

## **2.9 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisssier of the Minister for Planning and Environment regarding the commencement of the consultation period for the plans for sheltered/lifelong homes:**

When will the consultation period for the plans for sheltered/lifelong homes commence?

### **Senator F.E. Cohen (The Minister for Planning and Environment):**

I am pleased to inform the Deputy that the consultation paper is nearing completion and will be out for consultation within the next few weeks. This will be an extensive consultation period of 12 weeks. After this, the consultation responses will be taken back to the Council of Ministers and then a report and proposition lodged. I appreciate this matter has taken a long time to reach this stage. However, it is important to recognise that the sites recommended for sheltered housing are those specifically recommended by the Connétable of each Parish. Each new site has required careful analysis to ensure its suitability. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Connétales for the care and time they have spent in bringing forward the most suitable sites within their parishes. The provision of retirement housing project has been managed by my Assistant Minister, the Deputy of Trinity, in close co-operation with the Assistant Minister for Housing, Deputy Hilton. Together they have thoroughly researched the issue of retirement housing. Their work has included researching the design requirements for lifelong homes and in doing so they have sought expert advice from the Joseph Roundtree Foundation. The proposals will include a requirement to build new retirement houses to the highest environmental standards. Measures such as geothermal heating systems are being examined, together with high insulation and taking advantage of passive solar heating. There has been a delay but this time has been very usefully used to ensure further analysis of the recommended sites, improving the specification of the homes and setting out the principles of an appropriate method of applying planning obligations.

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

Would the Planning Minister confirm he now has a very clear picture of what the need is and would he also confirm, Sir, that the solution of using green fields is one that he will only approach with the greatest of caution?

### **Senator F.E. Cohen:**

The demand issue is not a precise science. What I am satisfied with is that the demand for social retirement housing units will exceed those provided by this proposition when it comes forward because we already know the number of sites. I can assure the Deputy that I am entirely satisfied that the numbers being provided are the numbers that are required, but remember that these sites will be built-out over a period of time. Even if we approve this tomorrow morning, these sites would not deliver retirement housing, in some cases, for some years. As far as the rezoning of countryside sites in order to provide these homes is concerned, the rezoning proposition, of course, is a matter for the House to decide. I believe that we have an obligation to house Islanders properly in their property and I believe that it may be that some countryside sites justifiably should be rezoned for the provision of retirement houses but, as I have said, this is a matter that rests with the House.

### **2.9.2 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisssier:**

I am in the unusual position of asking, Sir, have any developers expressed to the Minister the sentiment that because of the delays they are starting to become very worried about whether this project will ever get off the ground?

### **Senator F.E. Cohen:**

Developers will always press and it is not just in relation to sheltered housing. They press in relation to all matters and that is part of the job of the Planning Minister to deal with those pressures and to ensure that we are not pressured to unreasonably give consent for things that, with time, we may wish to carefully consider. This proposition will come forward, and it will come

forward shortly, but it is important to get it right. I do not believe that anyone has lost hope but the final decision rests with this House.