



# Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny

## Panel

### Affordable Housing: Supply and Delivery Review

### Witness: The Minister for the Environment

Tuesday, 27th July 2021

#### Panel:

Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade (Chair)  
Connétable J.E. Le Maistre of Grouville (Vice Chair)  
Connétable S.A. Le Sueur-Rennard of St. Saviour  
Deputy S.G. Luce of St. Martin  
Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier  
Deputy G.J. Truscott of St. Brelade

#### Panel Advisors

Mr. J. Paterson, ARK Consultancy  
Ms. J. Alderman, ARK Consultancy

#### Witnesses:

Deputy J.H. Young of St. Brelade - The Minister for the Environment  
Deputy G.C. Guida of St. Lawrence - The Assistant Minister for the Environment  
Mr. K. Pilley – Head of Place and Spatial Planning, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance

[10:32]

#### Connétable J.E. Le Maistre of Grouville (Chair):

Good morning, Minister, and thank you for attending this meeting. I am John Le Maistre, the Constable of Grouville, the Vice Chair of the panel. Our Chairman will be joining us shortly, he has been unavoidably delayed. We will perhaps start the hearing by introducing ourselves. My panel

members joining me this morning are Deputy Inna Gardiner, Deputy Steve Luce and Deputy Graham Truscott, we also have 2 advisers from Ark Consulting, John Paterson and Jane Alderman. Perhaps you could introduce your panel, please, Minister?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Yes, I think at the moment it is me, John Young, the Minister. Deputy Gregory Guida was having a meeting earlier but I think he may be joining us later. Officers, I have Kevin Pilley, Head of Place and Spatial Planning who is working in the SP3 team on the Island Plan. I think that is the extent of our team, Chair.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

Thank you. We have quite a lot to get through, as you can imagine, this is quite a big subject. If I can start off by asking the first question. How do you propose ensuring that housing affordability and housing need are kept under review so that changing affordable housing requirements are understood and individual development sites have the most appropriate mix?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

The planning policy is the key to what we can do in terms of individual sites. Obviously the planning policies are set in the Island Plan and, of course, what we have had is a situation over probably the last 2 decades where there have not been adequate, strong enough policies in the Island Plan to be able to require the development of affordable homes for affordable prices to people on privately owned land, on land that is privately developed. Affordable housing has been relied upon from both States owned sites, because under the law when the Government develops its own sites it can set the rules and that can be translated into planning agreements and planning conditions which are applied on developments to require what is sought of them. That is on States owned sites. But on private at the current time the planning officers have to rely entirely on the current planning policies, which, at the moment, can only achieve matters by agreement. Developer offices do that to provide affordable homes but that does not happen. Of course, in rezoned sites as well, where there are sites that the States have rezoned for affordable homes then, of course, the planning system will ensure that that is what happens in perpetuity for those sites or those homes. But, of course, the reality of it is that I personally think, and this is where I would ... how do I monitor it? Well, in years gone by - and my memory of working on this type of work when I was a civil servant goes back 3 decades - is there used to be a very joined up approach of procuring affordable homes in Jersey, in more enlightened governments and administrations, which brought together all the various parts of government and where we had a whole set of policies in place to achieve affordable homes, including programmes of buying brown-filled sites. Brown-filled sites that have a higher value --

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

Minister, that is in the past, what is happening now and what is ...

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Well, at the moment one cannot do that and so what I have done is that on the ... I think I would refer you strongly to the AECOM report and the report of the Housing Development Board, because it was shortly after elections. The views I am giving you now I expressed 100 per cent to that board and they were supported by the AECOM report and it is all on the public record. I argued strongly for a greater level of intervention in the market by setting out policies where we can grab or take over a proportion of the enhanced land values and privately owned sites and have that allocated into proportion of private homes. To buy sites taken at their values and also ... but unfortunately those things have not seen the light of day. As Minister I can only use the tools we have. But in the new draft Bridging Plan we are proposing some stronger measures in there and, in fact, there are some amendments in the pipeline which I got to form a view on whether I support or not. At the moment my lean is to support them, that we should have a greater intervention in the policies of the Island Plan to be able to require privately owned developers to produce affordable homes.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

Thank you. Can you please explain what contingency plans for a new supply in place if delivery of affordable housing zone sites is slower than expected or problems arise?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

At the moment what one has sought to do is to ... again the planning tools do not allow you ... so any notion that the panel has that the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Planning has his hand on the throttle and the control levers, he does not. What one has to use is the planning development control system. The sites that are zoned ... first of all, when they are zoned my proposal will be is there will be a compulsory purchase acquisition power because what is the point of zoning sites if they do not get a compulsory purchase reserve power. If they do not get a development the Government can step in and acquire them. That is in the current plan. So that is one measure. The other one is on privately owned sites. The planning permissions are given for only 3 years and then they expire after that because that is to try and resist people from land banking. Unfortunately my efforts to try to get agreement to have a power in the planning law to put an end date on a development failed. I am not surprised about that because no planning system has been able to do that.

**Deputy S.G. Luce of St. Martin:**

Minister, I just wanted to go back, if I could. I do not want to stop the Minister talking about compulsory purchase because it is an interesting concept of how in the past we have only used it for important things like hospitals or airports, something like that, and we certainly, for my

recollection, have not used it for housing. The question I wanted to put to the Minister: he spoke about joined up government and previous governments not being joined up to deliver but certainly when this new system of government we are currently under was sold to us 3 or 4 years ago, the whole idea was to avoid this problem that we have now and it was going to make things a lot more joined up. The Minister currently has a policy department that has the ability to speak to different Ministers. Does he feel that this current new system is working worse than it did previously then?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

I think when I referred to what was done years gone by I was really referring to the days of committees, when States Members had a lot more flexibility and authority. If they agreed to do things they did them and some very bold things were done. Under the ministerial system, of course, a lot of that has all changed and one relies very much on the Ministers effectively working together. Of course, in the meantime, the last few years, we have seen the civil service department restructured and I think there has been pluses and minuses of the changes that have been made. So, for example, the SP3 team - and Mr. Pilley who is on the call here is a member of that team - there is more interaction going on between civil servants across the board. I am seeing a broader based discussion, much more joined up in terms of the work that is going on behind the scenes but somehow or another it is not coming together properly in the political decision-making structures. I have certainly complained loud and long that the decisions about the release of States owned sites, which are essential to deliver affordable housing have been either not made or made in a very confused and piecemeal manner. I do not have a voice on the Regeneration Steering Group, nor do I have any access to the work being done by the property team and I complained about that because those sites, the States owned sites, and their reuse is critical to deliver affordable housing. As a member of the policy group, when we had that because it has all been disbanded now, I met the housing trust, I met Andium, I met the other housing trust and they all said: "Give us the sites. Give us the sites, we will do the affordable housing" but none of that has happened. They also complained that where it comes to a brown-filled site they have to go and negotiate on the open market to pay the full price and therefore the schemes may not be viable. What they are saying is we should be given help and guidance on how we do not have to deal through the market in this way. That is what I meant when I said better intervention. So the officer side is working well, there is good exchange, there is good work going on, but in the principle side it is not working at all well. I have had a lot of complaints and I am going to be spending 3 afternoons this week airing my concerns at the P.P.C. (Privileges and Procedures Committee) sub-committee on looking at the whole way ministerial government works because it is not working well and I hope that the new Members in the new Assembly will make it work better.

