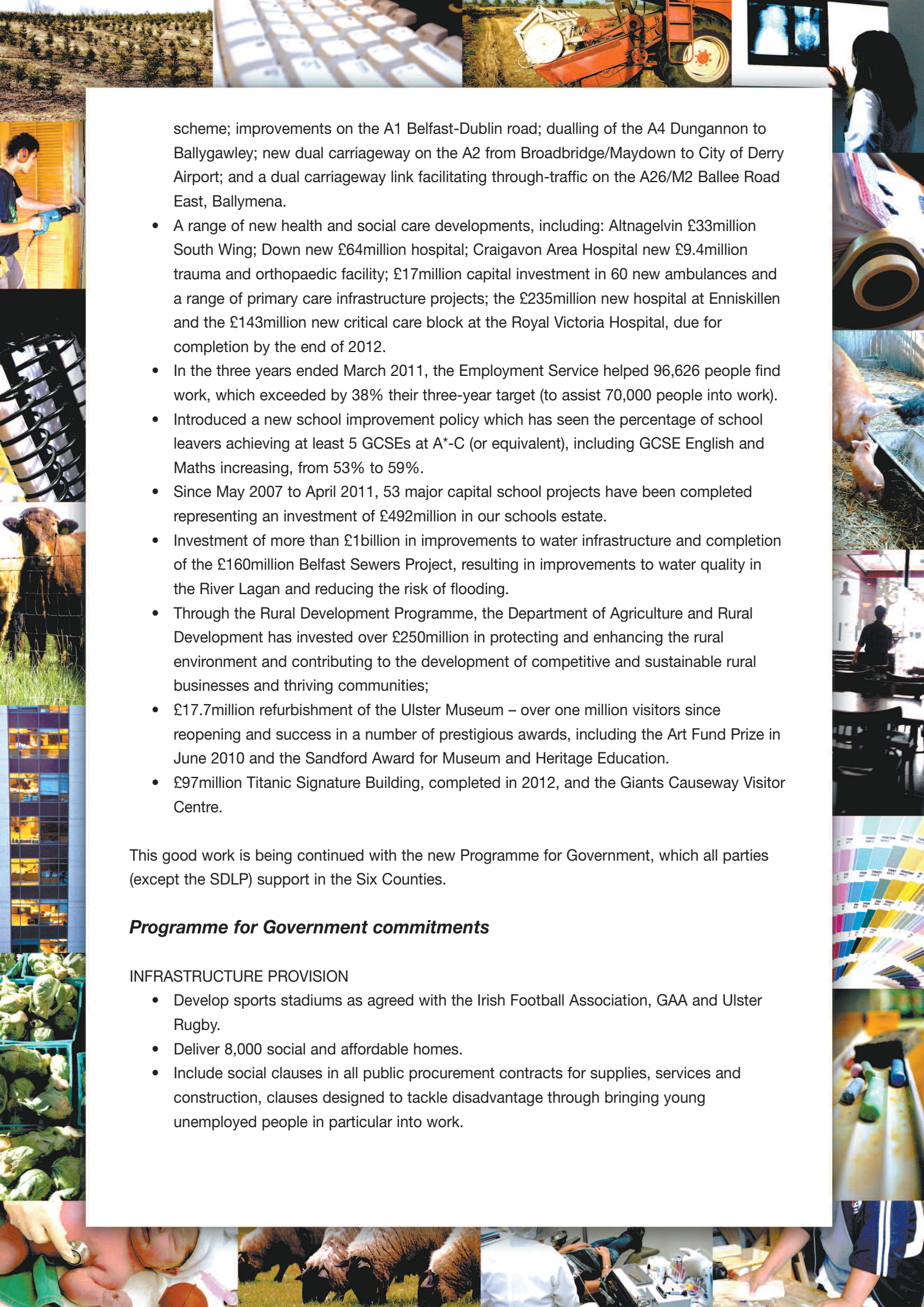
We are also committed to addressing regional imbalance.

Equality is an important issue for the Executive. Sinn Féin has promoted policies and programmes designed in ways that ensure we can address inequality and unfairness and create conditions that support inclusion and equality of opportunity.

During the term of the previous Executive, a range of important initiatives was delivered which have benefited the economy and people in the Six Counties and are continuing to do so. These included significant foreign and local investment in jobs; the delivery of major infrastructure projects, including roads, water, hospitals, housing, schools and public transport; the physical regeneration of cities and towns; the development of urban and rural communities and the roll-out of broadband networks.

