

STATES OF JERSEY

Health, Social Security and Housing Panel Long Term Care

FRIDAY, 27th JUNE 2008

Panel:

Deputy A. Breckon of St. Saviour (Chairman)

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier of St. Saviour (Lead Member on Health matters)

Deputy S. Power of St. Brelade

Professor J. Forder (Adviser)

Witnesses:

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

Ms. D. Caunce

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier of St. Saviour (Chairman):

Okay, so you have obviously received our background material; you have been sworn in before, both of you. Obviously today is to look at housing policy as it applies to long term care, so we will quickly, for the tape, introduce ourselves.

Deputy A. Breckon:

Alan Breckon.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Roy Le Hérisier.

Deputy S. Power:

Sean Power.

Professor J. Forder:

Julian J. Forder

Ms. D. Caunce:

Dominique Caunce.

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

Terry Le Main.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Good. Well, thank you very much for coming, Terry and Dominique. So as I said, we have a series of questions here. If for any reason you do not have the stats involved, if there are those kind of questions, we can obviously get them at another stage. The idea is to get a general report out on care of the elderly before the States finishes, Terry, and then hopefully the next generation of Scrutiny Committees will pick this up and start look at various aspects in more detail. So how has your department arrived at the numbers for the elderly? I mean, you have spoken in debates; you have published the Lifelong Home papers; can you give us some idea of you arrive at these numbers?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I know, but I think it would be better if I asked Dominique, because she has the current up-to-date figures of 360 at the moment, and how she has come to that.

Ms. D. Counce:

Thank you, Minister. 361 is the current figure on our waiting and transfer lists. Now, they are 361 real people, some living in the private sector, some living in our own accommodation, all of which who require specific lifetime homes, so it is the walk-in showers, the ground floor. A lot of them may be in one-bedroom flats, but they are not suitable, given their age or their medical conditions, but of course, the figure that is looked at is drawn from a number of areas. Our figures play a big part, but of course there is Planning for Homes, the Housing Needs survey, future censuses. I mean, all of these need to be looked at and figures drawn in from those.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

But at the moment, there are 361 that we know of, real people that have been home visited and have needs that we cannot cater for in their current accommodation.

Deputy A. Breckon:

Can I just ask, Terry and Dominique, is this accommodation that would not be easily converted to people's needs?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Well, a lot of it does not have lift accommodation or you cannot get stairlifts up them, and some of them, because of the location and size and layouts, you cannot put in showers and things like that; a lot of them, you cannot get wider doors and what have you. So it is a general --

Deputy A. Breckon:

So would you say of those 361, most of them are mobility issues as well as age or whatever else?

Ms. D. Counce:

Mobility, yes, more than anything. I mean, we make sure that we have an area of our budget which we can use for medical adaptations, because we do try to keep people in their homes for as long as possible. If they are in a ground floor flat, for example, and they just need a walk-in shower or certain other adaptations, then we would prefer to do that to their home, because that is better in the long run. But it is the units that are sort of all over the stock, not able to just bolt on a lift for one flat. I mean, obviously our long term aim is to either acquire or refurbish properties, 400 units like this, and it may be that there are places which would be suitable for some kind of decanting and creating lifetime --

Deputy A. Breckon:

Where do you get the necessity from? Is it from G.P.s or from the health service or in general terms?

Ms. D. Counce:

Generally, it is the professional therapy services. Yes, we get an O.T. (Occupational Therapy) report.

Deputy A. Breckon:

So there would be somebody who would do an assessment, if they could open jars and doors?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Indication assessed by occupational therapy after Social Services.

Ms. D. Counce:

That is certainly for the more physical adaptations. When there is any doubt over, you know, other issues around location and that kind of thing, some of the more mental health side of things, then there is a medical officer of health that we have.

Deputy A. Breckon:

When you get a referral like that, do Health sort of pick up if somebody needs support with various things? I mean, from Meals on Wheels to social workers or psychiatrically, you liaise with them on these issues, do you?