**The Deputy of St. Martin:**

Thank you for that, Minister. Can I just say then you are basically saying that it is the Infrastructure Department, and Property Holdings specifically, which are holding you back from delivering some of these sites?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Well, I do not deliver but they are not happening. They are not coming forward. The decisions are just so uncertain and piecemeal. That has been my experience in my time. What we tried to do ... and so the officers have had quite a tough job of progressing the Island Plan to try and get some clarity on these sites. Let me give an example, only last week in the States we all agreed that because of the complete failure to come out with clarity on the need for school sites in town, rightly we have supported what is a proposition to effectively block any use of any sites for anything else, including housing that could be used as a school. That is an example of where it is not joined up. I have been protesting for a year about the need to get clarity on the school sites, where are we going to have those school site provisions with all the people we are going to put in homes. I have not had the answers so I am determined when it gets to the planning inspection we are going to have to get some clarity on this. That is an example where the whole way of Infrastructure, Property Holdings, the Regeneration Steering Group, it is not working effectively.

[10:45]

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

Thank you. Just for those looking in, Deputy Guida has joined us from the Environment Department, Assistant Minister for the Environment and our Chair has joined us, Michael Jackson, but for continuity I will carry on asking the questions.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Just one thing, because obviously people might think what I am saying is negative, there is a lot of common ground on what I am saying on this issue of joined up government and is accepted by other Members. I think you are speaking to the Minister for Housing and Communities this afternoon, I think he will enlighten you to a set of changes that are in train to try and achieve a better co-ordination in that, being led by the Minister for Housing and Communities. I am hopeful that may well give us progress but I think you should just bear that in mind for this afternoon's session.

**Mr. J. Paterson:**

Morning, Minister, I am one of the panel advisers and I just wanted to take you back a couple of steps, if I may. You talked about private sector land sales and not being able to retain or include affordable housing quite often in schemes that have emerged on those sites and that it was only sites in the direct ownership of the Government of Jersey that were tending to deliver affordable

housing. My question was to do with the rezoning of some sites that you proposed in the bridging plan. Those sites, unless you compulsorily purchase them in due course, are obviously in private ownership at the moment. What is the intention within the current planning mechanism to try and ensure that it is definitely affordable housing that gets produced on those sites and that it remains as affordable housing in perpetuity?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Thank you, John, for your question, it is a very good one. I think the draft policy makes a requirement that those units be allocated to persons coming from the housing gateway. The Minister for Housing and Communities sets the rules about the housing gateway as to what is an affordable home, who is entitled and who is not. What I am trying to do is to leave some flexibility this time because in the past I think the rather restrictive nature of the housing gateway has meant that there are a lot of groups potentially that would want to buy affordable homes - for example, right sizes and so on - that could not happen. There is certainly an intention of the Minister for Housing and Communities when you talk to him ... we have worked together and it works synergistically with the new draft policies if they are approved to be able to provide those mechanics. Because the sites are privately owned, you are absolutely correct, the method of doing it would be a planning obligation agreement. In other words, the developer will be required to enter into a planning obligation agreement that sets out all those requirements that flow from the draft policy and the gateway rules and so on. That would all need to be in there. Unfortunately, you are quite right, delays do happen. I am not close to this because planning obligation agreements are not set by the Minister, they are set by the chief officer ... well, we do not have a chief officer under I.H.E. (Infrastructure, Housing and Environment) now, that is one of the issues. The officers effectively are the ones that do the planning obligation agreements and I have heard reports of it being anything up to a year to try to get resolution on these matters. Obviously, there is quite a resource issue because they all have to be checked through with the law officers and so on. Of course, finally, if nothing else happens, then ... although I do understand there are standard planning obligation agreements which I use, and obviously they are trying to make sure those homes are in perpetuity. Of course, there are the compulsory purchase powers in default. The last ones they potentially thought about using, it was 10 years ago, and we have a site that is zoned in St. Brelade, which has been zoned for many, many years and has not been carried out. I just want to get this impression across. I think people have an impression that the planning officers and the development control team are in control of this. They are not. They are regulators of it. What we need are the other parts of government, the providers, the drivers and the doers to deliver that and that is where the join up comes with the Minister for Housing and Communities, with the Minister for Treasury and Resources to make sure there is money available to buy those sites, with the Minister for Infrastructure to get those sites acquired. Although the Minister for Infrastructure tells me he has no money to buy land, which is a ludicrous situation. Then I suppose there is the politics of the Chief Minister who needs to support it. That is the joining up. I

am part of the system and I think that is my message to you: we really need to have greater joining up to deliver this.

**Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade:**

Thank you. Just going back to the joined-upness, if there is such a word. You may not have been directly involved with the Gas Place Andium proposed development but clearly in a situation where we have an arm's length body, Andium, applying for permission and it gets refused by planning, how can we possibly get to that point. It just seems ludicrous that that ran so far and we have potentially lost an affordable housing block there. How can we stop that happening again?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

The first thing is that development came forward by Andium Homes. They say - I am not directly involved but this is what I have heard said - they had to come forward with a scheme that breached the planning guidance because of the amount of money they had to pay for the site. Somewhere there must have been some discussion an agreement that went on and they were not given any ... there cannot have been recognition at the start that the price being paid meant that there was going to have to be what is called a planning busting scheme. I think it is absolutely right. The planning system is the regulators and we should not be bending the planning rules because things have gone wrong. Now, has it happens in this case, I think there are ... and my understanding is that there are discussions going on about what alternatives might be possible for that site as part of the Island Plan amendments and so on, which may avoid that situation happening. But certainly you are right, the viability of any scheme within the planning rules - and the planning rules have been set for a long time there, this is an historic site. I remember there is a dolman there. This is a site of major archaeology and the idea that you would deliberately destroy it, going against all the policies, is in my view not acceptable. I am sorry, I do not go with that. Having spoken to planning committee members I think they feel strong on it, I do not think there is any criticism ... but there is criticism of how we got to that place. It illustrates the point where our arm's length developers are left to their own devices to acquire land privately - because Gas Place was privately owned by the Gas Company, it is a private company - in a way that did not recognise that in order to be able to get a planning compliance scheme they needed to have support or some capital subsidy in some way. Donkey years ago, we would have had that. When I was a chief officer running this type of thing, the land vote, we had nearly between 50 and 100 million a year to spend on sites for affordable housing. We have had none for decades and we have relied on the private sector. The private sector refused to comply with Robert Duhamel's Island Plan that put an H3 requirement for affordable. They would not do it and the States ... I am afraid, my colleagues have not had the bottle to put that policy back. We will find that in the new Island Plan whether they are prepared to wear it or not.