Specific examples include:-

- The delivery of gross capital investment of £1.4billion in 2007/08, £1.7billion in 2008/09, and £1.7billion in 2009/10 through our Investment Strategy (ISNI) – this compares to just £1billion in 2003/04.
- InvestNI secured almost £2.6billion in investment commitments and £487million in annual salaries; promoted 15,565 new jobs; safeguarded 5,329 existing jobs; and supported 8,267 new local business starts between 2007/08 and 2009/10;
- Over £140million spent on the continued regeneration of our most disadvantaged areas through the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme over the last seven years to improve economic, social and physical conditions;
- £77.5million spent in 2008-11 on urban regeneration projects which include the transformation of the City Centre of Derry, the new Peace Bridge over the Foyle, the Belfast Streets Ahead project (implemented to transform Belfast City Centre) and major public realm improvements.
- In 2010/11, 50% of all planning applications were decided within 11 weeks, and 89% of all applications decided were approved.
- Improved journey times and safety on Key Transport Corridors due to completion of a number of major road schemes, including the M1/Westlink project; the M2 improvement



scheme; improvements on the A1 Belfast-Dublin road; dualling of the A4 Dungannon to Ballygawley; new dual carriageway on the A2 from Broadbridge/Maydown to City of Derry Airport; and a dual carriageway link facilitating through-traffic on the A26/M2 Ballee Road East, Ballymena.

- A range of new health and social care developments, including: Altnagelvin £33million South Wing; Down new £64million hospital; Craigavon Area Hospital new £9.4million trauma and orthopaedic facility; £17million capital investment in 60 new ambulances and a range of primary care infrastructure projects; the £235million new hospital at Enniskillen and the £143million new critical care block at the Royal Victoria Hospital, due for completion by the end of 2012.
- In the three years ended March 2011, the Employment Service helped 96,626 people find work, which exceeded by 38% their three-year target (to assist 70,000 people into work).
- Introduced a new school improvement policy which has seen the percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs at A*-C (or equivalent), including GCSE English and Maths increasing, from 53% to 59%.
- Since May 2007 to April 2011, 53 major capital school projects have been completed representing an investment of £492million in our schools estate.
- Investment of more than £1billion in improvements to water infrastructure and completion of the £160million Belfast Sewers Project, resulting in improvements to water quality in the River Lagan and reducing the risk of flooding.
- Through the Rural Development Programme, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has invested over £250million in protecting and enhancing the rural environment and contributing to the development of competitive and sustainable rural businesses and thriving communities;
- £17.7million refurbishment of the Ulster Museum – over one million visitors since reopening and success in a number of prestigious awards, including the Art Fund Prize in June 2010 and the Sandford Award for Museum and Heritage Education.
- £97million Titanic Signature Building, completed in 2012, and the Giants Causeway Visitor Centre.

This good work is being continued with the new Programme for Government, which all parties (except the SDLP) support in the Six Counties.

Programme for Government commitments

INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION

- Develop sports stadiums as agreed with the Irish Football Association, GAA and Ulster Rugby.
- Deliver 8,000 social and affordable homes.
- Include social clauses in all public procurement contracts for supplies, services and construction, clauses designed to tackle disadvantage through bringing young unemployed people in particular into work.

- Improve thermal efficiency of Housing Executive stock and ensure full double glazing in its properties.
- Deliver at least 30 schemes to improve landscapes in public areas to promote private sector investment in towns and cities.
- Provide £40million to address dereliction and promote investment in the physical regeneration of deprived areas through the Social Investment Fund.
- Publish and implement a Childcare Strategy with key actions to provide integrated and affordable childcare.
- Upgrade the Coleraine to Derry railway line.
- Progress the upgrade of key road projects and improve the overall road network to ensure that, by March 2015, journey times on key transport corridors reduce by 2.5%.
- Invest over £500million to promote sustainable modes of travel.
- Significantly progress work on the plan for the Lisanelly (Omagh) Shared Education Campus as a key regeneration project.

TOURISM

- Increase visitor numbers to 4.2million and tourist revenue to £676million by 2014.
- Eliminate Air Passenger Duty on direct long-haul flights.
- Develop the 'One Plan' for the regeneration of Derry, incorporating the key sites at Fort George and Ebrington.
- Provide financial and other support across Government to ensure the success of the 'Our Time, Our Place' initiative in 2012, including marking the centenary of Titanic's maiden voyage.