Ms. D. Counce:

We work very, very closely with a number of agencies. We have our Supported Housing Group and our Assisted Living Team. It very much depends on the individual and what referral is being made. If it is very much because of a medical condition that just requires an adaptation at home, then the occupational therapists will provide that report for us, visit at home and provide that report. If we have any other concerns, then with the individual's permission, we can certainly contact other agencies and get their involvement.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

But they meet on a regular basis. They meet on a regular basis, these 2 groups, with Health and Social Services, the police, everybody else, probation, you name it. All the agencies meet together, those groups meet together.

Ms. D. Counce:

The Supported Housing Group is a multi-agency group that meets every month, and they discuss a number of cases, not all for elderly people, but anybody who we would

consider to be vulnerable, just to ensure that we are not just providing adequate housing, but they are being housed with an appropriate support package.

Deputy A. Breckon:

From that assessment, do you say to people, you know, if you are living in Cornwall Court: “Would you like to go back and live in St. Martins?” Is that where some things come from as well, so if you were looking, say, at sheltered housing?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Well, the issue is very clear, that I am very, very keen to see elderly people move closer to where their children are living, to have some added family support. Very often we get asked on a weekly basis; 7 times a week I get calls and letters asking. I mean, we had a lady only yesterday from Les Cloches, who would like her daughter to come and live alongside her in one of the new flats, because she is now having serious medical problems. Now, by getting them close to their family - whether the daughter or the son - so that they can interact with the elderly person on a daily basis will eventually stop, allow that woman, that person to stay in their home, otherwise you are going to have to put them in a care home somewhere. So my policy is that we need, all over the Island, not just in St. Helier, we need availability that we can match elderly people, either by providing some sheltered accommodation in the parishes so that they can be close to their family. The biggest demand at the moment of course is St. Peter and St. Brelades, where we have over about 200, I think, applications for the bungalows at the moment, where people are close to relatives. It is 100 or 200?

Ms. D. Caunce:

I would have to check that figure. I would have to check.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

But it is certainly over 100 applications.

Deputy A. Breckon:

I think there is always been a demand for those.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

They are the most marvellous bungalows; you can remember seeing them. I mean, they are absolutely wonderful and everybody wants to live there, because there are so many people living St. Brelades and a lot of their families are living in those areas.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Thank you. When you said earlier 361, those are only people in States housing, is that correct?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

No, no.

Ms. D. Caunce:

No, that is --

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

That is private, the whole list?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

As well, yes.

Ms. D. Caunce:

It is our waiting list and our transfer list pulled together.

Deputy S. Power:

Do you have the composition of that figure? Are they couples or mostly single people?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

They are couples and singles. They are couples and singles.

Deputy S. Power:

So does the 361 refer to units of accommodation or people?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

No, no, units of accommodations of people, 361 units of accommodation we need.

Ms. D. Caunce:

Yes, it is applications.

Deputy S. Power:

Okay, all right.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

There could be a need for a couple for 2 beds, because they need a bedroom each; it could be a single person wanting a 2-bed, where they are going to get somebody to come in and assist them while they are sleeping, over the weekend, or assisting at night; all sorts of accommodation. But it is 361 units, where people have been home visited and assessed by the officers.

Deputy S. Power:

Do you have a split on that between one-bed flats, 2-bed flats or whatever?

Ms. D. Caunce:

Well, the 361 is for lifelong homes, so that is generally the one-bedroom lifelong homes, but it would certainly take into account the one and a half bedroom, which is the ideal, so certainly for any new units coming along, that is what we will be looking at. I can split the figure waiting list/transfer list: 162 of those 361 are in the private sector.

Deputy S. Power:

162.

Ms. D. Caunce:

So the rest are living with us at the moment.

Deputy S. Power:

So 200 are with you and a third, yes, it looks like; 200 and 100.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

As Dominique was saying, we intend over the next 5 years or so to purchase another 400 units of purpose-built accommodation, and although the need is one-bed, I think we believe very much that it should be one and a half beds, really, so that people can have assistance.

