

## **2.9 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier of the Minister for Housing regarding estimates of the requirement for sheltered housing units:**

Will the Minister advise Members how his department estimated the number of units of sheltered housing which will be required in the immediate future, and would he further advise what will happen to the properties vacated by tenants moving to such sheltered accommodation?

### **Senator T.J. Le Main (The Minister for Housing):**

Based on our March 2007 waiting list figures there are currently 155 individuals waiting to be housed by the department in one-bedroom, sheltered, retirement or lifetime homes. There are a further 191 existing tenants who need to be moved to more suitable one-bedroom, sheltered, retirement or lifetime homes. This gives an immediate need from our side of 346 homes. But I am aware that there are certain Connétables who do have a list of people in a similar situation. The department's Social Housing Property Plan proposes the demolition of certain properties, such as Convent Court, which would provide a full mix of accommodation. Much of it is one-bedroom flats and bed-sits. The department is also proposing phasing-out the majority of bed-sit accommodation, approximately 80, which are not considered suitable as lifetime homes. When one considers all this together with the fact that the proportion of our population above normal working age is going to increase from the current level of 17 per cent to 30 per cent by 2030, there is, Sir - I would submit - irrefutable evidence of a desperate and growing need for sheltered, retirement, or lifetime buyer homes. If all these homes were provided immediately those homes vacated by existing tenants which were suitable for re-letting would then be available for new tenants on our current waiting list.

### **2.9.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:**

Am I to infer from the Minister's answer that the majority of sheltered homes will, in fact, be directed to people leaving the States' housing sector or will be they available to all-comers, so to speak, on some kind of selection system?

### **Senator T.J. Le Main:**

It is to all-comers. Currently we do have, as I say, 191 existing tenants that would need to move. We have also a waiting list which is a mixture from our accommodation and also from the private sector. As I say, I am well aware that some of the Connétables - I think, particularly Trinity who I will be proposing some sheltered accommodation for - can fill that accommodation immediately on completion. So there is a desperate need for sheltered accommodation. I am currently in the same position as the Health Minister with this ageing population: absolutely desperate.

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

Would the Minister advise the Members what the age criteria for the figures of 105 and 191 are?

### **Senator T.J. Le Main:**

Yes, Sir. Currently over-60 is classed as retirement age. One or 2 fall below that criteria where there are serious medical or disability grounds, but generally it is over the age of 60. Nobody comes on our housing list until the age of 60.

### **2.9.3 Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondre:**

Just as a point of clarification from the Minister, he referred to 155 individuals waiting to be housed. Is that 155 different cases that need to be housed? For example, a couple would be one case?

### **Senator T.J. Le Main:**

Yes.

### **2.9.4 Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondre:**

Or is that 155 individuals?

**Senator T.J. Le Main:**

No, that would be individual cases. I do apologise.

**2.9.5 Deputy S. Pitman:**

I ask this question as there appears to be no answer for it in my written questions to the Minister, Sir. In an answer on 27th February regarding the elderly residents of Caesarea Court, the Minister informed Members that he will be working very closely with the Planning Minister to try to identify land that we desperately need to produce more sheltered homes for the elderly. Would the Minister clarify for Members whether he was only referring to the residents currently living at Caesarea Court and, if not, would he explain to which elderly people he was referring?

**Senator T.J. Le Main:**

The Planning Minister and the Assistant Ministers and all the department officials met only this week again and it is proposed that land will be coming forward for proposals for support by this Assembly, which will meet the needs of all Island retired needs. I cannot say anything else. I am having great support from the Minister for Planning and his officers and everyone will know that the document that has been produced by Planning recently - the Planning for Homes document - clearly identifies a need of over 400 homes and it will include homes that are currently on all the waiting lists, including the housing stock.

**2.9.6 Deputy J.A. Martin:**

I was slightly confused with part of the answer: the estimated number of units. I understand exactly that the Housing Minister has the figures of the tenants in States' accommodation already. I think where Deputy Le Hérisier has a problem - and many other Members - we need the exact amount of the estimated. Would the Minister not be much better, Sir, working completely with the Constables to find out exactly. I know it is not an exact science but we need to know more on how many people and what type of person. It seems to me that the Minister seems to be saying: "We need 400 sheltered homes but these are only for people who now cannot afford their own home." Illness does not come with not affording your own home. If you need sheltered housing; you might be now living in a 5, 6, 7-bedroom house, but you still cannot occupy that. This is where the confusion seems to be coming in, Sir.