**The Deputy of St. Martin:**

Thank you, Minister, I remember you and I sitting on this very Scrutiny Panel back in 2012 discussing H3. At the time we quite clearly said that we thought H3 would be a disaster and it turned out to be exactly the same. My question is: do you accept now that given the cost of housing and the cost of construction that the only people who can deliver affordable housing would be the States?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

That is a good question. A private developer is obviously going to maximise their return. What has happened now is that I think the absolutely dreadful escalation of house prices has resulted in a major escalation in land values. People that have bought sites for high prices are not going to be able to ... they only way they could try and develop them and get affordable is by piling them in in unacceptably high densities, removing amenity space and all the things that make developments decent places to live. I am not an expert in this but we have had expert pieces of work done and I think you probably need to talk to an expert about that who can justify it. But that is my feeling. I think the States are able to deliver affordable housing if we increased our level of intervention. That was my message that I took to the Housing Board and I took to the report that went to the Council of Ministers and unfortunately it has not been accepted. We still have an unwillingness to intervene. If you combine that with the fact that the demand for homes has massively increased as a result of our failure to manage immigration and the fact, justifiably, because of COVID people are now absolutely desperate to be able to increase the quality of their homes, more space, more open space and gardens. It has just driven the prices to a point that is frankly ... I am upset about it, I really am, because most young people have no chance at all of buying their homes.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

Thank you. There are a number of amendments proposed to remove proposed housing sites from the draft Island Plan. What contingency is there if this happens?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Well, at the moment there is no proposal in the draft plan for what used to be called reserve sites. That has been done before. I took a decision not to do so. I am quite clear that I will not be supporting the amendments to remove a number of sites in the draft plan because I think what would happen is that the whole balance of the plan, where we have concentration of new homes within the strategic extensions of the built up area and then allowing the village communities to become more sustainable and breathe with a little bit of expansion ... I thought that was a very good balanced plan. My fear is that if I cannot sustain those arguments through the inquiry and the States we will end up potentially with a very unbalanced plan. What contingency is in there? Well, I suppose as Minister, according to what the inspector says, then I do have the ability to do late amendments and also I would have to consider that. There are amendments and proposals to allocate new sites but



some of those do have the potential to be able to distort the sustainable balance of the plan as a whole. That is important. At the moment we have a pretty high rating for sustainability in it and if that balance was to go because some of the urban sites are removed and then we end up trying to put all the homes on the countryside sites, I think that balance will go.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

What happens if the amendments are accepted by the States?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

I think that will be a severe disappointment. I am going through the amendments now. In a matter of 2 weeks' time Members will see my comments in public on all of the 60 amendments, and they are all being gone through individually so I do not want to come out with a blanket answer, but on the housing sites we have some proposals to take some urban sites out and then we have got some proposals to put rural sites in. Without commenting on them individually, what I am worried about is the overall balance of the strategic approach to housing strategy and development of land, because we have to remember we also have to think about traffic, we also have to talk about schools, drains ...

[11:00]

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

We are coming to a question on infrastructure a bit later, Minister. Deputy Luce, did you have another question?

**The Deputy of St. Martin:**

Yes, thank you. I just wanted to take the Minister back to the reason why sites do not get developed and I accept that it is possible that sites will not survive through the draft plan and the independent inspector. But it is also possible, Minister, that sites do come forward, they are accepted and they are put into the plan but there is no obligation on a landowner to develop his land, even if it is rezoned, and you mentioned the sites in St. Brelade. I know there is another one in St. Ouen that in my day the owner would not bring forward. Getting back to the compulsory purchase issue, do you think now then that it is time that sites that are rezoned but do not come forward are then compulsorily purchased?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

In principle, yes. I want to look at every individual one but if you are saying we end up with sites that are ... first of all, you would not want to invoke a compulsory purchase power even unless you had owners that are willing to see those sites developed. One of the things that I understand

happened is that the sites that are proposed have been put forward by willing owners, and that is important. One has to look at the sites that are now coming forward individually but I do think it is important that they would have ... if they are accepted by the States, those amendments against either my decision or the inspector's judgment, they will, in my view, need to carry the affordable home requirements. That would have to be imposed by probably some amendments in the propositions in the plan, which is part of the technical changes I have to do at the end once we ... my system is making all sorts of funny noises. I have just lost presenter status.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

Okay, we can move on. A similar question to the last one. My understanding is the policy is based on an 800 net inward target figure. We have exceeded that over the last 4 years, what happen if that occurs?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

First of all it is a bridging plan. This is not a 10 year plan and we are in a recovery phase. I think the evidence that was used for the 800 figure came from the Stats Unit. We will have that confirmed by the end of the year. We will get the early census information. I am told we will either get it at the end of the year or in January, and we will be able to see how reliable it was that there has been this reduction in inwards migration. Personally, I would be very surprised if that does not happen because we have new rules coming for E.U. (European Union) citizens. Home Affairs now have visa requirements and so on being imposed, which are very onerous. We are all hearing from industry that they cannot get any staff, they cannot get any workers. At the moment the numbers being proposed in the draft plan include both dealing with ... it does include making up a proportion of the backlog. Two situations: if the numbers of migration coming in is less than the 800 then it means that we will be able to increase the inroads into the backlog of housing. At the moment that is 50 per cent, we would be able to increase it. The corollary is if we get more people coming in then I am afraid we will need less of the backlog or have a choice between meeting the backlog and dealing with new people qualifying. I think the choice of that middle planning assumption was the right one and I believe we can defend it.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

Thank you. What assurance can you provide to demonstrate that the right policy and legislative framework is in place to enable compulsory purchase of the affordable sites, should planning not be obtained by the landowners as anticipated?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

A compulsory purchase ... when I was a chief officer we used it all the time. It has not been used recently. The law is about as simple as you can get. It is the Compulsory Purchase of Land

(Procedure) (Jersey) Law 1961. There is no appeal against it, it is very effective indeed. Three notices and the land is transferred and sort the price out afterwards through the Royal Court and the Board of Arbitration, so in the meantime you can get on with it. But there are a number of things, the States have to approve that that land be acquired by compulsory purchase previously and in my view that should be done as a reserved power at the time of zoning. Secondly, the States have to vote allocated money in place to allow that land to be so acquired. I do not think there is any administrative problem about that, the problem is that obviously, and quite rightly, States Members are very unhappy and are generally unwilling to use compulsory purchase. That has been the case for years but nonetheless there are occasions it is necessary.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

You think it unlikely that States Members would vote for compulsory purchase for housing?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

They have done before but the way the power will be put is it is what is called a reserve powers, which says that in the event of them not being developed ... I do not have the words in front me, I would have to arrange for you to be provided with what the actual terms of the policy is. But somewhere in there there is, I am sure, a compulsory purchase power. I am looking at my other screen here to see if the officers are going to help me out on this but at the moment they are not. Can I come back to that, Chair?