Deputy S. Power:

I mean, you are talking about 2 beds. One and a half beds, what does that mean? A spare room. Yes, okay.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

One spare bedroom.

Deputy S. Power:

So there has been a shift then in policy in the last 6 months in the Housing Department, because you were discussing of an urgent need for one-bedroom accommodation.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Well, most of those people can do with just one bed, but I think we have shifted policy as time goes on with an aging population. I mean, we started about 3, 4 years ago where we would never offer a single person a 2-bed, but we feel now, our policy is that we have some blocks of over 50 years that we put 2 single people in 2 beds, then they can have somebody come and stay with them and visit them and what have you. If we are going to be purchasing and building and developing, we believe that is the road we should go at the moment.

Deputy S. Power:

I think that is a terrific move, yes.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

I mean, we partly explained the fact that everything in the Island to do with housing hits the buffers when it comes to sort of land acquisition, as we know. What is your

policy in terms of direct provision versus stimulating the private sector to provide this housing?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

There is no strict policy on that. You know that David Kirch is hoping to provide some units in Gorey and pay for them, which is wonderful. If the private sector and the parishes could provide 400 units, I mean, we would be delighted. Whether we have them or they have them, it is no difference. I think we need to work with the private sector.

Deputy S. Power:

Just to explain, Julian, that David Kirch is a high net worth individual who lives in the east of the Island and has made some very generous offers to one particular parish and to assist in the provision of housing for the elderly.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

He already has a housing trust, and which he has built some bungalows in Gorey and owns several properties which he lets out to local people at affordable prices.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Is it your policy, Terry, to concentrate these housings or to pepperpot them through existing estates? What is your view on that?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

The issue, Roy, in every parish we have people, we have demands from virtually every parish. The majority is St. Helier, of course, but there is a need in every parish, and we believe - I believe, certainly - that the villages have been run down in the last few years, the village shop has gone, the village shop is going, and I certainly believe that there should be a strengthening of all the villages in Jersey, from Trinity, like they are trying to do in Trinity, St. Martins, Maufant, where you develop in those areas some first time buyer homes, certainly long term lifelong homes; to regenerate. You know, I mean, these facilities have to be provided alongside existing shops, existing bus routes and the pub and what have you, but it certainly needs to be regenerated, in my view.

Deputy A. Breckon:

I am just wondering, Terry, with people living in the community, have you had any liaison with Health and the New Directions things about who is going to do some of this, whether it is voluntary or family or nursing home?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Well, all I can say is that I have not seen the New Directions yet, but my officers in my department have been working very closely with the Health and Safety Service and the Planning Department on all those issues, but certainly, Richard Jouault is certainly supporting our policies, because they are going to match in with what the long term aims are.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Talking of settlements, Terry, and your plan to sort of regenerate the villages, is there any view in your department as to whether there is a right size, like in other words, if it gets too small, can it sustain the kind of services you mentioned, like a shop or a post office, a pharmacy?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Too small? You mean the number of units?

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Yes. Do you have any ideas about what you see as a reasonable number?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

No, I think that it does not need a specific amount of units. The issue is as long as the units and the accommodation is provided alongside an existing shop where people can go and get their pint of milk every day and hopefully a post office, if they maintain them, and the church - because a lot of people, the elderly people, do see the church as a comfort, and the buses, of course, importantly - we do not have any real view. I do not think we have any real view on that, have we?

Ms. D. Counce:

I think we have seen some successful developments at either end of the scale. Trinity of course has been hugely successful and is a relatively small development, whereas Berkshire Court in town, quite a big, concentrated development, very successful as well. It is about the location, as opposed to the size, although you have to bear in mind that you are trying to build a community there, so it does have to be a certain size. The other thing which we would always take into account - if it was us developing something - again is contacting the other agencies. Certainly the care agencies, family nursing, for example, would possibly prefer them on a larger scale. It might be easier for them to deliver their services, but that is something we want to communicate with them at the time.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

We are getting frustrated at the lack of progress. I know that on the 15th, there will be the debate on what is coming forward, which will make a huge difference. We are frustrated, and particularly when officers see someone where they are living is unsuitable to their needs in a wealthy society, whether we like it or not, you know, we should be doing more. But I am rather hopeful that the debate on the 15th will bring about the Carter land and what have you that will produce the loans.

