

4.3 Deputy M. Tadier of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the application of B.R.E.E.A.M. (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) to the design and maintenance of buildings: [1(551)]

Does the Minister's Department have regard for B.R.E.E.A.M. (British Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) when designing new buildings and maintaining existing ones? If so, how many buildings and what percentage of buildings currently owned by the States meet a very good standard or above under B.R.E.E.A.M.?

Deputy E.J. Noel of St. Lawrence (The Minister for Infrastructure):

The B.R.E.E.A.M. new construction assessment applies to new buildings and has been used in the public and private sector in Jersey. The assessment process starts with a feasibility stage and continues through to assessment of the building in operation. B.R.E.E.A.M. has recently introduced technical assessments for buildings for in-use and for refurbishment and fit out. I am not currently aware that these assessments have been used in Jersey in either the public or the private sector at this time. The reference to B.R.E.E.A.M., rating as a percentage of all States buildings, is, therefore, not relevant. The first States building to be assessed under B.R.E.E.A.M. new construction assessment process was the new police headquarters and station, which was assessed as 'Very Good.' The Les Quennevais School will be assessed against B.R.E.E.A.M. new construction assessment criteria and as will the future hospital main building works. The assessment process is quite involved and I cannot do it justice in an oral response. I would be happy to invite the Deputy and any other Members to meet with the relevant officers who can provide a comprehensive briefing on the whole B.R.E.E.A.M. assessment process and its application.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Sir, may I have a supplementary?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, Deputy but ...

Deputy M. Tadier:

I thank the Minister for the answer ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

Deputy, I would not try to deny you a supplementary, it is just that it is important to be prompt, otherwise I assume there is no supplementary and move on to the next question.

4.3.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

That is okay, Sir, my brain probably works slower than yours, so I was just getting my second one ready. **[Approbation]** Some approbation for once coming across the floor. **[Laughter]** The Minister will know that 'Very Good', which has been given to the police station, is the middle standard for B.R.E.E.A.M., as we are going to call it, I think, from now on. There is a 'Pass', a 'Good', 'Very Good', 'Excellent' and 'Outstanding.' While it is great that the first building to have been assessed under these criteria meets a fairly good benchmark, what assurances can he give that in the future all of our new public buildings will be fitted to the highest possible and reasonable environmental standards from now on?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

Very few buildings manage to attain 'Very Good' status, even completely new-design buildings. I am advised that, due to various local conditions, it is going to be very challenging under the new B.R.E.E.A.M. assessment process, which has recently been implemented, for

any buildings on the Island to get to the 'Excellent' or the 'Outstanding' stage. I believe one building has been deemed as 'Excellent' and that is the new office block built by the S.o.J.D.C. (States of Jersey Development Company).

4.3.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

In order to assure Members of his firm commitment to achieving good energy-saving levels in our buildings in the Island, will the Minister, despite his reservations and his mention of difficulties, commit himself to a target level for all new buildings in the Island and refurbished buildings to meet a standard given by B.R.E.E.A.M.?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

I encourage the Deputy and his fellow party members to investigate more B.R.E.E.A.M., as I have been doing over the weekend and I have only just scratched the surface of it. It is a process that is quite complex, it is quite technical and it would be unwise for me to commit future States builds to anything other than where appropriate using B.R.E.E.A.M. to the standards that we can realistically expect to achieve. B.R.E.E.A.M. is quite an expensive process. It is a voluntary process. But we also have the building standards to comply with of a very high level in Jersey and we do endeavour to make sure that any public building is built, firstly, so it is fit for use but, secondly, that it is as efficient in energy terms as possible.

4.3.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Will the Minister commit himself now to return to the Chamber with some realisable realistic targets to be met by the Island in terms of B.R.E.E.A.M. standards?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

No, I will not because the simple fact of it is B.R.E.E.A.M. is a moving target in itself; it has recently changed.

[10:15]

For example, the S.o.J.D.C. building, which I have just mentioned, that achieved the 'Excellent' status; if it was being built now to the same specification it would not achieve the 'Excellent' status because the B.R.E.E.A.M. process is an ongoing process and, therefore, it would not be wise for myself or any other politician to make such a commitment of public funds.

4.3.4 Deputy M. Tadier:

I think we can learn a lot from the States of Jersey Development Company's new office building, namely if you keep it half empty all the time you will only use half the energy, so I think maybe that is something that we can extend across the board. But on a more serious note, whether it is B.R.E.E.A.M. or just generally building our office blocks or our buildings to a decent environmental standard. It is true that there is an expense upfront, it is expensive to do, but there are long-term savings to be made. It seems to me that there is not across-the-board working in departments between the aspirations of Environment and then Property Holdings on the other side, with limited budgets to make sure that we are getting the best value into the future. Will the Minister and the Council of Ministers give an assurance that whenever new buildings are put forward there will be a long-term plan for environmental sustainability and costs to be factored-in and not just to look at the overall construction build but to look at the ongoing build and maintenance costs, including environmental expense?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

The Deputy needs to do his homework. He needs to look at the planning applications that are currently going through ...

Deputy M. Tadier:

Objection. It is because we have been doing our homework this question is being asked, so I do not like that patronising tone from the Minister.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Well the Minister will answer in whatever tone he wishes provided it is in accordance with Standing Orders. So, Minister, answer the question, please.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

I maintain what I said. We have a major planning application currently going through the process in the Deputy's own district and that is the new Les Quennevais School. If the Deputy had done his homework he would see that we are doing exactly what he is asking us to do. We do not have to be asked to do it twice, we are already doing it.