

3.1 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding means-testing by social housing providers (OQ.122/2025):

In light of the Minister's comments regarding means-testing by social housing providers, made during the debate on the amendment to P.29/2025, will the Minister advise whether, in her assessment, a lack of such means-testing would negatively impact on delivery of the proposition?

Deputy M.E. Millar of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):

During my speech in the debate on P.29, I referred to Andium and other social housing providers undertaking means-testing and not a complete absence of means-testing. Means-testing is already undertaken when an individual or family is admitted on the Housing Gateway list. Tenants who receive income support are also means-tested. There is therefore no lack of means-testing that would negatively impact on delivery of the proposition. I believe that, as part of reviewing options for social housing policies going forward, it would be inefficient and costly for social housing providers to assume responsibility for means-testing when it is already undertaken by government departments. My principal concern in my speech was to emphasise the importance of preserving the business models of Andium and the other social housing providers to ensure that they can continue to meet decent home standards and deliver ongoing maintenance and, in the case of Andium, their capital development and building programme.

3.1.1 Deputy M.B. Andrews:

The proposer, Deputy Kovacs, alluded to members of our society living in relative poverty, and that is really what she wanted to see be addressed. I want to know whether the Minister for Treasury and Resources is of the view that this is something that can be addressed with her and our officers once they look at this issue in greater detail.

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I think we are in danger of pre-empting a debate that will happen early next year. The outcome of the P.29 debate was that the Minister for Housing is going to do some work and bring forward some options. I think it is premature to discuss aspects until he has done that.

3.1.2 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour:

Would the Minister for Treasury and Resources, who has of course been Minister for Social Security and got wide experience, would she agree with me and the view that fundamentally the issue which the Deputy is asking, and the issues in that debate fundamentally need the whole of the Government, the whole of the Assembly, to focus on the supply side of houses? If we had more of them, then people would not be in such poverty. Would she not say that that is where the focus of her attention and officers might better be spent than creating another means-tested system?

Deputy M.E. Millar:

I thank the Deputy for his question. I think we would all agree that supply is an issue. We need to focus on more supply of homes, whether in the public or the private sector. We need to consider the affordability of those homes, and that is exactly why we need to have social housing providers focusing on that and not on means-testing. But that is my view, and this is a debate for another day.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

I thank the Minister for her reply.

The Bailiff:

Final supplementary then, Deputy Andrews. Very well.