

**4.9 Deputy D.J. De Sousa of the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture regarding the removal of the Havre des Pas pool lifeguards as a Comprehensive Spending Review saving proposal:**

Would the Minister inform the Assembly why he is maintaining the removal of the Havre des Pas lifeguards as a Comprehensive Spending Review proposal and explain why he does not consider that this would put lives at risk?

[11:00]

**Deputy J.G. Reed of St. Ouen (The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture):**

In response to concerns raised by Deputy Lewis, Deputy De Sousa and members of the public I would first of all like to confirm that I have no desire to do anything which would put anyone's life at risk. The Havre des Pas pool is a seawater pool covered by the tide twice a day and therefore only usable when the tide is low. It should be noted that we have many popular beaches where no lifeguard cover exists and the public are expected to take their own precautions while in the water. Even without lifeguard supervision it could be argued that people using the Havre des Pas pool and the nearby beach could be classed at less at risk as there are many individuals close by who are able to react if a person found themselves in difficulty. I can confirm that the Department will be working closely with the Economic Development Department and other interested parties to ensure that any safety concerns are dealt with in the appropriate manner. As such, until I am satisfied that all safety issues have been addressed the current provision will remain.

**4.9.1 Deputy D.J. De Sousa:**

Does the Minister not consider that this also puts risk on the actual pool itself? The States have paid out a lot of money in doing the pool up recently, and does he not consider that removing the lifeguards would, if there were the risk of injury or someone losing their life, put the whole pool at risk so that it would end up like the one at West Park?

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

I believe the Havre des Pas pool is completely different to the one at West Park and in fact there are many facilities provided at the Havre des Pas pool apart from just swimming, and as such I believe the pool is well used and any discussions regarding future lifeguard cover will include those individuals.

**4.9.2 Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

I thank the Minister for his reply but Havre des Pas pool is a magnet for youngsters and families and the cover must be maintained. My question is, will the Minister liaise closely with the Minister for Economic Development, as the Minister for Economic Development is responsible for beach guards, the Minister for Education for the pool guards, to secure cover for the whole Island?

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

Yes, I think it is one of the anomalies that have come to light as we have sought to seek and identify savings and areas where perhaps a better co-operation might exist, and I will certainly be continuing with the dialogue with the Minister for Economic Development.

**4.9.3 Deputy T.A. Vallois:**

Could the Minister explain how much liaison he has had with the Minister for Economic Development seeing as they are looking to save £50,000 from their lifeguard service and you are looking to save £25,000 from yours, therefore a £75,000 saving possibly putting lives at risk?

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

I was not aware of the savings proposed by the Minister for Economic Development. All I can tell Members is that when considering the various areas where we may - we may - be able to save money, first and foremost was the importance to protect what I call the frontline services, and as such areas as this obviously come under the spotlight. As I said before it is simply a proposal. I will not remove the cover until I am absolutely satisfied that safety issues are going to be addressed.

**4.9.4 Deputy J.A. Martin:**

It is good to hear that from the Minister for Education, would he also take into consideration that the summer clubs run by Education and nurseries who are in charge of young children can only use the Havre des Pas pool, and that there is the only place they are allowed to go in the water because they have a lifeguard. He is a better man than me if he can keep a 6, 7 or 8 year-old out of the water on a sunny day. This really needs consideration and he should also be talking to the people who organise the many, many summer schools so our mothers can work and know that their children are enjoying a safe day at Havre des Pas pool.

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

As a father of 3 I am well aware of the difficulties to oversee and look after one's own children. However, I have not ultimately relied on others to do it for me. I fully appreciate that there are clubs and other users that use the facilities of Havre des Pas and they will be included in any discussions we have on the matter.

**4.9.5 Deputy D.J. De Sousa:**

I just ask the Minister to be very careful with this idea of doing away with the lifeguards. If somebody does lose their life or get injured if there was not a lifeguard who will be held responsible?

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Will you be careful, Minister?

**The Deputy of St. Ouen:**

I am rather surprised at those comments because ultimately individuals have got to be responsible for their own actions, and although I appreciate that where possible we need to protect and ensure that people are looked after safely, ultimately individuals are and must be held responsible.