Deputy A. Breckon:

Regarding sheltered, we have seen (I think Sean has the papers) a development that was done over 20 years ago in London, where they converted a high rise apartment block into sheltered housing and they took a layer out and put community facilities, like a T.V. (television) lounge and a family nurse. Is that a consideration?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Well, we have looked. If you take Convent Court, there was a bit of an argument going on about Convent Court.

Deputy A. Breckon:

It is still standing, by the way.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Convent Court was the classic example of what we built in the 1960s in Jersey, where there was, in the middle of every floor, 2 bedsits, and the issue about trying to convert that would be false economy in that case, because the existing layout precludes us from making enough. It would be more beneficial in knocking it down and recovering the area of land to be able to do a similar amount of development of homes on low rise. That is the great difficulty with the Convent Court.

Ms. D. Caunce:

Well, of course, we have E Block, Le Marais, which we have now turned to over-50s.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Yes, and that has worked successfully.

Ms. D. Caunce:

There is more work to be done though before you could really say it was in that bracket. We would want to put a second lift shaft in so that there was a lift going to every floor. We are already looking at community facilities, when some of these bedsitters come up, which we know are not ideal accommodation for people these days. It is finding a better use for them. We have a high-rise panel that has just taken one on at Le Marais which has been successful.

Deputy S. Power:

I think the point Alan was making is that when I was on the Environment Panel, which seems like a time ago now, we did visit some of these reconstituted, rehabilitated high rises.

Ms. D. Caunce:

They can be very successful.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Yes, you did tell me. I understand that.

Deputy S. Power:

It was successful in that.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

But you see, that is successful as well as Le Marais, which is on equal standing. If you went to see Le Marais and speak to those in Block E there, the tenants, they --

Deputy S. Power:

Well, we went there with you.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

-- they are over the moon. In fact, we have people wanting to go there because of the views and everything. We were able to do those for elderly occupation, a lot of them are single people with double bedrooms, but we could do it in places like Convent Court. We may be able to do it in the Cedars or --

Ms. D. Caunce:

I think Le Quesne(?) would be a good example.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Yes, Le Quesne might be.

Deputy S. Power:

So you are saying architecturally, Convent Court is not easy to convert?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

No, it is not, because of the way it was built.

Deputy S. Power:

Because it is in a perfect location, close to Age Concern and the middle of town.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

It is a perfect location, but the money we would spend on converting that would produce very little benefits in comparison to having it knocked down and being able to build low rise, and that is the outcome of it.

Deputy A. Breckon:

I am just thinking, Senator, with what you are saying now, if you have that, like an over-50s block at Le Marais, you are sort of getting towards that, because one of the things they found with creating this sheltered environment was the mix of tenants. Obviously you did not want single people in there, or maybe young families or disruptive people, and there was a security issue, and that thing was sorted, and with the facilities that were put in, it worked. But it sounds as if by what you are saying, you cannot really there anyway.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

We do not mix them. We do not mix them. The over-50s is now over-50s. It has taken some time to move people out. You know, you cannot just put people out of their home. But the policy is that they are over-50s, there is no young families there with children. I mean, one of the other problems at the moment with places like Le Marais, there are a lot of bedsits there, and we have a duty of care to everyone and we have to pick up people that are addicts and people that come out of prison and people on probation, and unfortunately, as in the past, we have had to house them in places like that. The mixture has not always worked, but where do you put them otherwise?

Deputy S. Power:

Part of your role is that you are the housing provider of last resort.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

We are, we are, absolutely.

Deputy S. Power:

You cannot forget that, yes.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

I know your department has looked a lot at the Roundtree experiment at York, Earleswick, I think it is called.

