

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION
BY DEPUTY J.H. PERCHARD OF ST. SAVIOUR
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 8th OCTOBER 2019**

Question

By what process were Caring Cooks chosen to provide school meals for primary school children?

Answer

This initiative was a natural next step in the context of work already being undertaken by Caring Cooks in local primary schools. The project did not arise from a specific directive but it had long been recognised that there was insufficient provision for nutritious meals for primary school children and especially for the most vulnerable families. Caring Cooks was already making a significant contribution via its 'Let's Get Cooking' and 'Let's Get Growing' programmes.

The 'Flourish' programme was proposed at the end of 2017 to the then Minister of Education, to deliver a vehicle for the Government to evaluate the viability of a primary school meals service. In support of both the department's and the wider Government strategic objectives - the healthy eating in schools and States/Island wide nutrition strategy.

In June 2018, Caring Cooks met with the Children's Commissioner, myself and senior officers from across Government to discuss the wider benefits of a pilot of hot school lunches, that not only met the Food and Nutrition Strategy but also put Children First. Subsequently a new proposal and financial model was developed and progressed through CYPES and SPPP.

Therefore, in order to comply with the Government's financial directions an exemption from competitive tendering was sought and approved via procurement in August 2018, with the joint objectives of gauging the level of uptake from parents and evaluating the benefits for the children taking part in the pilot scheme.

Subsequently in February 2019 the Minister for Treasury and resources approved the recommendation of the Investment Appraisal Board to provide funding of the pilot from central contingencies.

It was always agreed that a successful pilot and subsequent programme for wider rollout will result in a formal competitive tendering process.

NB

The pilot scheme for Janvrin and Samares primary schools will run during the first year with a planned extension to St Luke's school in 2020. The data collected during the pilot will be evaluated and used to determine the next phases of the project, one of which could be a full tendering process on a commercial basis depending on financial thresholds and in line with the Government directives.