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

Of course. What work have you undertaken with the Minister for Infrastructure and Government of Jersey officials to ensure that publicly owned sites are developed within the timescales set out in the draft Bridging Island Plan?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Me personally, none. The direction I have had is I am not allowed to interfere with the planning direction of individual sites. I work with the officers all the time and keep close to what is happening but I am not part of those direct land use decisions that are being made under our current arrangement for managing States property. I would like to see that more joined up. That is one of the things I have said early on. I have just had an answer, Chair, it says: "Where sites that are zoned have not commenced within 3 years of improvable plan they may subject to compulsory purchase." This is what policy H5 in the draft plan says. I do not have that policy to hand but that is what I am advised. If that needs to be tidied up then I will make sure that is done.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

Thank you. Policy H4 in the draft Bridging Island Plan seeks to avoid an over-concentration of any type, size or tenure of housing and this seems to conflict with the following in the plan: “The focus is on flatted and high density development and no immediate policy to integrate affordable housing into market developments.” Could you provide your views on how this conflict should be resolved?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Policy H4 you are referring to? I am just going to have a look at it. Would you give me just a moment to read it because there is hundreds of pages on this plan and I need to ... I will just pause if I may. Well, obviously what this seeks to do ... I was not involved with the drafting. If I may, I invite the officer to speak on this in a moment. But it does seek to provide this balance of communities, recognising there are lots of different needs within a community. I will refer to Kevin Pilley, the planning officer responsible for drafting this, to speak on that point.

**Head of Place and Spatial Planning, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:**

Thank you. I think the purpose of this policy, Chair, is to address some of the concern that has been expressed during the current plan period that we have seen a large number of sites come forward for flatted development, lots of units, particularly one and 2 bed units of accommodation provided in flatted developments on urban sites. This policy seeks to try and provide the planning system with a greater degree of intervention, if you like, in terms of seeking to ensure that we do not get an over-concentration of a particular type of units in a development scheme. There is no reason why larger units of accommodation should not be provided on a flatted development. There is potential for the provision of 3 or 4 bed units of accommodation to be provided as a flat, for example, as part of a mixed scheme, which might have a mixture of different sizes of homes within a high density development. This is what this policy is seeking to do and seeking to ensure, as the Minister highlighted, that we get different types of occupants, depending on their accommodation requirements, moving into development schemes and that provides a greater mix and range of occupants to different schemes, and therefore a different mix in the community, rather than it just being perhaps a community that is focused on a concentration of one and 2 bed units. I hope that helps.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

Thank you. Deputy Luce.

**The Deputy of St. Martin:**

I just want to take the Minister back to something he said just now, which was we have different needs within our communities and the policies are there to help with that. In this draft Bridging Island Plan there is rezoning for affordable housing but I cannot find a lot to do with retirement homes,

sheltered homes, over 55s, nursing homes. Do you not feel that there should have been some rezoning propositions to help the more elderly in our population?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Yes, I certainly am worried about the onward provision for persons of more advanced years, put it that way. When I was a Member in 2011 to 2014, I put amendments in to the then draft plan, to Robert Duhamel's draft plan, to require every parish to bring forward plans. Unfortunately I think that has possibly happened in maybe one or 2 cases but generally that has not been a policy that has been very successful. So I asked for this to be looked at. Although I am aware that since 2008 all homes have been required to meet lifetime home standards but I think the Deputy is referring to developments specifically for those groups. Of course, that was done years ago in the Langtry Gardens type development, 2 decades ago there were a number of sites zoned specifically. I have asked for that to be looked at and there are a number of solutions. First of all, the Minister for Housing and Communities has said he is happy to revise the gateway to open up the opportunity for what we are calling right sizes now. On the basis that people that have family homes can go into the sort of development that I think the Deputy is speaking of and releasing their larger homes that they under occupy for younger groups or for affordable homes. But also there is an issue about care homes. I asked the officers to produce a number of figures and what I am being advised is that we are pretty tight for spaces for care homes but I have been advised that it would be not the right thing to do with the development of the Jersey Care Model that we are working on for our health service at the moment during the bridging plan to bring forward specific zonings. I have asked, where we have hotels and other commercial premises, where they can change the use, to have policies in the draft plan which would enable them to go into that type of facility because I think that would help. Also I think it is quite clear we need to get a better handle on the numbers and the forecasts of forward need in the next few years before the next plan. It may well be that that will be required in the next plan. When you speak to the Minister for Housing and Communities, I think you should ask him to speak about his plans to enable right size developments within the spectrum of some of the zoned sites. I know we have some amendments where the plan is to ... rather than just have zoning for affordable homes, to zone those sites for over 55. My position at the moment is I am open to that and we are working through those amendments, but I am open to that situation in principle.

[11:15]

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

The introduction of a proportion of affordable housing as a planning requirement for market housing sites is not included within the draft Bridging Island Plan, although it is signalled as a longer-term aspiration. Can you explain the reason for this?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

There has been a lot of debates over that during the consideration of the draft plan. Basically the end result is that it was not recommended to me by the officer team who worked on it. They concluded that on balance it was better to have an alternative policy about some kind of levy to a community fund. The downside of that, of course, is that it will need a new law, as I see it, or I think it will - I stand to be corrected if I have that wrong. What we want to be getting the supply from is from the publicly owned sites. That is the best place to get those but we could go back ... I think there are ... again, I am working through 60 amendments, I do recall there is one there where there is a proposition for putting in such a requirement. It was done before. The principle of the H3 policy is in the plan but I think it has been put in there for reserve in the future. I am just reading up. It is in there. Yes, it is covered in H3, it is in the Island Plan with a view to it being used as a mechanism in the future but not in this short-term plan. The focus of the short-term plan is on delivering the States owned sites.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

The draft Bridging Island Plan introduces increased environmental and design standards as well as the Sustainable Communities Fund. Have these measures been tested with housing providers and developers to ensure proposed developments are still viable?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Sorry, I was just reading a note. I apologise, Chair. Sorry, I am trying to do 2 things at once; it is my fault. Just to come back, I have been told that the need for residential care, nursing home needs, is supported in the urban areas. Sorry, Chair, I should have mentioned that earlier. Would you mind giving that question again?

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

The draft Bridging Island Plan introduces increased environmental and design standards as well as the Sustainable Communities Fund. Have these measures been tested with housing providers and developers to ensure proposed developments are still viable?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

There has been a lot of consultation. They have not just been drafted off the top of our heads, as it were. Have they been tested? I am going to ask my officers, if I may, to speak about the gestation of those proposals. It is absolutely right that those 2 principles have improved design standards. The minimum sizes of homes and so on, there has been a lot of work about minimum sizes. I know that has been tested with developers. It may well be that there is not universal agreement in there. Perhaps, could I ask the officers to pick up on that point, please?

