

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND TECHNICAL SERVICES BY  
DEPUTY P.V.F. LE CLAIRE OF ST. HELIER**

**ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 1st APRIL 2008**

**Question**

In view of the fact that on 11th March 2008, the Minister stated in the Assembly that the report in relation to compost issues had cost £100,000, would the Minister provide the detail of this expenditure, particularly if any private consultants were involved?

Given that the Minister also stated that after the report was completed that it revealed nothing the Department did not already know, would he advise what the value of the report was and why it cost so much when nothing new was presented?

Would the Minister consider that this work could have been better undertaken by the States Auditors?

**Answer**

In November 2006, following the publishing of the report on composting prepared by the Working Party into Composting, the Minister for Transport and Technical Services agreed with Deputy Paul Le Claire and the Chairman of the Environment Scrutiny Panel, acting on behalf of that panel, to review whether there were any private sites that offered better value to the States than the 11 sites in States ownership that were already under consideration.

To that end an expression of interest was issued in December 2006 and 18 private expressions were received in January 2007. In order to ensure a fair evaluation process for private and publicly owned sites, my officers and the technical consultant conducted a comprehensive evaluation of all of these sites, which was completed in September 2007. In June 2007, the Minister for Transport and Technical Services met with Deputy Le Claire and Deputy Rob Duhamel to update them on the evaluation process which received a favourable response.

On 11th December 2007 the Minister took a Ministerial Decision which confirmed that the La Collette industrial area was the confirmed preferred location for the replacement enclosed composting facility and commercial green waste reception site subject to a full environmental and health impact assessment being undertaken.

This location had been presented to the Council of Ministers as the preferred location following the initial assessment of States-owned sites in February 2006, but due to the opposition received from the Environment Scrutiny Panel and Deputy Le Claire, the Minister had agreed to defer progressing the site development until the Working Party on Composting reported its findings.

Considerable work had been undertaken developing an environmental impact assessment for the proposed site at La Collette to enable the replacement enclosed facility to be progressed as rapidly as possible in February 2006 if Council of Ministers approval was forthcoming. The cost of a technical adviser consultant in 2005 and 2006 was £180,639. It is believed that most of these costs are not abortive because they relate to the same location and can still be used now the location for the enclosed compost facility has been reconfirmed as being La Collette.

The cost of the additional technical consultant work to enable the detailed evaluation of private sites required by the Working Party on Composting since the site specific work at La Collette was put on hold is £72,684. This does not include the officer time involved for which a precise estimate cannot be provided, but is considerable because it required the involvement of officers from the environmental, health and planning regulatory functions, and would take the total cost of the exercise towards the approximate figure stated in the States Chamber by the Minister.

The Minister advised the Environment Scrutiny Panel that it was unlikely that the additional site selection and evaluation work required on reviewing the private sites would result in a better solution for the island and this has indeed proved to be the case.

The sensitivity of this decision required that the opinion of the representatives of those affected by the occasional odour from the current open composting operation to be respected.

The Minister reluctantly agreed to complete the exercise as, without it, the benefits of the preferred location could not be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the public and there would be a perceived public concern (promoted by the Working Party for Composting and Environment Scrutiny Panel) that alternatives had not been tested fully.

However, in the Minister's view the review did not represent good value for the Island as it was clear at the outset that the proposals of the Working Party on Composting and Environment Scrutiny Panel were almost certain to be unviable.

The States Auditors could not have undertaken this work as it requires expertise in waste management and environmental site appraisal.