

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, SPORT AND
CULTURE BY SENATOR J.L. PERCHARD
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 16th NOVEMBER 2010**

Question

To ensure that the consultation process on the future of education is not unduly influenced, will the Minister unconditionally withdraw his proposals to reduce the levels of subsidy to private/fee paying schools during the period of research, publication and consultation on the green paper?

Answer

I do not believe this would be appropriate in the current context because action is needed now to tackle the potential deficit of £100m and fee-paying schools cannot be immune from the process. The proposal to reduce the level of subsidies is an essential part of this.

If the fee-paying schools do not play their part then the burden of savings will be shared unfairly. Savings of an equivalent sum would have to be found from other parts of the ESC budget in order to meet the targets set by the Comprehensive Spending Review. This would be very difficult to achieve without having a major impact on the other services that my department provides.

The Council of Ministers fully support my commitment to finding the savings and have concluded that all areas of States spending must make a fair contribution.

In the longer term I want to ensure that the education service continues to provide the best education for all the Island's children. Detailed analysis and in-depth reviews have taken place and I intend to issue a green paper early next year. This will set the overall shape of Jersey's education system for the future. It will be a strategic document that will help us secure an education service to meet the needs of the whole island in years to come. It will address fundamental issues such as

- Vocational provision for 14-19 year olds;
- Responding to the Skills agenda;
- Special Needs;
- Social Inclusion;
- Funding for schools and higher education
- Secondary education—a review of options, including opportunities at sixth form level.

I should also emphasise that the proposals regarding the level of subsidy of to private/fee paying schools are still proposals at this stage. Over the coming months they will be subject to further investigation and consultation. Members will be aware that I have agreed with the Council of Ministers to allow additional time for consultation with schools, parents and other stakeholders. Any information that comes from this will inform the wider debate.

People should not confuse the two processes. The spending proposals are designed to help the States to balance budgets so that we can continue to provide the services people need now. The green paper is a wider ranging document about Jersey's education provision. It will set the scene for the future of education in the Island, addressing how the system should be provided for the benefit of all.