

**2.13 Deputy T.M. Pitman of St. Helier of the Minister for Housing regarding the viability of constructing sheltered housing for the elderly on the site of Ann Court:**

In the light of recent statements, would the Minister advise the Assembly whether the Housing Department in conjunction with Planning Officers have investigated the viability of constructing sheltered housing for the elderly on the site of Ann Court given its central location and, if so, how many units could potentially be constructed?

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

Officers have been involved in the existing proposals for the creation of 20 new units of lifelong homes along with the proposed new car parking.

**2.13.1 Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

With due respect, that seems rather a flippant answer. It is a very large site and I would think, if 20 is the limit, perhaps the Senator should go and do his homework again. Could he enlarge please?

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

The Deputy asked have the officers been involved in discussions with Planning and I have given him the answer. The only discussions my officers have had with Planning Officers is the creation of 20 new units on the site. Is that not the answer to his question?

**2.13.2 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:**

Given this morning's advance notice by the Minister that there is a need of 400 to 500 and increasingly more numbers of sheltered housing needed on the Island, how are we possibly going to achieve that without building in the green zone? If we take such a large site in town within walking distance of all the facilities, ideal for people of this category, if we are only going to achieve 20 on the site, will he undertake to look at this issue to help formulate a more practical solution to what is going to be ...

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

No, I am not prepared to look at the moment. I am the Minister for Housing and my role in this Assembly is a Member of this Assembly and I have a duty to the whole of this Assembly and this States Assembly have agreed there should be a car park on the Talman site and the gas works. There was a petition, which was taken to this House, for this Assembly to agree to a new town park. That is the policy of this Assembly and, currently, 16,000 people signed that. I was a member of that district as a Deputy for 15 years and I supported that project. Currently, my duty is that this Assembly will debate the future of Ann Court and the car park and the Millennium Park and the decision will arise out of that and if the Assembly decide at that time that it will not be a car park, then I will gladly move forward with plans for redevelopment of that site for sheltered housing but, until such time, I remain a corporate player in this Assembly and I remain in the hands of this House. This House will direct me and I would not be so foolish as to move forward in the meanwhile overriding the wishes that may come out of a decision of this House.

**2.13.3 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:**

A remarkable answer to nothing that I asked. First of all, if I may, just in premising this question, point out that the support for the petition was for a car park on Gas

Place and not Ann Court. It has never been agreed in the Assembly and if the Minister is truly a corporate player, how does he propose to drag the corporation behind him in re-zoning other areas in Jersey for 400 or 500 homes if he can only get 20 out of this potential site? If he is not going to look at it, how can he get our support?

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

How many times do I have to try to argue with the proponents that do not want to lose Ann Court for housing? The issue is that I am very happy that if this Assembly decides they want Ann Court to remain for social housing, I will put plans forward and we will develop it but up until such time as this Assembly have made a decision, I am not prepared to waste money on that sort of issue.

**2.13.4 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

It is a point of clarification but I think the Minister is accidentally in danger of misleading the House when he suggests that this House has supported the petition for car parking on the Ann Street site. That is not the case. The case was the town park and underground parking at the time and that was what was supported. Will the Minister withdraw that statement?

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

No, I will not withdraw it at all. The issue is quite clear. We all understand about the gas works car park and the original proposals of an underground car park. That is not now feasible due to costs. There is a master plan being prepared at the moment by the Minister for Planning and Environment who will look at all the issues in the north-east part of St. Helier. The issue is quite clear that there is no decision being made on what is going to happen to Ann Court; whether it should be a car park to complement the achievement of a new town park on the gas work site or whether it should remain as housing. I await the States decision to be made and I will not go forward with my department wasting taxpayers' money on preparing plans and discussions with officers until I have had a firm decision from this House. It is quite clear. I am a corporate player and the issue is quite clearly that I cannot override the decision of this House and I am not prepared to do so.

**2.13.5 Deputy J.A. Martin:**

The Minister is not listening to the question. It has not been a decision of this House; it was a decision of the Council of Ministers. He is a corporate player. Is the Minister a corporate player or is he the Minister for Housing who told us not less than an hour ago we are going to have a shortage of housing of 400 to 500 and is he going to come back with the Minister for Planning and Environment and ask us to re-sow more green land because none are being built at the moment? Is he a corporate player or does he really seriously want us to take him as the Minister for Housing?

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

How many times do I have to say this to the Member and to one or 2 other Members of the Assembly that seem to think that the issue of the town park will go away. There has been a States decision. The Council of Ministers have promised they will deliver the town park as required by this Assembly and by the demand and request of 16,000 people who signed the petition although, as Deputy Southern says, with an underground car park. At this present time, I concur with the wishes of our Assembly because I was one of those that voted in favour of a town park. In the meanwhile, at

the moment, there are proposals that will be debated. Deputy Martin has a proposal on the table to come forward when the master plan has been completed and the Assembly will decide then when the master plan has been completed in its findings. It may very well be that the master plan will identify other areas for car parking - I am not sure - and if it does, then the Minister for Housing will be pleased to develop the site for sheltered housing, no question, but I can only do it on the basis that this Assembly are the masters of any decision that I am prepared to take.