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Indeed.

**Head of Place and Spatial Planning, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:**

Yes, happy to do that, Minister. As part of the preparation of the draft Island Plan, it has been subject to a viability assessment. That is published online with all of the evidence that supports the Island Plan. That work draws on some work that we did some time ago to look at the potential introduction of the levy in the Island. We did a lot of work to look at the viability of development in Jersey and to look at the potential to introduce a levy. That work has been updated to some extent to look at the current situation and to see whether or not the policy provisions in the plan that are placing additional burdens, if you like, on the development industry would be viable within current prices. That work suggests that development would remain viable, notwithstanding the new policy provisions being introduced as part of the draft plan. I suspect that is something that the planning inspector will want to, of course, test further at the examination in public. Where we have had comment on those issues, I suspect the inspector will want to delve deeper into them at the E.I.P. (examination in public), just to test that.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

On a similar subject, what testing has been undertaken generally to ensure that the draft Bridging Island Plan and the sites identified within it are viable themselves?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Mr. Pilley, can you outline the procedure that you went through in order to get to this short list?

**Head of Place and Spatial Planning, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:**

Yes, certainly, Minister. The call for sites process elicited a large number of sites put forward for consideration as part of the draft plan. They were all subjected to a process of review and analysis. That is set out in the Housing Needs and Site Assessment Report. Again, that was published with all the evidence associated with the draft plan. All of those sites were subjected to tests against various planning criteria to determine their acceptability from a planning point of view. Consultation has been done in terms of those sites that are specifically proposed for allocation in the draft plan with colleagues across government, including the Infrastructure Department and also liaison with colleagues at C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills) in terms of other infrastructure requirements, such as education.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

Thank you. What is the definition of a sustainable community under the draft Island Plan?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

What it means for me, sustainability, is we live within our means and that means all aspects of our means. That does not just mean money means. It means the demands we make on services, on infrastructure and indeed on the physical environment itself in what we do. For example, if we were not to have a spatial strategy, which tried to help the Island achieve its economic and community needs, that disregard of its impact on the environment would be completely unsustainable. Again, sustainability means making choices which try and find where the balance is. If we were to put all our housing out in the countryside, yes, we would house people, but what we would then have is the implications for the whole Island of traffic, transport and the facilities that would need to go to support that would be disproportionate. We are living within a finite land area. Therefore that is why we have had the Sustainability Review, that I am very pleased to say gives us a ... in other words, in the case of housing, sustainable means meeting the needs of residents of all the various ages and needs. It is quite clear that ... since well before I was elected Minister, I have been aware that our rural communities go back to the 1960s and 1970s and they were obviously young communities, building up their farming communities, but they predominantly become, that demographic mix, persons of older years and retired. Of course, those communities need the life blood of new residents to keep them viable. If all that happens is we just create housing in town, that is what is necessary. I have had some experience of unsustainability in this area. For example, when I worked in Alderney for 3 years, Alderney went through, and thankfully it has turned around now, a period of depopulation. Where its serious decline in young working families and so on meant it was extraordinarily difficult for life activities to be sustained. We have not had that extreme in Jersey and preparing for it now in the plan is important. I am very pleased that all the rural Constables who I have spoken to have told me they support this. They have considerable lists of people, older residents, who want to downsize and to stay in their local community, rather than having to move into town. That is right and proper. As a government we should try, if we can, facilitate that. That also helps us have a more mixed community of younger workers and older community who are the social support and the fabric of community. I feel very positive about that, Chair.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

Thank you. The draft Bridging Island Plan requires passive house accreditation for new affordable homes. Can you explain what that means?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

It is to do with the modern standards of energy management, which again I will please ask my team to speak on that, because it is technical.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**



It seems quite prescriptive. Why does it only apply to affordable housing?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

That is a good question, Chair. First of all, because where we are developing affordable housing, as I said, we are relying on States owned sites, we are in a position to call the shots. The alternative is setting a standard which would go beyond and be imposed on private owners. I am going to ask Mr. Pilley, please, to follow that up. I am having a struggle to recall our conversation, but I did agree that we would put it on the States owned sites.

**Head of Place and Spatial Planning, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:**

Yes, thank you, Minister. The context for this is quite important. Clearly members will be aware of the States declaration of a climate emergency and the development of the carbon neutral strategy. That work is on-going and emergent. The Island Plan is running a little ahead of the development of the carbon neutral strategy, but the Minister felt it important that the plan made some response to the climate emergency and the Island's aspiration to become carbon neutral by 2030. Clearly we are not that far away from it. This is a plan that will take us to 2025. It is important that this plan makes some steps towards that target. The introduction of a new building standard that improved the performance of homes in terms of their thermal performance and their energy consumption was seen as something important that the draft plan should introduce. It was proposed that a good place to start that would be on the affordable housing sites, such that those Islanders who would be accessing affordable housing sites are probably those least able to afford to run an energy intensive home. Therefore, it was seen as appropriate that that was where that was targeted in the first instance. Hopefully that provides you with some background to the genesis of the policy. I am not entirely familiar with the ins and outs of the passive house standard itself, but if the panel wanted more information about that we could certainly provide that to you.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

We were just interested as why it only applied to affordable housing. Sure we want high standards for all housing.

**Head of Place and Spatial Planning, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:**

That is right, Chair. As I say, there will be, no doubt, proposals that will emerge from the carbon neutral strategy. Clearly the Island Plan can encourage and support provision of certain standards in building. When you get into matters such as building construction and thermal performance of buildings, they are best delivered through changes to the building bylaws.

[11:30]

Clearly that sits outside of the Island Plan process. We have seen already some of the recommendations coming out of the panel on climate change, recommending those sorts of changes to the performance of buildings and they are best delivered through changes to the building bylaws. I suspect, without wishing to pre-empt it, but I suspect that the road map for carbon neutrality will include changes to the Island's building bylaws to deliver improved performance of both new buildings and also any changes made to existing buildings. The Island Plan is simply trying to take a step in that direction by using planning policy as a means to try and start to introduce that in the development of new homes in the Island.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

Thank you. John Paterson has a question.

**Mr. J. Paterson:**

Chair, it is more really a bit of advice, in a sense, based on our experience around this issue of passive house standards. In particular, what we have found with a lot of our affordable housing clients, and we have many of them right across the U.K. (United Kingdom), is that passive house has not been that great a standard in practice, particularly for occupants of dwellings. The air-tightness expectations can create quite an uncomfortable living environment for a lot of people. The tenancy among providers, and with policy makers in the U.K. as well, has been to move away from being prescriptive around passive house. If, for example, the Government of Jersey was to have a look at what is being proposed in Scotland around energy efficiency standards for social housing ... so there are very specific standards for affordable housing, which are more demanding than they are for the private sector. It is called E.E.S.S.H.2 (Energy Efficiency Standards for Social Housing 2) in Scotland. It stops short of prescribing passive house but in fact it is a very demanding set of standards that moves you very close to zero carbon. You might find that a little more practical from an implementation point of view. Just a bit of advice really, if that is okay.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

That is appreciated, John, thank you for that. I must admit, my own self, I love to have my windows open all the time, so that worries me. However, obviously we are on a new journey here towards carbon neutrality and learning from other places is important. As far as I am concerned, we will take that advice on board.

