

Stephen Robert Tompkins – 17th May 2021

Scrutiny Matters Feedback - Modular or prefabricated Homes

I do believe the time has come for us to thoroughly overhaul our thinking regarding our methods of construction, from design through to the finished home. Labour and materials are simply too expensive on the Island for us to be able to provide modern high quality homes at an affordable cost to the home buyer. This is not the fault of anyone involved in the process but simply the cost of living in Jersey. I believe the answer lies in using Modular construction techniques used elsewhere throughout the Western world. Yes I'm speaking of Prefabricated homes, I'm fully aware that the concept is usually associated with what was on offer just after World War Two. This is not the case now, Modular factory built homes are available to a very high standard, combining the efficiencies of modern techniques, High Insulation factors, they are quick to build/assemble, offering standards of finish normally only associated with High Quality builders. I further accept these are not perhaps the preferred method of construction that some buyers require for their luxury High end pricewise homes. We are where we are, we don't have NHBC inspections available on Island providing the 10 year guarantees that exist in the UK and similar in many other countries. We must ask ourselves what are we trying to achieve and will this fulfil that need. I believe the answer is yes, the sale cost is established at the outset, we know the land costs and services to provide the location for each. They can be erected far quicker than traditional methods of construction with guarantees supplied by the manufacturer. I further believe both the low cost financing and conveyancing costs should be looked at in order to provide a complete package that is affordable to our desperate first time buyers. Further consideration should also given that these are homes to get our new buyers started in home ownership, not be seen as a method to make money on their home when they move on to bigger or other homes as their lives progress. All resales restricted to new first time buyers only, with any profit limited to replacement cost in the future. In this way we will build up a nucleus of starter homes for future buyers to get started.

For the sake of brevity, I would be happy to discuss this or any further ideas at any meeting you may decide. I accept my ideas may represent a more radical approach than has been used previously and for that reason would make myself available to discuss my ideas.