

2015.03.24

4.4 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of the Minister for Housing regarding rents paid per calendar month by the existing tenants of the Andium Homes properties at 163-170 Le Clos des Sables:

Will the Minister provide a breakdown of the individual rents paid per calendar month by the existing tenants of the block of flats owned by Andium Homes at 163-170 Le Clos des Sables and can she also state whether the flats currently meet the decent homes standard?

Deputy A.E. Pryke of Trinity (The Minister for Housing):

In the interests of the tenants' privacy I will not disclose the rents for each individual home. I am happy to confirm however that the rents range from £140 to £280 per week. The higher rents are set at 90 per cent of market rents, a policy adopted by this Assembly to place a social housing sector on sustainable funding. The properties all meet 'Decent Homes' standards.

4.4.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

So the Minister can confirm that the homes meet 'Decent Homes' standards, this is despite a concrete survey which took place in 2013 and the fact that all of the residents of that block are going to be moved out of the block next year - in one year's time - to a different part of the Parish, so that the block can undergo extensive structural work, which will take some time? Can she definitely confirm that the block is of 'Decent Homes' standard and, if so, provide the evidence for that?

The Deputy of Trinity:

I understand that the homes do meet 'Decent Homes' standards and I am aware that if no plan for refurbishment was done by 2016 they might not meet the 'Decent Homes' standards, so that is why work is put in place to refurbish the block. I know the tenants have been informed of that and work will take place.

4.4.2 Deputy T.A. Vallois of St. John:

Could the Minister explain why there is no access to the 'Decent Homes' standard on the Andium Homes website so people are able to assess whether their home meets 'Decent Homes' or not?

The Deputy of Trinity:

I am not aware that the 'Decent Homes' standard is not on the Andium website but that is something that I will bring up with the chairman when I next see him.

4.4.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

On a more general front, can the Minister state what proportion of tenants of Andium Homes have now been moved on to this 90 per cent of private sector rents?

The Deputy of Trinity:

I do not have that detailed information but it is something that I can ask Andium and come back to you.

4.4.4 Deputy S.Y. Mézec of St. Helier:

Is the Minister able to identify which Andium properties fall below the housing standards at the moment? Is that something she is able to do?

The Deputy of Trinity:

As I understand it, there is a set process of refurbishment, as this Assembly knows, that is taking place and they are working through at De Quetteville Court. As you know, De Quetteville Court is in the process of being refurbished. Significant investment has been placed in Andium over the last

years and work will continue. As we know, Le Marais and Le Squez have been done. That is why Andium are playing catch-up, because there has not been significant investment over the years.

4.4.5 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Do tenants who currently live in properties which fall below the housing standards know that they live in properties which fall below those standards? Do they have a right to know and are they informed of this fact in advance of anything being done about it?

The Deputy of Trinity:

The significant investment, as I said, has been done in Andium and Andium do a very good job of keeping their tenants informed, not only on a one-to-one basis, but by newsletters. I think if any tenant has any concerns about that it is important that all their concerns are addressed and I encourage them to contact Andium, because their customer service is their customer and their tenants are very important to them.

Deputy M. Tadier:

May I ask a point of order? I thought the Standing Orders say that the Minister must attempt to answer the question. She has clearly answered a different question to that which was asked about whether tenants have the right to know if they live in a property which falls below and we have heard none of that this morning.

The Bailiff:

The Minister has given you the answer that she thinks is appropriate to give, Deputy, and that is a matter for the Minister and for Members to follow up politically as they wish.

4.4.6 Deputy M. Tadier:

The reason I asked the question is that there is a block of flats in my constituency where the new tenants who have moved in, I believe, in some cases after the date which it was known that they will have to be decanted in a year's time, are moving into properties where they pay £280 a week for the same property incidentally without carpets, and which they are having difficulty and reluctance to carpet naturally if they are only going to be there for a year. Meanwhile other tenants in the block are paying £140, which is exactly half of the rent that these people are paying for the same properties. One can understand that quite naturally there is tension in the block and there is dissatisfaction at having to pay 90 per cent of market rates on one hand for what is considered to be a substandard property and 45 per cent on the other hand for perhaps a more furnished property. Will the Minister look into this as a matter of urgency and also circulate to Members a list of all the properties in Jersey which do not currently meet the 'Decent Homes' standards in the interest of transparency?

The Bailiff:

All properties you said, do you mean all the Andium properties?

Deputy M. Tadier:

We can start with the Andium ones because we probably will not even get that, so that is what I am asking for, the Andium properties.

The Deputy of Trinity:

What little faith the Deputy has. Going back to his question, I can understand his concern but if the Deputy thinks back to the Housing Transformation debates it was said that new tenants moving in are assessed on market value, 90 per cent of market value, which is 10 per cent lower than the market value. At the same time existing tenants are protected by the rents that they pay. It is as simple as that. All those flats will be refurbished in the next year and unfortunately it does mean

that the tenants will have to move. Not an ideal situation but unfortunately it has to be. Regarding his final question, yes, I shall ask Andium and come back to the Deputy.

The Bailiff:

Deputy Higgins is malade so we cannot deal with question 5.