

**QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE HOUSING COMMITTEE ON TUESDAY  
17TH FEBRUARY 2004, BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER**

**Question 1**

In response to a supplementary question from the Deputy of St Martin on 3rd February 2004, regarding the condition of a States' rental property the President stated *'the back garden had six inches to a foot of raw sewerage in it. It had been like that for months ...and complaints from the neighbours.'*

- (a) Would the President explain why there is no record of any such complaints on the file of the tenant concerned?
- (b) Will the President inform members who is responsible for maintenance of the drains and therefore for any sewage problems which might arise from a fault?
- (c) Would the President explain why no action had been taken on this matter over the previous months?

**Answer**

- (a) Complaints from neighbours were received only shortly before the Department inspected the property. These related to the apparent abandonment of the property and the rubbish and other material in the garden. Given the state of the garden I assumed that it had been like that for several months.
- (b) The Department is responsible for carrying out repairs to drainage systems. In this case the tenant had made no contact with the Department to report a drainage problem which was subsequently identified as attributable to a fractured waste pipe.
- (c) A drainage fault is unlikely to be identified for repair unless the fault is reported to the Department

**Question 2**

In response to one of my questions on 3rd February 2004, regarding whether measures were taken to contact the tenant on 10th February 2003, the President replied *'No. Neither the Department or the members of my Committee who were present or myself were aware of the tenant's whereabouts.'*

Would the President inform members –

- (a) whether the mobile phone number of the tenant was on file in the department, and whether use was made of this?
- (b) why he telephoned the tenant's mother?
- (c) whether, during the course of his telephone conversation to the mother, he advised –
  - (i) that the behaviour of her daughter, together with photographs, would be reported in the media?
  - (ii) the level of rent arrears her daughter owed?
  - (iii) that all States members would soon know who she was?

**Answer**

- (a) A mobile telephone number for the tenant is on the file but it was not used on this occasion. The property gave every indication of having been abandoned and it is the tenant's responsibility to notify the landlord if

they intend to vacate the property.

(b) and (c)

I am not prepared to give answers to these questions as they re-open matters of a personal and private nature which I believe, in the best interests of the family concerned, are best not discussed in a public forum.

### **Question 3**

Would the President inform members –

- (a) whether photographic records are retained on all vacated Committee properties, and, if so, the reasons for this? and,
- (b) whether he considered releasing the pictures in this case to the media?

### **Answer**

- (a) Photographic records of some vacated Committee properties are made and retained. The photographic record is generally made when there is evidence of damage or neglect of the property by the previous tenant.
- (b) In any situation , I consider all options, and try to choose the best one. It is a simple matter of record that the pictures were NOT released, so the question is irrelevant.

### **Question 4**

Would the President inform members whether he had a telephone conversation with the tenant's eldest sister also on 10th February 2003, and, if so, would he advise members of his recollection of the conversation?

### **Answer**

For the same reasons as given in answer to Question 2 (b) and (c) I am not prepared to comment on this matter.