

KNOWSLEY AGRICULTURE AREA, DERBY

666. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:

With regard to the new agriculture development proposed for Derby in the so-called Knowsley Agriculture area, as reported by ABC Rural on Friday, 29 November 2013, and the Department of Water's *Derby Water Reserves Drinking Water Source Protection Plan, Report 98*, published in 2008, I ask:

- (a) is the Minister aware of concerns expressed in Report 98 of the very real potential for the “inland migration of the salt water interface, including leakage from the overlying aquifer which is the result of the current abstraction rate of the Lower Erskine Sandstone Formation”;
- (b) how will the Minister allay these concerns;
- (c) will the Minister ensure the establishment of “monitoring bores to measure the rate of inland movement of the salt water interface into the confined aquifer ... in order to provide early detection of increased salt water intrusion into the Derby town water supply”;
- (d) if no to , why not;
- (e) will the Minister make public the results of all monitoring and, if not, why not;
- (f) what crops are proposed to be grown in the Knowsley Agriculture area and by whom;
- (g) is the Government talking to a private investor about getting involved in the project and, if so, who;
- (h) what is projected to be the cost to the taxpayer for the scoping study, including the trial work, bore and investigative work into other water sources such as the May River and rivers feeding into the Fitzroy River catchment;
- (i) will these investigations include proposals for dams and weirs;
- (j) what other infrastructure is being considered;
- (k) what areas of land are being considered for cropping and will the Minister please table a detailed map;
- (l) what is the timeline and how much funding has been allocated for the study from the budgets of the:
 - (i) Department of Water;
 - (ii) Department of Regional Development; and
 - (iii) Department of Agriculture and Food; and
- (m) at what stage in its development will the proposal be referred for environmental assessment?

Hon Ken Baston replied:

- (a)–(m) The Departments of Regional Development, Lands and Water are lead agencies for the Knowsley Agriculture Area; therefore this question should be directed to the Minister for Regional Development; Lands and to the Minister for Water.