

2.7 The Connétable of St. Helier of the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture regarding the response of the Parish of St. Helier to the consultation on nursery car provision:

Would the Minister confirm whether he received the response provided by me on behalf of the Parish of St. Helier on 28th October 2005 in response to the consultation process on nursery care provision? If so, would he confirm that the Statement he made at the last meeting that no response had been received was incorrect and inform Members of his response to the concerns raised in this submission?

Senator M.E. Vibert (The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture):

The closing date for responses to Investing In Our Future, which was presented to the States on 5th July 2005, was 30th September 2005. Prior to that date, the Department for Education, Sport and Culture received a submission from the St. Helier Parish nurseries and the St. Helier Parish finance departments. This was circulated along with all other responses to the then Education, Sport and Culture Committee members. Subsequently, I am informed that around 28th October 2005 - 28 days after the closing date for submissions - the same paper was resubmitted to the Department of Education, Sport and Culture signed by the Connétable of St. Helier. I am informed the paper contained no additional comments so it was not recirculated. If this is the response the Connétable is referring to, then I can acknowledge its receipt and confirm that I am aware of its contents. I would also like to assure the Constable that the issues raised by the Parish will be taken into consideration along with the other 29 submissions that have been made as we continue to develop and consider the feasibility of the various options outlined in the original report and correspondence.

2.7.1 The Connétable of St. Helier:

Notwithstanding the fact that the Minister appears to have received the submission twice, he seems to have avoided answering my question: would he confirm that I and my team did, in fact, respond to the consultation process and, therefore, his comment at the last meeting was inaccurate?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

If I was the Constable I would not have asked this question. I can confirm (and I have a copy of it here) that on 30th July 2005 we had comments to be made to Education, Sport and Culture by the Parish nurseries and Parish finance department to our consultation document. There is no indication in this document of any input of a political nature whatsoever or any indication that the Constable was involved. As I said, that was received in time, within the consultation period. Twenty-eight days after the close of the consultation period, the same document, but this time signed by the Constable of St. Helier, was resubmitted to my department. I say if this is the response that the Constable is referring to, then I can acknowledge its receipt out of time and confirm that I am aware of its contents.

2.7.2 The Connétable of St. Helier:

I am sorry to press the point, Sir, but for this Minister "sorry" does appear to be the hardest word. Does he not accept that the Parish nurseries and, indeed, the finance department of the Parish of St. Helier come under my direct control and the fact that he received a submission twice does not remove the fact that the Parish of St. Helier did, indeed, respond in the consultation period and, therefore, his comments at the last meeting were inaccurate?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

I totally confirm, Sir, that the Parish nurseries and the Parish finance department, which are part of the Parish of St. Helier made comments on Investing In Our Future. Until 28 days after the closing date, there was no indication that this was a direct political document. If the Constable wishes to go through with me the document submitted by the finance department and the Parish nurseries, it certainly appears to me that it is a different document to what I would expect to be submitted by a Member of this Assembly.