Professor J. Forder:

Hartrigg Oaks.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Yes, Hartrigg, and that built in a lot of support and enabled people to stay in their houses a lot longer, almost, you know, to avoid the residential care issue. Are you moving to that? Terry, are you going to try and move to that?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

The problem is we do not have the land to do that. I mean, we had a proposal - as you know, Trent Village was a similar thing - and there was a proposal put to me for Maufant, behind Poplar Close opposite the glasshouses, and the same people were proposing it there as well. But I mean, we would have our heads chopped off if we were run with something like that, taking 40 or 50 vergée in the open countryside. So at the moment, these homes are all pepperpotted all around the Island. I mean, if we could have a 30 or 40 vergée site, we could cure all the ills in one go, but the opposition from people like Deputy Le Hérisier to build in the countryside is impeding our progress.

Professor J. Forder:

You are talking about close care model though here, I mean, where there is a progression from being a sheltered house situation to one where there is a care home close by. I suppose it does not necessarily mean that it has to be literally within a few hundred yards. The proximity need not be that small. You could have a situation where you have a housing complex which is associated with a care home which is perhaps --

Senator T.J. Le Main:

But there is nothing like that in Jersey, you see?

Ms. D. Counce:

We do have the Willows.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

We have the Willows. That is the only one, yes, and there is not many units there.

Ms. D. Caunce:

There is not many units there, and originally built by Health and Social Services.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Sandybrook we have as well.

Ms. D. Caunce:

And Sandybrook, of course, yes.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

But if we had the availability, there was land availability alongside some of these, it would be ideal. No doubt about it, but we are not in an ideal situation in Jersey. We just do not have the land.

Deputy S. Power:

We had the Health Department in this morning, and one of the points that was made was there is a significant number of residential and care homes in the west of the Island. I think there is a bit of an imbalance in the east, so the logical progression there would be the development of sheltered in the west; because there is a provision for care, residential and nursing homes, it would lend itself to that, and that is why we are all keen, and why there is quite a demand from the western parishes. Senator Le Main referred to St. Brelade and St. Peter and that is working quite well, but we just need to put some --

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Of course, there is a much larger population in the west of the Island, around St. Brelades and all that, so you have that much more demand for people to have one.

Deputy S. Power:

Julian has visited St. Brelade and has visited that area, just to get a feel for it.

Professor J. Forder:

Yes.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

When it comes to designing, you briefly mentioned things like floor level showers and everything, Terry and Dominique. When it comes to designing the facilities for the elderly, and knowing that they are going to be lifelong - whatever lifelong means - do you liaise closely with the Health and Social Services Department?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

We work with Health, we work with Age Concern. Any development that takes place, the insistence is that they have to get Age Concern in to go and have a look now. When the plans are on the table, myself and others and all interested parties have to look at all these developments and have the input. They were very much involved with Berkshire Court, but all the agencies, and we welcome any input from anyone that is in the care industry.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Thank you, Terry, but what about private sector, like the big one at St. Saviour?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Yes.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

I mean, there is this suspicion - I mean, they are going to be very nice, obviously, we hope - are they just designed for people who can afford to downsize and get a nice little surplus as a result, or have they been designed under your influence?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Well, I have not seen the plans at the moment, but I understand that there is going to be a number for sale, so people can downsize and recover a bit of cash and sell off their family home in the marketplace, which is desperately needed. There will be some that will go to the parish. I think 30 are going to be given free of charge to the parish and there is going to be a dementia home there, and I understand there is going to be rental; otherwise rental.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

But you will hope to influence, Terry, the inside of the house, that it has the right facilities?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

The plans will not be approved by the Planning Minister unless he is satisfied that Housing and all the agencies see that the plans meet what is required for people, and we have already set guidelines, Freddy and I. I said to Freddy a little while ago when we had our regular meetings that we need to have some minimum sizes, and the minimum size for a one-bed is now 650 square foot, and 850 for a 2-bed. So there is -

Deputy A. Breckon:

This is not what has happened though, has it?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Sorry?

