

4.2 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire of the Minister for Planning and Environment regarding the units of accommodation proposed for St. Helier in the North of Town Master Plan:

May I ask the Minister how many units of accommodation are proposed for St. Helier in the North of Town Master Plan? How many are proposed in the draft Island Plan by category, and how many people will this accommodate in total, please?

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

The North of Town Master Plan should create around 500 high-quality homes of different types on the key large sites, plus 80 to 100 townhouses and apartments at the enlarged Ladies College site. The draft Island Plan seeks to deliver around 2,500 homes in the town urban area, including the 600 from the North of Town Master Plan; around 1,000 from the Waterfront, of which many are already under construction or are approved; 500 from other large sites currently in pre-planning or approved or in planning; leaving the balance from smaller windfall sites which will be developed over the 10 years of the Island Plan.

[10:00]

The number of Islanders to be accommodated in the new housing is hard to quantify, as of course it depends on the configuration of the homes provided, but we estimate around 5,000 as a rough guide.

4.2.1 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

I am sorry, the Minister was not as audible for me this morning as perhaps he normally is. I think he said there was something like 6,000 in total, and yet he said that there is going to be was it 6 ... could I just clarify that first, before I ask the question?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

No, I did not. I said that the total number of homes would be around 2,500 and the number of Islanders accommodated within those homes would be, as a broad approximation, 5,000. I am sorry the Deputy was unable to hear me.

4.2.2 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

The question still is relevant. Is it realistic to think that out of 2,500 homes we are only going to see 5,000 people accommodated - 2 per unit?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

I made the point that the 5,000 was a very broad approximation. It depends on the configuration of the units as they come forward, and it may very well change, and it may very well change substantially.

4.2.3 The Connétable of St. Helier:

Given that the creation of the town park was justified on the existence of around 11,000 people close to the site, will the Minister explain what he is going to do as far as open space provision goes for these 5,000 new residents of this part of St. Helier? Does he believe that there is enough open space on the gasworks site, which was described recently by the consultant planning as very, very tiny?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Unfortunately I am unable to make the site any bigger. The problem of space for those residents of the town is indeed an important issue. It is important that all new homes are properly sized, and that means adequately sized, and I have already increased the minimum size by at least 10 per cent. They need to be provided with appropriate amenity space and there is a reasonable quantum of open space in the town, but of course it would be better if there was more, but we are limited with what there currently is.

4.2.4 Deputy J.A. Martin:

I would like to push the Minister for Planning and Environment on the quantum size of open space. I want to know exactly how much: not a guideline, an absolute statement, because as Deputy Le Claire has said, this is cramming. There are lots of one-bedroom flats living with 2 parents and a child already, so your 5,000 I would say is a very low estimate. It is nearer probably 8,000 to 10,000, and is the Minister going to lay down proper guidelines for open space?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

The guidelines are constrained by the open space available. All I can say is that the quantum for individual residences I think is more than adequate. We are now talking about for a one-bedroom unit over 600 square feet and for a 2-bedroom unit, 750 square feet. Clearly, the more open space available the better, but there are parks and residents of the town will be able to use the new North of Town Millennium Park.

4.2.5 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Really to follow up from Deputy Martin's point: 2,500 homes, and the States are being told 5,000 people. That sends out a message that every home is just for 2 people. It is nonsense. Does the Minister not agree, following on from the next question, if we go down this route of perhaps 8,000, 9,000 or 10,000 people that it can only lead to further social problems of the like that we had in the last question, with young people with nowhere to go, no open space, nothing to do?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

No, I cannot agree with that. Providing the units of accommodation provided are of the highest quality and are a good size - and that means that they are effectively large - then no, I do not agree. Town residents can use the facilities of the town that are available and providing the units they live in are of good size, that we can promote very good town living, and that is the idea of the North of Town Master Plan and the Island Plan. Thank you.

4.2.6 The Deputy of St. John:

Of these homes being built, could we be given the number which are for social and first-time buyers and how many are for the open market? Given the North of Town Master Plan that I have seen recently, which the houses look like Wormwood Scrubs, are Planning inspired to improve on the appearance of that particular site?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

I take exception to the comment that the plans for the gas company site, which I believe the Deputy was referring to, constitute Wormwood Scrubs. They are in fact in the best tradition of classical architecture and had he attended the talk by Professor Adam yesterday, I am sure he would have learnt more on the subject. As regards the affordable housing criteria, that is in the hands of this Assembly, because the new

affordable housing criteria, starting at 12.5 per cent and rising during the period of the plan, is part of the Island Plan; it will depend on whether this Assembly approves the Island Plan. Thank you.

4.2.7 Deputy J.A. Hilton of St. Helier:

I think in the Minister's answer to the first question he talked about 1,000 homes on the Waterfront. I recall that there was possibly a policy a few years ago whereby any large development had to supply a percentage of social rented homes. I may not be correct though - I am hoping the Minister can answer that question for me - but can he tell me whether any consideration is being given to providing social rented homes on the Waterfront?

The Deputy Bailiff:

On the Waterfront? I do not think the Waterfront is part of the North of Town Master Plan. Minister, the first part of the question would you like to answer?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

The affordable housing criteria are not yet in place. It is part of the Island Plan and as I have previously said, it is up to this Assembly whether or not the Assembly approves the proposals which begin at 12.5 per cent.

4.2.8 Deputy J.B. Fox of St. Helier:

With the North of Town Master Plan still having a number of very large areas still yet to be determined by planning, can I seek reassurance that we have a fully qualified officer within the States of Jersey Police for designing-out crime which includes amenity space and relevant conditions for future living of people in what will increasingly be high density, and could he ensure that these developments seek and obtain the written advice of planners to ensure that that advice is adhered to?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

Yes, I can give an assurance that designing-out crime will be part of the consultation of all applications - all large applications - in the north of the town, but of course the determination of applications is always a balance. Designing-out crime should be the most important aspect of that determination.

The Deputy Bailiff:

A final supplementary, Deputy Le Claire?

4.2.9 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Recently I asked the Minister if he could provide the Assembly with a comparison for spaces internationally. Today he spoke of one-bedroom units comprising of 600 square feet and 2-bedroom units comprising of 750 square feet, which are, by his own admission, a 10 per cent increase. Have those figures been calculated yet, and is he prepared to send them out this week so that we can consider the numbers that he is speaking about and the size of space that the average architect is going to have to be living in?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

As I thought the Deputy was aware, we are doing everything we can to compile an answer to his question. It is not an easy question to answer because the comparables

are quite difficult to decipher, but as soon as they are available they will be circulated to the Deputy and to all other Members. Thank you.

The Deputy Bailiff:

We come on to question 3. Deputy Higgins has a question to ask of the Minister for Economic Development. Deputy Higgins.