

### **3.11 Deputy N.B. Le Cornu of St. Helier of the Minister for Housing regarding the testing of housing stock for radon gas:**

Has the States housing stock been tested for radon gas, and if so, how many units are affected; what budget is allowed to treat radon in social housing, has Andium been allocated funds to treat radon in future, how might tenants be assured that their homes are safe and can ask for tests to be carried out and, if necessary, alterations made to satisfy decent homes and safety standards?

#### **Deputy A.K.F. Green of St. Helier (The Minister for Housing):**

A whole host of questions there and I will try and be as brief as I can. A representative survey of all homes in Jersey, including Housing Department homes, has been carried out to identify the presence of radon. This was carried out by the Health Protection Unit in association with the U.K. Health Protection Agency in 2012. They found that 36 per cent of the homes tested across the Island had levels of radon above the action level. All owners of these properties were notified of the high test results and given advice on how to put that right. None of the Housing Department's homes tested were identified as having radon readings above the actioned limit. Notwithstanding this, the department has taken extensive advice on the potential risks posed by radon and have been making arrangements for the introduction of a regime of radon testing on those properties which could potentially be affected. It is worth noting that most modern properties which have radon barriers or sumps fitted during construction, as a part of building control requirements, and this leaves about 2,000 homes of the department's homes - about 44 per cent of the overall stock - which it is proposed to test again. The radon testing must be carried out continuously over 3 months. It is anticipated that the testing programme will commence at the end of this year and be completed by the end of 2016. Tenants will be consulted individually on the proposed testing regime for their individual homes. The costs associated with the testing is not significant, it is about £50 per test and this level of expenditure is catered for in Andium Homes' long-term business plan. Until the testing is complete it is not possible to confirm what level of funding may be required for redeemable measures but it is anticipated that most of this can be catered for in the funding provided for the achievement of the decent homes standard. I must stress that this is something that does worry people from time to time, and should any tenant be concerned in the interim they should contact my department for advice.

#### **Deputy N.B. Le Cornu:**

I have no further questions, just to thank the Minister for that information. Thank you.

#### **3.11.1 Deputy J.H. Young:**

The Minister has given us a thorough comprehensive answer in relation, particularly to housing, that may have raised issues in other people's minds. Is he aware that the Environment Scrutiny Panel is shortly to publish a report on this subject which, I do expect, will produce some recommendations for a wider basis? But is he aware that is the case, and that is a review that has been ongoing for some time?

#### **Deputy A.K.F. Green:**

Yes, I was aware that the Scrutiny Panel was looking at this and I look forward to reading their report. Radon gas is something that has particularly interested me personally so I have followed it very carefully, and I must stress to people that are worried that they can go to the Health Department and get testing done now at the cost of about £50. It is very easy to do, and I also must stress to people that exposure to radon gas; it is the lifelong exposure that is the point, not short-term.