Deputy A. Breckon:

In the last developments, that sort of space has not been available, has it, in more recent ones?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Well, no, maybe not in the last ones, but certainly from now on, the policy is now that anything that is going to come online on the next debate for rezoning has to be those type of sizes. No plans will be approved by the Planning Minister unless all the agencies, including Housing, are satisfied that the accommodation is what is required for people.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

What about the issue of on care, which is not really a planning issue - and it may not even be a housing issue - but you can obviously have a lot of influence, Terry, like St. Martins, I understand they have really a guardian onsite, have they not, as opposed to

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Senator T.J. Le Main:

They have a one unit with 2 beds, yes.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

A professional carer, but that person does some good stuff, you know, the changing of the light bulbs stuff, basically.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Well, I am very keen on that.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Yes. Well, they are going to talk to you about white van sort of people who go round doing all those little support jobs. But do you feel that is taking it far enough? What happens if people get beyond that stage? Could they still stay on these housing estates, or have we not really thought the next stage through?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Well, I mean, Dominique will tell you more on that. We have the policy of Cottage Homes and George VI Homes, for instance, that people go in there. It is not a caretaker any more, they have to be self-sufficient, they still have to be able to look after themselves. But unfortunately, once they need assistance, if the agencies cannot cope with it, they have to move into care.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Do you think we are missing some steps there, if we provided a bit more support, we would not need that?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Well, we could not be a social landlord. We could not get involved; that is a different role. You know, that is a specialised role.

Ms. D. Counce:

I think there is a certainly a cut-off point. I mean, we can provide the accommodation that is either or can be adapted to meet lifelong needs, but when you are talking about

the actual care that needs to go in to keep that individual living there on a daily basis, we are investigating now about warden schemes and getting people to live in these. Changing light bulbs and things is something I think we can achieve, but if it is more on the medical attention, you know, changing dressings or helping with bathing, anything like that, I think that is kind of crossing over and it comes out of our area.

Professor J. Forder:

Yes. It seems to me that you need to be able to co-ordinate between them. I mean, obviously it is not your responsibility to do that.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I mean, we have a very good working relationship with all the agencies. It fell down a little while ago with some of the special need ones, where Health used to promote someone to come to us and then Health were not following up the advice. That has been a bit of a bugbear, and we have had several problems with Health just dumping clients with special needs upon us and not going to visit them again, and then we ended up with somebody not paying their rent and all sorts.

Ms. D. Caunce:

This is why the Supported Housing Group was formed, because it was important to bring those agencies together and have that kind of corporate responsibility for the individuals, not just: "Now that they are housed, it is your problem."

Professor J. Forder:

No, I think it is important. I mean, now we are seeing quite a lot of development of so-called extra care housing or various sheltered housing in the U.K. and some people going as far as to say that it is going to be a replacement for care home services, and indeed, a large number of cases of people that move in there appreciate that form of accommodation. But it does, at least in the U.K. situation or the English situation specifically, involve some shunting of costs from Social Services on to the housing part of it.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Well, I mean, that is exactly what we are doing with doing with Cottage Homes and George VI, really. You know, this is the last step before they go into a care home, really.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

But these are old but very nice developments that have been around since -- well, they are pre-war, one is pre-war. But do you feel by pulling away a warden, for example, Terry, could you have kept more people there had you kept that little warden service going, for example?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I am very keen to see a warden. We have a very successful one. What estate is that in, do you remember?

Ms. D. Caunce:

Brighton Close.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Brighton Close. We have a chap there. He is well in his 70s and he does every little thing free of charge for all the residents. I mean, it is just wonderful to see, you know, shopping for them and he changes their light bulbs. When he has something wrong, he either calls the department; if he cannot get hold of the department, he calls me, you know? Now, I have been keen for a long time that we have a warden, but the problem with having a warden is in some of the estates in the past - probably not so bad now - they have been the target of vandalism and threats and phone calls. You know, if they went and told somebody off: "Your child has broken the fence" or something, they find his car vandalised and that has been a bit of issue. But I am really keen in elderly, over-50s, to have some kind of person that could be the liaison officer and assist in little jobs on a reduced rent or something.

