

## **2.8 Senator J.L. Perchard of the Chairman of the Environment Scrutiny Panel regarding the forthcoming Scrutiny Panel visit to Vienna:**

Would the Chairman inform Members who will be travelling on his Panel's proposed trip to Vienna, the purpose of the visit and the estimated cost?

### **Deputy R.C. Duhamel of St. Saviour (Chairman of the Environment Scrutiny Panel):**

Two members of the sub-group of the Environment and Scrutiny Panel for Design of Homes will be travelling on the trip. They will be myself and Deputy Sean Power. We will be accompanied by a Scrutiny Officer and also accompanied by a local architect who is organising the visit. The Planning and Environment Minister will also join us in Vienna on the trip. The purpose of the visit is to take advantage of the strong record of social housing, organisation and planning that has been exhibited by the Viennese Municipality over a number of years, noticeably since 1920s, and to feed-in any results which may be of interest to the Island in terms of 3 particular areas of interest; notably, the Design of Homes Review itself - which is looking at the design of homes; the St. Helier Urban Regeneration Plan; and, indeed, just notified to the House, the Housing Property Plan. The cost of the trip is of the order of £2,500. The air fares are roughly £230 per person and that includes the off-Island cost of getting to the U.K. - to London - before the continental flight takes place. Hotel costs have been kept down to similar proportions and are of the order of £240. There will be additional costs for transport to take people around in Vienna at the time and all costs of that nature additional will be of less than £1,000. So, all in, the intended estimated price is of the order of £2,500 to possibly £3,000.

### **2.8.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Can the Chairman confirm that this particular site has been visited before by a previous Housing Committee and that data on its effectiveness and efficiency is in the public realm and that the justification for such a visit is thin?

### **Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

No, Sir, I cannot do that. In fact, a number of the buildings - if not all of them - are recently built buildings which have not been seen by myself or anybody else who went on a previous trip to Vienna. There are 2 ecological housing estates which the Committee might have time to visit, but in the main the buildings are of new construction and that, indeed, Sir, is one of the reasons why we are going.

### **2.8.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Can the Chairman confirm that data on the effectiveness and efficiency of these particular pilots is publicly available?

### **Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

It is certainly the intention of the Design of Homes Review group to hold a public exhibition and to formally record the event by way of the advice and the assistance that we are receiving from the Scrutiny Officer. It is our firm intention, Sir, to go further than that and to hold a public exhibition of all the interesting points that come out of this trip for, indeed, the public to gauge the usefulness of this particular exercise.

### **2.8.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

The Chairman has not answered the question, Sir. Is data on this particular site, or these particular sites, available to the public already on the internet?

### **Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

I think the questioner must be clear in his question. There are items of information on the internet site, including some selected pictures which any member of the public or, indeed, any Scrutiny member or any Member of the House is freely available to download. That is somewhat different

to walking through these buildings and receiving different points of view and different impressions and, indeed, the opportunities to speak to the architects who will be meeting with us in Vienna are not available on the internet and that, indeed, Sir, is another one of the reasons for taking the time and trouble and effort to go to this particular site.

**2.8.4 Senator F.E. Cohen:**

For the purposes of clarification, can the Chairman of the Scrutiny Panel confirm that he has understood I will be paying my own expenses on the trip to Vienna and will not be using public funds?

**Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

That is the case, Sir, and the Scrutiny and Environment Panel are delighted the Environment and Planning Minister has agreed that there is merit in this particular trip.

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

Will the Chairman confirm that in 1998 or 1999 when, as a Member of the then Housing Committee, he went to Vienna with several other Members and officers, that nothing came out of that trip? It was nothing but a jolly and a waste of time. Will he confirm that he also invited me to join and I have refused to join on that basis?

**Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

Whether or not the Housing Minister chose to join or not on the basis of a jolly is something that only he knows, Sir. But, certainly, the results of the previous housing trip were broadcast to other States' Members and, indeed, would have gone further had it not been for change in the presidency of the particular Housing Committee at the time.

**2.8.6 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Again, as supplementary to the previous answers, will the Chairman inform Members what additional, essential information he expects to gain as a result of this trip?

**Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

Certainly, Sir. Our Members may not be aware, so I need to remind them, that the university education in Austria is somewhat different to mainstream U.K. There exist universities of technology, parts of which have professional chairs for housing and housing economy. Our Members are at liberty to download some interesting papers from the Viennese Housing Research and, indeed Sir, they are currently looking at things of interest to the Island of a similar nature.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Deputy, you have to be rather more concise in your answer, please.

**Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

I will, Sir. There are 5 specific items they are looking at. Affordable housing; new housing in old districts - that is exactly what we are doing under the St. Helier Regeneration Scheme. They are looking at the ecology and new technologies. Indeed, Sir, the new building codes are moving the Islands in the direction of building techniques which are useful in terms of our pilot's changed responsibilities. They are looking at housing and the economy - and we had a statement in the *Jersey Evening Post* the other day by the Economic Development Minister suggesting that the way forward for solving some of our housing problems was to take a closer look at the town and, indeed Sir, this is what they are doing - and they are looking at demographic change and lifestyle changes caused by working from home. Indeed Sir, those are things that all apply equally to Jersey, perhaps on a smaller scale, but the pointers as to potential directions from which the Island's policy can be derived can be gained from the Viennese authorities.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

I think I am going to have to cut you, Deputy. Final supplementary question.

**2.8.7 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Could I ask, of the 5 areas which he has just listed which of those are not available publicly on the net and require a visit in order to ascertain what the facts are?

**Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

I would maintain all of them and I think it is of vital importance to speak to the people involved as well as downloading particular documents which can only be read.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

As the original questioner, one more.

**2.8.8 Senator J.L. Perchard:**

Will the Chairman of the Environment Scrutiny Panel confirm that the Panel has engaged an advisor - an expert advisor - who has already travelled on the Panel's behalf to Vienna to visit the very sites that will be visited by the good Deputy and his colleagues? What, then, is the reason for duplicating the visit? Is it that his advisor has not informed them accurately of what he has seen?

**Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

No, Sir. The advisor has organised a visit and is using his extensive personal contacts in order to guarantee personal representation by various Austrian architects and people working in the housing forum to meet with us on this particular trip. Were we to participate in a trip going to Vienna or any other particular country and try to make the contacts ourselves we would have substantial difficulty because we are not architectural or housing professionals in our own right. That is why the particular...

**Senator J.L. Perchard:**

A point of order. The Chairman failed to answer my question.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Yes. I think the question was, had the advisor already been there?

**Deputy R.C. Duhamel:**

In putting together a programme which delivers, in terms... [**Members: Oh.**] Yes; and one would expect him to do that or otherwise one would be travelling blind and the programme would not be defined.