**Mr. J. Paterson:**

Thank you.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

The Island Plan makes no mention of the role of the private rented sector in assisting with housing supply and how that might be promoted through the planning system. Can you explain what role the private rented sector could play through build-to-rent schemes, for example?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Crikey, this is probably one more for the Minister for Housing and Communities. What you are really asking me is about alternative tenures, are you not? My worry at the moment, about alternative tenures, is that what we have seen, and this is more a market issue than a planning issue, is a huge tendency for buy-to-let properties. I personally have been uncomfortable about that. I accept the fact that we need a mix of tenures. We need to have rented housing as well as house purchase. However, lots of figures I have seen say that with interest rates being so low, owning your own house is cost effective but, of course, you need a deposit. The role for government in that is to provide access through lending. That is another area where joining up government ... the absence of the States Loan Scheme has been a real loss to the Island's people. Yes, they can get low interest rates, but it is still pretty hard with deposits and there is nowhere near the choice there used to be. If government were to re-establish that loan facility ... I mean, here we are borrowing billions of pounds for the hospital and everything else, why could we not borrow for home loans to try and help. One thing I would do is I would stop people buying buy-to-lets, buying 4 flats and so on to build out rental portfolios. That just cannot be ... as far as I am concerned. Planning provides for homes. This is not a planning issue, what the tenure is.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

Thank you, Minister. Constable Jackson has a question.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Thank you. Given that house ownership is a very British thing and it is not nearly so common in Europe, do you think that is the correct policy for us to continue to follow? Perhaps there are many people, given the prices of properties these days, who will be in the rental sector probably for most of their lives and be perfectly happy with it. Do you think we are following the correct policy?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Myself, this is not a thing for Big Brother. Members know my view, I am generally on the left of political persuasion. I certainly absolutely bought in 100 per cent to our late Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, who brought in the whole push about policies to enable people to buy their homes. Many people of a working class background, like myself, believe the same thing, because you are more in control of your own life. In the end, we all make our individual decisions. It is for government to try and have both tenures provided for. That is a political answer. It is not a planning answer. It depends on your time of life and what your personal circumstances are, which of those sectors you

prefer. It cannot be right that because people are getting 0.1 per cent interest at the bank that people are buying homes intended for Jersey people to be purchased in multiple flats, to be let out and then ... speculative off-Island, it is not acceptable and is just going to lead to the homes being more and more unaffordable. Of course, the higher the price, the higher the rentals that have to be charged. So there we are. I am afraid this is a social policy issue and not a planning one.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

Thank you. Minister, submissions made to the panel have commented on the lack of resource in the Planning Department, the lack of timeliness and delays in processing planning applications. Given the focus on increased delivery, can you explain how the additional workload within the Planning Department is to be resourced?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Thank you, Chair. That is a good question. I have been very open about this. I have been very critical of the effect of government reorganisation has had on the planning team and in fact the I.H.E. team that have shed staff as a result of the target operating model and have gone through huge changes and uncertainty in the last 3 years. As a result we lost very experienced staff and we have ended up, I am afraid, with a number of teams who are demoralised and feel very let down by the States. My information is they are looking to leave the States employ and go into the private sector. I am extremely worried about it. I banged the table at the Council of Ministers again yesterday. I have made it quite plain to our new interim chief executive that this has to be sorted out. However, somehow or other I do not seem to be cutting through. If we look at the volume of workload that we have now, with the backlog of planning applications - because after COVID-19 they are flooding back in and good job they are - and what we are going to see from the development in the next 3 years, I desperately need some flexibility in H.R. (human resources) policies and an end to the dreadful mess that our previous chief executive saddled us with in terms of the I.H.E. fundamentally flawed target operating model that has caused immense damage. Sorry, Chair, it makes me so angry. I cannot reassure you. My successor will have to take up this challenge. There we are.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

Are you saying that under the current conditions that it is unlikely that the situation will improve and therefore that the hopes for affordable housing, planning permissions, et cetera, will be inevitably delayed?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

I would not say "inevitable" but at the moment they are at risk. There is that risk. It is a serious risk, unless we can deal with the staffing issue. It is not just planning. I have to tell you know our building control officers are extremely dissatisfied. Many of them have told me they are about to leave.

These professionals are just not replaceable. They have a lifetime of experience. They are not generally available to recruit anyway. Who would want to come to Jersey? We cannot recruit anyway because of our high housing costs and what we have done in terms of their pay, conditions and career prospects. We have a serious problem. I put this at the door of the chief executive and the Council of Ministers. I am a bit of a lone voice. I do not know how to go forward with this. I have put forward bids in the Government Plan this year and I have gone out on a limb: "I want this money." But it is not just money, it is about the H.R. policies that go with it. Fortunately, that crunch situation will not come just yet. The plan, if it is approved, will be in March next year. That is still 6 months away. Of course, then the new Ministers will be able to try and get this blockage removed.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

Is there a blockage at the moment, Minister?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

At the moment, I am afraid, we are not making progress on this. I am sorry, but there we are.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

Constable Jackson, you had a question.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Indeed. Just really picking up from that, Minister, will you be putting a new target operating model on the table before next June, before the election?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

I am not an H.R. expert, all I know is about service delivery and trying to give political priority to the teams of people that really deliver. That is what I have been frustrated at, that I cannot get the system to respond to help us recruit people to fill those gaps or to train people in the longer run. No, I cannot say I am going to put in a target ... if the Scrutiny Panel have a suggestion of how I might overcome that block, I would be very pleased to hear it and will take it forward. I would love to do so.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

John Paterson, you have a question.

**Mr. J. Paterson:**

I do. It is obviously in connection with this issue of resourcing. Again, it might partially be advice. I wondered whether there was a role for outsourcing some of the activity required from planning staff, whether that could be some of the forward planning type work or more particularly probably

development control, particularly because we are all much more used to remote working over the last year and a half or so? I am wondering whether Government of Jersey had an ongoing relationship with an outsourcing provider for some of its planning administration, whether that is a workable relationship now more so than it used to have been, when planning officers do not need to be on site that they might have been at one time? I wondered, Minister, if that is in your thinking about solutions?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Certainly it is a possibility. For me, my view is that is pretty much a last resort. In the end, if we came to the crunch, that would have to be done, even for a couple of years. I know it took about 10 years to train our building control team, who I am now saying are at risk if we do not get this sorted out. There would be a need to keep that going, an outsource arrangement for a number of years. However, it is inevitable that it is not going to be as efficient. People do expect people that come along and judge on their home developments to know the Island. They do expect them to be familiar with local circumstances. Of course, we all live closer together in Jersey than they do in the mainland. A lot of things which are less significant, planning issues or development control, less significant elsewhere, are very material in Jersey. Of course, we have third party appeals as well, which they do not. It is a pretty challenging environment, John, in Jersey for development control. It takes quite strong people to be able to do this. Your suggestion, we would have to do that if necessary as a last resort.