Ms. D. Caunce:

It is important that their duties, for want of a better word, are very clear.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Defined.

Ms. D. Caunce:

Referring to Cottage Homes, just as an example, the warden that we had there was never there in any medical way at all. It was very much an administrative function, and I think when you are there all day and all night, it is almost a risk of giving out this wrong impression that there is somebody there, who if you think you are having a heart, you are going to phone the warden, when you need to phone the ambulance. There was a concern about that. So it is just making sure that their role is very clear in respect of what you are expecting them to do.

Professor J. Forder:

That is quite difficult, this distinction between the supporting role and the care role and this is a real blurring of the boundaries between them, and they are funded out of different budgets as well, coming back to the point I was making earlier on. So I think making sure that you can get that balance right is pretty crucial.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

What we need to do, we need to be able to get some homes in the marketplace; we need to be able to get these people into accommodation that suits their needs and give them as much care and help and assistance, until such time they cannot cope any more in their home.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Yes, quite.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

That means by working with agencies, and by supporting agencies, meeting on a regular basis and having the right kind of accommodation. At the moment, I mean, we are struggling, and I think it really is very, very unfair on good, decent people that have contributed to the wealth of this Island over the years, that we should be telling them all the time: "Oh, yes, we are going do something." I have been saying this for 9 years, and I am not getting anywhere, really, although the property plan is going to

make a huge difference to us. The property plan is going to be our saviour in the next 10 years on maintenance and being able to go out and buy.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Do you think you missed a trick, Terry?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I never miss a trick.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

But do you think you slightly underemphasized a trick? When you went to the countryside development, we often find a lot of elderly people, they prefer to stay in town, they like the walkability to the shops and things like that.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

You have all sorts, yes, yes. I know the resistance we had from Ann Court, for instance. They found Ann Court absolutely brilliant to get to the market, it was just next to the Arts Centre and it was really, really handy. But there are still a lot of people that are very happy, if you talk to people at Trinity, St. Martins and St. Ouen, where they have a decent village in St. Ouen.

Deputy S. Power:

With the benefit of your 9 years pushing this particular area of concern, why do you think that either under the old committee system or under the present ministerial system, there has never been a taskforce formed; that there has never been the pulling together of Housing, of Health, Social Services?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Oh, my dear man, they have tried it time and time again. There has been committees and sub-committees. I would not say they were taskforces, but there has been everything.

Deputy S. Power:

It just does not work?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Well, you have to remember, in my 9 years, but before that the Housing Department was in absolute bloody chaos before that. They have had more presidents than you have had hot dinners in about 5 or 10 years, in those days. You were one of them, were you not?

Deputy A. Breckon:

I was only on it for 12 months.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

But there has been all sorts. I mean, this is politics, you know?

Deputy S. Power:

I was surprised to hear you say that in terms of the work Health are doing on the directions, that you are not really aware of what is going on in that. I would have thought it had come to --

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I have seen some drafts, but I have not seen the final things. This went out weeks ago. I have not seen the final. Have you seen the final?

Deputy S. Power:

No, no.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

No. You see?

Deputy S. Power:

Still delayed.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I mean, we have all sorts of discussions at com and otherwise on it, but apart from that, I mean, a draft is a draft. I mean, things have changed.