**Senator T.J. Le Main:**

There is no confusion. The confusion is by these Members who continue to ask these same questions week after week. It is irrefutable that there is a need for up to 400 homes identified by all the departments and identified by the Planning Department. I have given the figure this morning of 346 that we know that we need now at this present time. It is an ageing population that is going to double by 2030. The evidence is irrefutable and, in fact, the evidence coming forward from some other Connétables is that they have waiting lists as well which are apart from ours. It is an ageing population. We do have people that, by the day and by the week, are coming on-board because of medical difficulties. People are living older and longer and the policy of the Health Department, and our department, and Planning is to keep people in their homes as long as possible. We are getting huge pressures from Health; we are getting pressures from everywhere around: the family; nursing, all of them that we need to care for people in their own homes and keeping their homes, and keep them out of the care homes and residential homes. No question. Keep asking the same questions; you will get the same answers. I am not going to change. It is irrefutable. We want around 400 homes for social rented housing.

**2.9.7 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire of St. Helier:**

It might be that if we keep applying the same answers to the same questions, we will still have to keep asking the same questions **[Laughter]** but...

**Senator T.J. Le Main:**

But you do not understand.

**Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:**

Well, exactly. I do not think many of us understand, Sir. I would like to understand why it is that we are told there is not a black hole when we were told there was going to be one; why it is we do have a thriving economy when we were told we were not going to have one.

**The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):**

Do you have a question on housing, please, Deputy?

**Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:**

It is a question, Sir. Why it is that we are in a desperate situation, with the full support of the Ministers, many of which have been in post for long enough now under this Ministerial system to handle things?

**The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):**

Deputy, if this is a question on housing, will you please come to the question? **[Laughter]**

**Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:**

The question is, Sir, is why are we in this position; what is going wrong and does the Minister believe that further reductions in the qualifications to the residencies of people that qualify for accommodation is going to help in this situation where we have nowhere to put the sick and elderly, and no homes to build them?

**Senator T.J. Le Main:**

I get a bit fed up listening to this same old record. **[Laughter]** Remember that we are reducing qualifications and it is an agreed policy of this Assembly to reduce it down to 10 years. Many of these children living in these unqualified homes are Jersey-born children just like yours, Deputy, and mine. **[Interruption]** They have not had the ability or otherwise to have a home life that all of us have been able to aspire with our own children. We do have a divine right to reduce housing qualifications to make life a little bit easier - down to 10 years, as agreed - so that we can show some moral responsibility.

**2.9.8 Deputy S. Pitman:**

I find myself asking the same questions because the Senator has not answered 4 of my written questions for this session. Would he firstly please confirm that he will answer these questions in written form? Secondly, Sir, could he confirm whether or not Convent Court will be demolished next year and, if not, when? Thirdly, Sir, could I ask him when Caesarea Court is reconstructed will be there enough units for the current elderly residents living there?

**Senator T.J. Le Main:**

I am not going to keep replying and answering to all these questions. If the Deputy would like to put it in writing to me I will make sure she gets a reply because I will send the registered envelope so that she does understand. Quite honestly, I am getting fed up with this... **[Interruption]** and I want to be able to debate with a property plan which will identify all these issues and answer all the questions.

**The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):**

We must move on. We have a lot of questions to get through.

**Senator F.H. Walker:**

I am sorry, can I just make a clarification? I have never said that there is no black hole. That was an interpretation of the remarks I made to a meeting of States Members on Friday and a speech I subsequently made, put on my comments by the *Jersey Evening Post*. I did not say that there was no black hole. What I did say was that the financial situation - and this is matter of record - has materially improved.

**The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):**

We must move on because time is running out and we have a lot of other questions to ask.

**Deputy S. Pitman:**

I do not have a written answer to 4 of my questions.

**The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):**

Well, it is a matter for Ministers how they answer questions; you must take a political view on how Ministers answer questions. There is no requirement for Ministers to answer questions, Deputy. Ministers answer as they wish.

**Deputy S. Pitman:**

There are 4 questions he has not answered.

**The Greffier of the States (in the Chair):**

Well, it is a matter for you, Deputy, to take whatever action you wish to take. We come now to a question from The Connétable of Grouville to the Minister for Planning and Environment.  
**[Interruption]**