[11:45]

**Mr. J. Paterson:**

Could I just follow that up very briefly? I am fully accepting all the points that you are making there, Minister, about the importance of being familiar with the local context, et cetera. An outsourcing relationship, if it was to work, given your longer-term challenges, probably needs to be quite a lengthy arrangement where your provider really does build up familiarity with your particular circumstances that allows you to flex how much of the resource you tap into. That is feasible. They are there to supplement what you have. A lot of leadership of decision-making is still taken by Jersey-based personnel but they get a lot of the administrative support and the processing-type work carried out for them by the outsource back-up, if you like.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

That is a good point. I am certainly open ... I would welcome ideas coming forward from the panel, Chair, along these lines. It is in extremis that I say the sort of things that I do. It is after 3 years of frustration with this that brings me to this point.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

We sense your frustration, Minister. Deputy Luce has a question.

**The Deputy of St. Martin:**

I want to take the Minister up on his discussion about human resources, attracting staff and more importantly losing staff and the difficulty in attracting new people to the Island. Minister, there is a role here for key worker accommodation. How do you see that being fitted into the slot of more demand for housing?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

There is a role, very much so, for key worker accommodation. Years ago we used to have such arrangements in place and they have rather lapsed, which is really disappointing. Can I ask Kevin Pilley to point out to me where we are? I feel sure there is provision in the plan, but I am not sure where it is. Thank you.

**Head of Place and Spatial Planning, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:**

Yes, thank you, Minister. To answer the Deputy's question, some work has been undertaken to look at key worker accommodation in Jersey, given the particular challenges, particularly for colleagues in health and education. Some work has been undertaken to look at developing a key worker scheme in the Island. I believe some provision has already been made to provide health staff with key worker accommodation. That is recognised in the plan and the plan seeks to make provision for 25 units a year over the plan period. Most of that will be using Government of Jersey land to bring forward accommodation to support key workers in the Island. Obviously that is a first phase of this work. The idea is that the definition of key worker is continually refined and expanded beyond those critical health and education workers, to perhaps embrace other public sector professions that the Island requires.

**The Deputy of St. Martin:**

Thank you. Could I just ask if key worker applies to anybody in the Planning Department?

**Head of Place and Spatial Planning, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:**

I do not believe that is embraced by the current definition, Deputy. At the moment it is focused on health and education. That might be a question you might wish to ask the Minister for Housing and Communities this afternoon, it lands in his portfolio.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

Thank you. With the lack of resource that the Minister has, he may find this difficult, is there a way of fast-tracking permissions? We know that it is likely more people will be working from home and

so perhaps not so much office space is required and it maybe that people would like to change office accommodation to living accommodation. It would be good if that could be fast-tracked. Similarly, is there a way to fast-track the affordable housing sites, if that can be done? How could that be done?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

It is always possible within the management of the workload of the team. It is not done by the Minister, of course, it is done by the lead civil servant. At the moment, as you know, we have a vacancy for the director of regulation, which has been the case for about 18 months. There is no lead officer there. The lead officer is the head of land and development and so there are quite significant gaps. Of course, that is where the decision-making would be made. I do not have a problem with giving preference to affordable housing sites in a scheme handling development applications. The practicalities are more routine; minor applications tend, at the moment, get dealt with quite swiftly. One of the tools we will be offering is supplementary planning guidance, which will help ensure there are fewer issues or fewer snags at the regulatory stage. We can do that. I am open to that. Also, you mentioned about offices. Yes, one of the things we did was to discuss planning policies for offices going into residential. Personally, I think this is a very, very positive move. I personally agree with you and all the evidence seems to be that going forward the demand or need for office space will diminish. Government's own aspirations are another matter, but I will leave that for others to comment. There are less needs and therefore we are seeing a lot of secondary offices. The question arose during the gestation of the plan: should we put policies in place to try and provide a market test before those offices were released to housing? My view was that we should not do so. Therefore, I see that there are fewer barriers in the way of that happening. It is important that when those offices are converted to housing that developers find ways of having amenity space and facilities, which is quite difficult. I would not want to go into the U.K. situation, where the U.K., as you know, has given blanket approval to all offices to change into homes without planning consent. As a result of that, they have a really dreadful situation of homes being made without windows and hardly any space, quite an appalling and dreadful mistake. When we do this, we need to make sure the homes are decent, liveable spaces.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

Thank you. Views have been expressed to the panel suggesting that parishes could make a more significant contribution to housing supply. Can you explain how they might assist, particularly in the provision of affordable homes?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

The communities, the parishes?



**The Connétable of Grouville:**

Yes, indeed.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

One of the key elements that I have been looking for are the sites that are coming forward in the parishes in the way of sustainable communities. First of all, that they are well located. I personally did not want to see isolated sites that are away from community facilities and so on. If you like, they would become part of the community so they carry a swathe of community support and engagement. That is important. It is about making sure that the major schemes have this community engagement at this stage and also when it comes to the planning application, for example, sort of provision for open space, the way the sites are laid out, the mix and so on. All of that would need to be part of an community engagement process and again with the planning briefs that would be issued by the new Minister for those individual developments. We are not getting wall to wall housing. You could get quite a number of elements in those schemes that contribute to the overall sustainability of the community: play areas, open space, tree planting, footpaths and all this type of thing.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

Thank you. Constable Le Sueur-Rennard, I believe you have a question.

