

3.12 Deputy M. Tadier of the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture regarding the total cost of the play park at Les Quennevais playing fields:

Will the Minister state the total cost of the play park at Les Quennevais playing fields and has the Minister received any feedback from its users since its opening earlier this year?

The Deputy of St. John (The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture):

The total cost of the new play area at Les Quennevais, including labour, soft fall flooring and play equipment, was £37,760. This was in line with the quotes received last year and the funding came from an underspend in another part of E.S.C.'s (Education, Sport and Culture) budget and special effort was made, as the Deputy knows, to bring the project forward as quickly as possible. I have not personally received any feedback but officers have had positive feedback, I am told, and the facility is being used by parents with younger children.

3.12.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

I thank the Minister for the answer. The officers have had positive feedback. Have they had any negative or neutral feedback?

The Deputy of St. John:

I am not informed of any, no.

3.12.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

Is that because that information does not exist or that you simply have not been informed? You will have presumably been ... you would have asked the question whether any negative feedback had been received before coming to this Assembly.

The Deputy of St. John:

Yes, I have asked that question in the short time available because I have been on holiday for the last 2 weeks. But, nevertheless, yesterday I did ask that question. I was not made aware of any particular negative feedback. That is not to say it does not exist, it just means to say the particular officers I spoke to were not aware of anything.

3.12.3 Deputy J.H. Young:

I wonder if the Minister could advise us on his policy in terms of selection of play park equipment. The old park was shut down, I think, for safety reasons. Do health and safety mean that such activities have to be rather unexciting?

The Deputy of St. John:

Well, I think health and safety is always an issue nowadays increasingly, and I think it is probably true to say that in the "old days" health and safety was not so much of an issue and maybe some of the equipment was a little bit more exciting in the old days. I think that is just common sense and being honest. But there we are, we are in the 21st century; health and safety is an issue. This particular play park is specifically aimed at parents with younger children. There are other facilities in the local area for older children, of one variety or another.

3.12.4 Deputy M. Tadier:

The reason I raise the question is that there has been lots of negative feedback that I have received which I will pass on to the Minister, if that has not already been passed on. The point about younger children seems incongruous insofar as one of the complaints I have got says: "My daughter who is 2 cannot use the play area on her own because she is too small." So, if it seems that the play area has been designed for younger children it does not seem to

be the case, certainly from what I can see, because there is an issue there, and also there seems to be a very sparse offering compared to what the former playground was, and that seems to be where a lot of the negative criticism is coming from. So I will certainly direct that to the Minister, but would the Minister also take steps to perhaps seek information from users, perhaps by visiting the playground, talking to the Rainbow Tots, which are one of the main users very nearby, and seeing if anything can be done easily to improve the facilities?

The Deputy of St. John:

Yes, I would be delighted to ask my officers to do that. As I say, you know, I am a little bit surprised that a parent with a child of 2 years old would want that child to use the facilities independently of parental supervision. **[Approbation]** Nevertheless, it is also true to say that all children's play areas are by nature a compromise because they have to try to cater for different age groups, and you tend to find that play areas are aimed ... they are either one of 2 kinds, they are either aimed more at younger children and that includes making it comfortable for parents to be there on site watching their children, whereas the slightly older children tend to want less supervision and so the nature of the play park is slightly different, perhaps aimed at a slightly older age group. So it is a compromise but we do our best.