Deputy S. Power:

Because there is a strong reference to that in your proposition.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Yes, yes, because Richard Jouault was working on the internal directions when he was at Health, but he is temporarily at Planning at the moment, and I mean, what we are trying to do very much complements what the Code of Directions is trying to do in keeping people in their own homes.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

One of the big issues, as you know much better than we do, Terry, about housing is the price of land, and it seems one of the advantages of the Connétables' push is, rightly or wrongly, they can enter into negotiations with contacts, you know, they seem to have that sort of local knowledge. Now, say for the sake of argument they get this cheaper land, do you think it should go to sort of social housing, do you think it should go to their parish regeneration or to the elderly people who are downsizing? Because it is a bit of a bonus in the system, is it not, which could lead to issues.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Our role at Housing is to make sure that the people of this Island are housed adequately and affordably and, you know, kept nice and warm. I am not really bothered who provides the homes at the end of the day, as long as the homes are provided and if it is going to be done through the parishes or through trusts or what have you, but we have to be very careful that we do not put too many rental homes in the market, because that carries a huge costs. You also have to put affordable homes that can stay affordable for people who downsize over a period of time so they can sell their States loan house they bought for £4,000 in 1960, which is now worth £400,000, they can buy a little 2-bed bungalow somewhere on a development and make sure in perpetuity, that house remains for someone over the age of 55 or 60, not first time buyers.

Deputy S. Power:

Can I ask a question about the 55 statistic, as it were? Do you feel with people living longer and living healthier lives, do you think 55 is too young?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

You know, a lot of people at 55, their children have grown up and gone away. I mean, whether it is 55 or 60, I am not too bothered. I do not have a specific figure on that.

Deputy S. Power:

Well, I am 53 and I am not minded to head in that direction.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Well, I mean, 55, as I say, a lot of people, their children have grown up. Look at Roy, he is 55.

Deputy S. Power:

I suppose so.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

He is moving into sheltered accommodation.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

I would not quite describe it that way, but I see your point.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

So I do not have a view on that. All I know is that there are a huge amount of people, and you know yourself that we have people at St. Brelades that keep asking us all the time, they have a 3-bedroom, 4-bedroom house, they would like to downsize. I mean, I am sitting in a 4-bedroom house/5-bedroom house, just me and my missus, and if I could get a little 2-bed bungalow somewhere, I would lease out my place. But I am not going to have a chance to do that, so I am going to split my house up eventually. That is what I will do.

Deputy S. Power:

Why would you not have a chance to do that?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

There is nothing on the market.

Deputy S. Power:

Specifically that?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

If I am going to get £400,000 for my house, I am not going to go out and pay £400,000 for a 2-bed somewhere, you know? A lot of people have no cash, but their pension is in their home, so they will sell their home for £400,000 and buy a little one for £200,000, £250,000; £100,000 to £150,000 in the bank, which they can spread over a period of the remainder of their life and have a very comfortable living.

Deputy S. Power:

But it is this interesting thing this, you know, when you have these older, sometimes single people running around in these big homes with, on the other hand, families that are growing not having enough room, and trying to co-ordinate these things is difficult.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

You see, there is this other issue, elderly people inherit a property for their life enjoyment in Jersey, so the husband dies and the wife will enjoy that home for the rest of her days, you know, rent-free, then it goes to the children or something. Now, those people are stuck in a time-warp. They have no money, they cannot maintain the property, you know? There needs to be some exit clause for somebody along the line to encourage people to move on.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Talking of moving on, Terry, I mean, we have had a good review. Are there any further questions from the panel?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

If Julian needs to come and talk to our officers, there is no problem, come and talk to us any time. In fact, the more assistance you can give us, the better. You know, I know we have a bit of a smile and a joke and all that, but this is very, very serious.

Deputy S. Power:

That is why we are doing this review.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

You know, some nights I do not sleep, worrying about some cases I have seen, I have to tell you. I know, I mean, as I say, I have a mother of 100 and an auntie of 95, and when I see some of the people, the way they are living, you know, and I cannot do anything about it as Housing Minister, it bugs me.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Yes. Okay, well, thank you very much indeed, Terry and Dominique. I think it has been a very --

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Well, I am very happy to come at any time. I have always seen Scrutiny as assisting me, you know?

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Good. Anyway, thank you very much, Terry and Dominique.

Ms. D. Caunce:

Thank you.

Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

It is Friday, so we will put a line under it. End of session.