**Connétable S.A. Le Sueur-Rennard of St. Saviour:**

Yes. Just to reiterate, you are saying about communities and putting communities first and yet not on any of these applications that you have put in for building is there anything about schools. You are putting people in but nothing about schools.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

The Constable has hit a really key issue. Of course, before this meeting I was having a session with the planners about the work we are trying to get done with Property Holdings and what they call C.Y.P.E.S. these days, which was Children and Education in my old language, about the future needs for schools. I have been pushing for this all along. There are very significant unanswered questions about how we are going to provide for the school needs for people in town and how we can make things more sustainable in terms of the traffic impact of children being bused around from one place to another. We are hearing, for example, and we heard in the States the other day, that we have children attending school in St. John who are living in town. Members of my own family, when they moved into town, had to go to school way out in St. Clement. They were travelling around all the time. It took 2 years to get a space. We have real pinch-points in some of the town schools. We do need a full sort-out on this. Fortunately, C.Y.P.E.S. is doing this work. I am hoping that we will get some results from this to help us make decisions about those school needs before we get to the planning inspector. We are told that there is enough capacity in the school system overall, but

there is a need in town. Of course, what the education and C.Y.P.E.S. teams have told us, Connétable - I am sure you will not be keen to hear this - is that there is enough capacity to meet the demand for school places for developments in and around the Five Oaks area. I respect your own views but that is what I am being told.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

When I have spoken to the schools in the St. Saviour Parish, there is not. They do not have a hope in that place. St. Saviour cannot expand at Five Oaks as it is. St. Luke's cannot expand as it is, because it is old. Plat Douet is full. This is a veil being pulled over one hell of a problem for St. Saviour if all this building takes place, because we do not have the schools. We have all the private schools and we have Grainville, which has done a big extension, which is fabulous, but we just do not have the space. So somebody is telling porkies. When I have spoken to the schools themselves they have said they are full to capacity. That is all I can say, John, sorry.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Constable, that is really important. I am pleased you said that, because, like you, I hear different accounts of things from all over the place. There is so much contradiction on this. Of course, I have concluded and I have told the officers ... we had this debate in the States the other day about Springfield and the reason why we all backed Deputy Gardiner was that none of us really believed that the true situation was coming out. There is a low level of confidence with States Members about this. Constable, I am with you.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

Thank you.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

But, of course, when I put my planning hat on, re the Island Plan, I am told I have to go on evidence, so another part of the machinery of this target operating model telling me this is what I have to listen to. I am going to ask the officers to comment on this, because they are leading on this work. I have been given lots of complicated models. You would not believe the complex model I have been presented with to persuade me that there is not an issue. Kevin, do you want to come in?

**Head of Place and Spatial Planning, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:**

Yes. Really just to add to what the Minister has said, in terms of the assessment of the housing sites that we have undertaken, those that have been allocated in the plan have involved consultation with colleagues at I.H.E. and at C.Y.P.E.S. to look at the capacity of local schools to be able to accommodate demand arising from these sites. As the Minister said, we are advised by colleagues who do the modelling on these areas that there is capacity there. No doubt an issue that the

inspectors will look to examine at the public inquiry. As you will appreciate, Constable, there has been a number of objections raised about the sites in St. Saviour and no doubt the inspector will want to explore the issues that have been raised by yourself and by parishioners in more detail. Inevitably that will be given a good airing at the inquiry.

[12:00]

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

Thank you, I would appreciate that and so would my parishioners.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Can I ask that the models that we have been given be made available to the panel? I am not prepared to do anything in secret. We have been given stuff, we are being told ... there are contradictions between what the Connétable says - and I absolutely entirely believe and respect exactly what the Connétable says - and what we are being told from other places. If that information could be provided to the panel, that would be good.

**Head of Place and Spatial Planning, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:**

Certainly, Minister.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

Thank you. Minister, I am aware of the time, but I invite our advisers if either of them have any further questions.

**Mr. J. Paterson:**

Just one very quick one, please, Minister, if I may. It takes us back to what you were saying earlier on, which from what I have seen I agree with entirely, that there needs to be more intervention on site assembly or site acquisition to support affordable housing development. You did make the comment that Andium had somewhat sort of ploughed their own furrow on site acquisition at times in the past that might not always have accorded, perhaps, with government priorities, et cetera. I wondered if you perceived that there was a role going forward, when we think about intervention, for government, Andium and perhaps Jersey Development Company to work together to try and create, if you like, a land bank for affordable homes in development that you can directly control?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

John, that is music to my ears. I have been arguing for such since I have been a Minister. When you speak to the Minister for Housing and Communities this afternoon, I think you will find that he is absolutely thinking along those lines as well. Of course, I have to be frank ... and I think you will

find that will be no problem with Andium. I have the highest regard for Andium. They have turned our estates round from being very run down and poorly maintained into a very effective unit and promoted very successful new developments. However, of course, they do need to have the flow of sites. They need to be presented with a situation where the viability works for them in terms of affordable housing in all the mix and so on. I do not think it would be fair to say they ploughed their own furrow. Having talked to their board members, they have ploughed their own furrow because they have had to, because they have been left to their own devices and not been given the Government direction that they needed to have. That frankly was a disgrace. Unfortunately, we also have the other part of government, the S.O.J.D.C. (States of Jersey Development Company), that I think are effectively operating completely outside government control. I will be honest with you, John, I am going to say it now on in the public record, before I got elected as Minister I thought that body should be wound up. Nothing has shifted my mind ever since. What we desperately need is planning of land for our community in a way that meets the community's needs. Probably, in their defence, and there has to be a defence, the brief given for S.O.J.D.C. was develop this land, we will hand the land to you but we will not provide any capital. The only capital we will provide you is the land. You have to make all the developments cross-subsidised and make them pay on their own. Personally I think that was wrong. There should have been an infrastructure investment in the waterfront area, in fact the whole of the S.O.J.D.C. area, so we could have had more developments that were meeting the public needs and less speculative housing like Castle Quay where we have 75 per cent buy-to-let and God only knows how many of those Horizon units have been sold off out of the Island. It is not what I wanted to see. I have to tell you, I am out on a limb on this. My ministerial colleagues would not agree on this. Some would, but not many. We have to get to that point where our arm's length procurement agencies and our delivery agents work with government in a co-ordinated fashion. I am hopeful that when you speak to the Minister for Housing and Communities, because he is the one that needs to be in the lead ... the Minister for Planning will be in there in support, whoever that is in the future. Also the Minister for Treasury and Resources, because at the moment S.O.J.D.C. is seen as a financial instrument and not a community needs body. I would like to see that happen in the future. For example, I will flag this now, one of the suggestions being made to me at the moment is that there needs to be a new school in the south of St. Helier. The most appropriate site for a suitable school is in the waterfront area. Well, there is an example of where you have a public need in juxtaposition with what is a commercial body, producing commercial-type developments. I will leave it there. It is a big challenge, John, you are absolutely right. I look forward to your report. I do not think there is any ... what can we do in the Island Plan now? That is the power that I have. If you think there are things that should be in the Island Plan that are not there, to achieve that kind of joining up, it would be helpful for the panel to say so.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

Thank you, Minister. Do you have anything else, John?

**Mr. J. Paterson:**

No, that is it, thank you.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

Thank you. We have gone slightly over time, Minister. Thank you very much for your time this morning. We do have a few questions, which we did not get to, perhaps we could put those in writing to you.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Yes. Thank you for letting me go on at length and to air some of my concerns. You always allow me to do so openly. I thank you for that, Constable and Members of the Committee. Obviously it is an early run for me on the Island Plan. Perhaps this is a flavour of what the Planning Inquiry is going to be in the coming months, with 60 amendments. My word.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

Thank you, Minister and your team.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Thank you.

**The Connétable of Grouville:**

I now declare the hearing over.

[12:07]