

STATEMENTS ON A MATTER OF OFFICIAL RESPONSIBILITY

5. Statement by the Vice-Chairman of the Health and Social Security and Housing Scrutiny Panel regarding the Williamson Report Review Sub-Panel

The Deputy Bailiff:

There are no matters under J. Under K; Statements on a Matter of Official Responsibility, the Vice-Chairman of Health and Social Security and Housing Scrutiny Panel will make a statement regarding the Williamson Report Review Sub-Panel.

5.1 Deputy G.P. Southern (Vice Chairman, Health and Social Security and Housing Scrutiny Panel):

I hope Members have their statement on their desks so they can follow it clearly. Following Senator Syvret's request that the debate on P.17 of 2009; Williamson Report Implementation Plan Funding be postponed until 13th June 2009, which was accepted by the Assembly last week, the Health, Social Security and Housing Scrutiny Panel has agreed to form a sub-panel on this subject. Members of the Education and Home Affairs Panel will be invited to join Senator Breckon and Deputy Southern on the sub-panel, thereby covering the 3 Ministerial departments with responsibility for children's services. The sub-panel intends to cover a wider remit than simply the Williamson Report while adhering to the demanding timeframe imposed by the date of debate agreed upon by the Assembly. The sub-panel intends to present its report to the Assembly in 10 weeks' time, by 9th June 2009, which will allow 3 weeks for Members to consider the report's recommendations fully before the date of the debate. Terms of reference will be agreed by the sub-panel, I hope tomorrow, and presented to the Chairmen's Committee for noting at the earliest possible opportunity. The working title of the review is "The Co-ordination of Services for Vulnerable Children". Issues likely to be covered will be governance and accountability, suitability of Williamson recommendations for a small jurisdiction, appropriate phasing and finance, the significance of Laming compliance, lessons learnt from the Kathy Bull Report and its implementation and the Howard League Report. Thank you.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Does any Member wish to ask any questions of the Vice-Chairman? Deputy Le Hérissier.

5.1.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

I welcome this statement. Would the Vice-Chairman confirm that, while it will deal with an enormously important area, given the time constraint, it is likely to be a broad brush report rather than a re-run of an investigation into the history of child protection?

Deputy G.P. Southern:

I can give that assurance, absolutely. I warned last week when we were debating the postponement of the Williamson Report implementation funding that we would have to strike a balance between depth and the timescale required. The last thing we want to do is hold up implementation of what is appropriate from Williamson, from being put into place as soon as possible.

5.1.2 Senator J.L. Perchard:

Yes, I too welcome this announcement from Scrutiny and will offer my and my department's full co-operation with the panel in order to progress this as swiftly as possible and provide as much information to the panel as we possibly can. That said, my question is to the rapporteur, will he support the Minister for Treasury and Resources when he comes back, in due course - probably around June - for some immediate funding for 2009, non-Williamson specific, to support vulnerable children?

Deputy G.P. Southern:

I will not offer him that assurance at this stage because by 9th June we will be reporting about the phasing and the funding. Hopefully the 2 will coincide, provided that we can get on with our report and deliver in a timely manner. So, that support may be there and it may be in the report.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to ask any questions? Very well, we will move on then.

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

May I confirm the figure that I was asked for on G.S.T.?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes.

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I can confirm that the receipts for G.S.T. for 2008 were £32.4 million and that the target yield for 2009 is still £50 million, based upon the deterring economic situation which of course affects the G.S.T. It was originally estimated that it would be higher than £50 million but the target, based upon our latest economic advice is £50 million.