

5.2 Senator T.A. Le Sueur (The Minister for Treasury and Resources) regarding the move of the dairy to Howard Davis Farm:

On 24th October, 2006 I withdrew both Projet 65, which sought authority to lift the covenant which restricts the permitted use of Howard Davis Farm and Projet 68 which proposed the sale of part of the site...

The Bailiff:

Minister, I am sorry to interrupt, there are some questions as to whether we quorate but the Greffier assures me we are just quorate so you may continue on. Sorry to interrupt.

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

The proposed sale of part of the site to the Jersey Milk Marketing Board. At the time, I referred in my statement to the commissioning of a report on the dairy industry which would be likely to include comments on the future site of the dairy. The report, by Promar, has now been published and identifies Howard Davis Farm as the best available site for relocation of the dairy. My Assistant Minister and officers have recently met with locally resident members of the Davis family and correspondence has been received from relatives in South Africa. Both the South African and local based relatives are supportive of the dairy relocating Howard Davis Farm but are opposed to a total lifting of the covenants and would like to see certain restrictions kept in place. As the future of the dairy is a pressing matter, I intend, before the end of the year, to lodge a proposition over here to amend the governance so as to allow the lease of the site of the Howard Davis Farm to the Jersey Milk Marketing Board for use as a dairy and for associated activities. The actual details of the proposed lease will be the subject of a separate proposition to follow. Meanwhile, my Assistant Minister and officers will continue to liaise with members of the Davis family, both here and in South Africa, before bringing forward a further proposal to amend the covenants in order to determine activities that will be permitted in future on the remainder of the Howard Davis Farm site. They will also discuss with the family how the next proceeds from such activities should be managed so that, as far as possible, the original purpose of T.B. Davis's gift is not forgotten.

5.2.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Yes, the Minister refers to Howard Davis Farm, as being the recommended and best site. I understand that, in earlier drafts of the Promar report, that was not the case. Is the Minister prepared to release those early drafts of the Promar report?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

Sir, I am not aware of earlier drafts of the Promar report so I am in no position to comment.

5.2.2 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Thank you, Sir. Would the Minister confirm that the Davis family is speaking as with one voice?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

As far as I can ascertain, yes, Sir. The family is quite large and wide-spread but there seems to be no dissent that I have heard to date.

5.2.3 Deputy J.A. Hilton of St. Helier:

Acorn Industries provide work for adults with learning disabilities. They currently occupy premises at the Howard Davis Farm. Will the Minister confirm, in the event that the dairy are given permission to relocate and, in doing so, impact on any areas Acorn currently use, he will give his assurance that alternative premises will be provided for their use before they are expected to vacate?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

I do not believe it is likely, Sir, that any of the activities of the dairy would impact on the activities of Acorn Industries at the present time, except perhaps some of their growing activities. If that is the case then I do undertake to ensure that those activities can be relocated elsewhere, either on the site or another suitable location.

5.2.4 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Would the Minister confirm whether he is indeed in agreement with the Promar recommendation that it be based at Howard Davis and has he studied the arguments for and against its retention on the Five Oaks site? If so, why did he reject Five Oaks, as appears to be the case, in favour of Howard Davis?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

Sir, it is not my decision as to whether the dairy should be relocated; my responsibility as Minister where I am responsible for property, is to ensure that if the site at Howard Davis Farm is to be used by the dairy, it is used in accordance with legal and other requirements. I have no decision or no activity to take in respect of where the dairy itself should be relocated.

5.2.5 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Will the Minister accept my assurance that there was an earlier report circulated and if that turns out to be the case, will he agree to release it?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

Sir, I am not the author of the Promar report. It is not commissioned by me, and it was for the people who commissioned that report to decide to what extent copies of earlier drafts or anything else should be released. For my part, I think it is irrelevant to speculate on what might or might not have been in a draft discussion paper, what we have is a final report which is the one we need to work on.

5.2.6 Deputy J.A. Hilton:

The dairy currently occupy a very valuable site in a built-up area. Can the Minister explain to the House how the Treasury are going to value the land at the Howard Davis Farm?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

The evaluation of the land at Howard Davis Farm, Sir, will be totally irrelevant to whatever the value of the dairy at Five Oaks or any other property in the Island would be. It would be valued on its own merits, as a site suitable for a dairy. It will be valued with professional advice and I believe on that basis, Sir, there will be a fair and objective value and there is no question of the dairy receiving it either at a discount or at a premium.

5.2.7 Senator F.H. Walker:

Will the Minister confirm that the Promar report has assessed other site options, including a redevelopment on the current dairy site and has come out fully in favour, as has the industry, of the move to the Howard Davis Farm site and that it is considered by the industry that such a move, in early course, is vital if we are to protect brown cows in green fields and protect Jersey's much valued and highly respected and indeed necessary dairy industry in the long-term?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

Yes, Sir, I confirm that having received the Promar report that the conclusions are quite clear and therefore we need to proceed, I think, with all due haste in order to assist the dairy in this reconstruction of their activities.

5.2.8 Deputy A. Breckon:

I wonder if the Minister could say whether he has considered taking the covenant back to the Royal Court for an opinion, as opposed to the political route?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

I certainly considered the legal implications of the covenant with the Solicitor General, Sir and I believe that, on the basis of the advice I have received to date, that the proposals I intended to take are the appropriate ones in this instance.

5.2.9 Connétable D.J. Murphy of Grouville:

Could the Minister please confirm what the ownership arrangements are for the Jersey Dairy? Who is the owner?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

That, Sir, is outside my remit. The Board was set up by a scheme some years ago and, to my knowledge, it has not changed since that time.