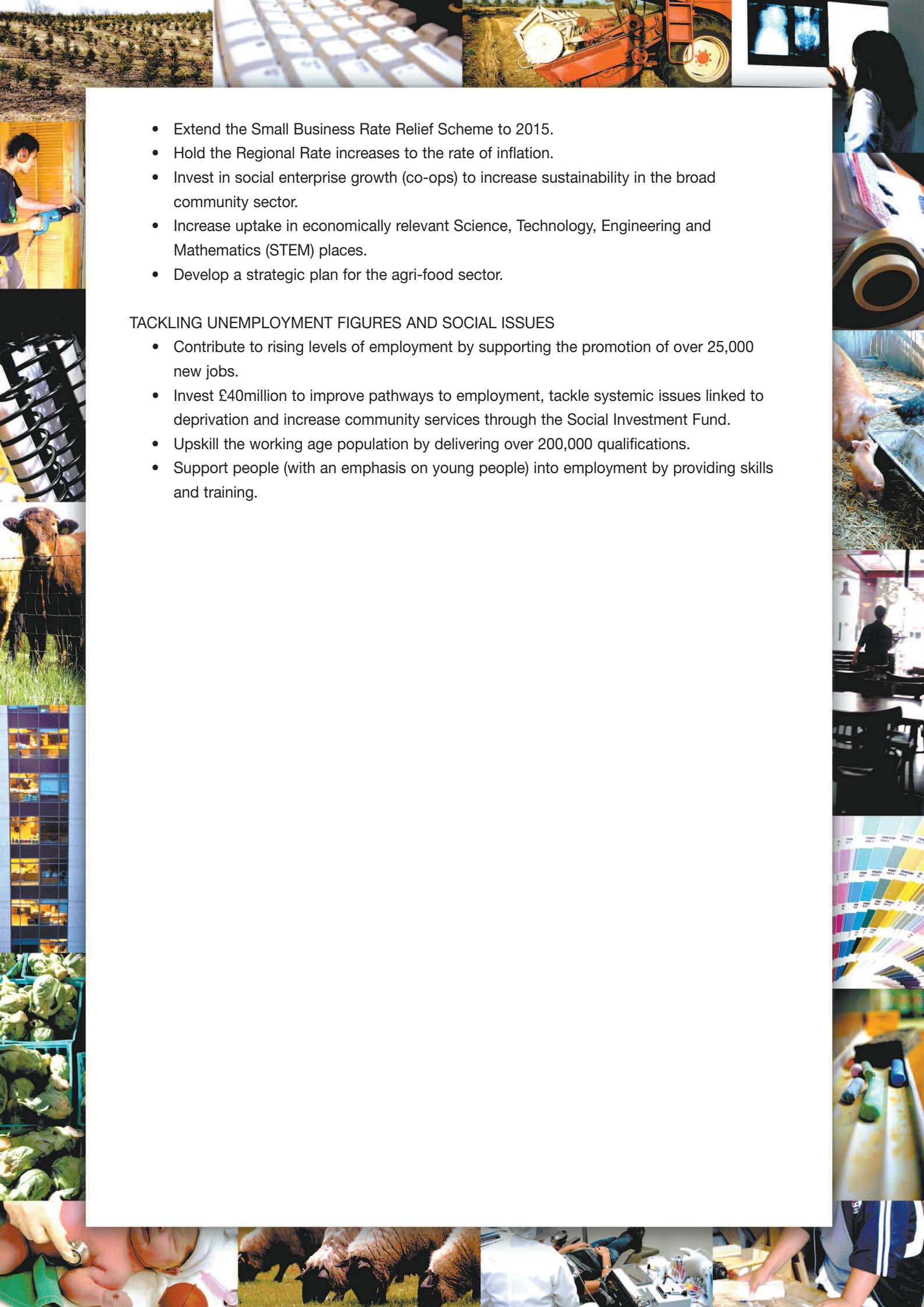
FDI

- Achieve £1billion of investment in the economy which includes £375million of Foreign Direct Investment; £400million from indigenous businesses supported by Invest NI and £225million injection in to the Jobs Fund.

ENTERPRISE AND INVESTMENT

- Press for the devolution of Corporation Tax and reduce its level.
- Increase the value of manufacturing exports by 20%.
- Support £300million investment by businesses in R&D, with at least 20% coming from SMEs.
- Aid liquidity of SMEs through a £50million loan fund.
- Facilitate delivery of the Executive's 20% target for increased drawdown of competitive EU funds.
- Develop and implement a strategy to reduce economic inactivity through skills, training, incentives and job creation.
- Ensure 90% of large-scale investment planning decisions are made within six months and applications with job creation potential are given additional weight.
- Support 200 projects through the Creative Industries Innovation Fund.





- Extend the Small Business Rate Relief Scheme to 2015.
- Hold the Regional Rate increases to the rate of inflation.
- Invest in social enterprise growth (co-ops) to increase sustainability in the broad community sector.
- Increase uptake in economically relevant Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) places.
- Develop a strategic plan for the agri-food sector.

TACKLING UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES AND SOCIAL ISSUES

- Contribute to rising levels of employment by supporting the promotion of over 25,000 new jobs.
- Invest £40million to improve pathways to employment, tackle systemic issues linked to deprivation and increase community services through the Social Investment Fund.
- Upskill the working age population by delivering over 200,000 qualifications.
- Support people (with an emphasis on young people) into employment by providing skills and training.