

2.5 Deputy J.A. Martin of St. Helier of the Minister for Housing regarding the publication of background reports which have contributed towards the Housing Consultation Paper:

Does the Minister propose to publish all of the reports from the consultants engaged by the department which have contributed towards the Housing consultation paper before consultation period ends and, if not, why not?

Deputy A.K.F. Green of St. Helier (The Minister for Housing):

I would have some difficulty with that because the consultation period ended on 5th July. That said, a number of consultants have assisted the department and myself in providing advice throughout the Housing Transformation Programme. This advice will provide the background report for my proposition that I will lodge later this year. Until that report and proposition is lodged, those consultants' reports remain, in most cases, policy in development. It is of course reasonable for States Members to request to see the relevant background information and research that has formed the basis of this policy. Where reports prepared by consultants are used, I will publish them for the benefit of Members in due course.

2.5.1 Deputy J.A. Martin:

That is quite disappointing really because, as the Minister will know, the last consultant used ... I think we have been told the cost, and we need to know what the basis is now; we needed to know why the consultation was out. I urge the Minister again to re-think this decision because he will put this back months because I, for one, will be calling whoever scrutinises this department to really have an in-depth look at what information was provided to base their consultation on. So I urge the Minister to re-think this. Thank you.

Deputy A.K.F. Green:

I will not re-think it. I cannot publish it before the end of the consultation period as it ended on 5th July for a start. But, secondly, the appropriate Scrutiny Panel is scrutinising at the moment the proposals and we are providing any information that they ask for. I hope that by the time I lodge my report and proposition, Members will fully understand the direction I have come from and the direction I wish to go.

2.5.2 Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondré of St. Lawrence:

If I understood the Minister's first response correctly he was open to allowing States Members to receive various of the reports that formed some of the background to the White Paper. Would that extend to the full business case?

Deputy A.K.F. Green:

When the full business case is worked out and I am in a position to publish it, yes.

2.5.3 Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondré:

Does that mean the business case, having gone through all the consultation; we still do not know what the numbers look like before we have gone out on a consultation on the preferred route?

Deputy A.K.F. Green:

I know what the numbers look like but I am still looking at that, particularly in the light of the consultation that has just finished.

2.5.4 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Will the Minister undertake to allow all Members of the States sufficient time to take in the consultation and research papers that back up his policy, including that performed by Professor Wilcox which was denied earlier in the year?

Deputy A.K.F. Green:

There will be a minimum of 6 weeks under Standing Orders. When I lodge the report and proposition then I will make myself available, and my officers, to provide any information that Members want.

2.5.5 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Will the Minister allow access to the background papers at the time he lodges, especially in the case of Wilcox that has now been taken over by Social Security and may still be policy information there?

Deputy A.K.F. Green:

The Member has answered his own question. The Wilcox report is not something that I have ownership of; that is with Social Security. I will answer questions that I can answer based on the formulation of my policy and my reports and proposition when the time is appropriate.

2.5.6 Deputy J.A. Martin:

This gets more and more confusing and deals done behind the scenes. The report was commissioned by Housing from Professor Wilcox and because it emphasises certain amounts of ways that income support may be involved, it has now passed to them. Is the Minister saying we are going to be asked to pass a report and proposition in this House with one hand tied behind our back and not have all this information? I am sorry, would the Minister admit that he is on a loser?

Deputy A.K.F. Green:

No, I am not on a loser, I am on a winner here [**Approbation**] and I will provide the appropriate information, together with my good colleague, the Minister for Social Security, when it is appropriate to do so. We have to have a chance to formulate our policies, listen to the consultation that has come back and then come forward with our report and propositions.