

3.4 Deputy S. Pitman of the Minister for Housing regarding the cost of a calendar sent to all States tenants:

Can the Minister or the Assistant Minister advise Members how much the calendar sent to all States tenants cost to produce and deliver?

Deputy S. Power of St. Brelade (Assistant Minister for Housing - rapporteur):

I will answer on behalf of the department, as my Minister is not present. Could I ask, I am going to circulate 2 copies of the calendar, one to Constable Mezbourian of St. Lawrence and one perhaps Deputy Hilton might pass over to Deputy Duhamel so that they can understand what we are talking about. Keeping tenants informed and engaged is a major focus for the department and one of the more successful ways of doing that has been the issue of a quarterly tenants' magazine called *Community News*, which is delivered to each and every States tenant's home together with their quarterly rent statement. Last year the department came up with an initiative to replace the fourth quarter issue of *Community News* with a 2010 calendar, which would contain information about the services operated by the department, and if Members will have the chance to look at this over the next half an hour or an hour, it includes emergency numbers on every page. It includes all tenants' dates and all significant Jersey dates, all emergency numbers in Jersey, it is printed in Jersey and it took quite some time to design. The cost of an issue of *Community News*, which was suspended for the calendar, is £1,910.65, which equates to 42 pence per tenant. The normal cost of sending out *Community News* is £2,309.07, which equates to 51 pence per tenant or a combined cost of *Community News* of 93 pence per tenant. The cost of producing the calendar, again which is produced locally, was £4,688.40, which equates to £1.04 per tenant and the cost of posting the calendar was £2,309.07, which equates to 51 pence per tenant. The combined cost of the calendar was £1.55; the cost of *Community News* combined cost was 93 pence. So the increase in cost of distributing the calendar as distinct from the *Community News* was 62 pence per tenant.

3.4.1 Deputy S. Pitman:

To my understanding I calculated that to produce and deliver the calendar cost around £8,000. Does the Assistant Minister not think that there is indeed a cheaper way of getting this information across? Firstly there are phone numbers in the telephone book on the front pages and, secondly, in the *Community News* issues that go to tenants.

Deputy S. Power:

I am not quite sure how to answer that. I do not know how Deputy Shona Pitman has researched the cost of producing a calendar printed in Jersey. These are the actual costs from the printer and from Jersey Post. It has come out at £1.55, that includes £1.04 for the production of the calendar and 51 pence to distribute it. Unless the Deputy can show me how she gets £8,000, these are the actual costs.

3.4.2 The Deputy of St. John:

Would the Assistant Minister confirm that his Minister is away on holiday at a time when we should be in the House, and on top of that does he consider this good value of taxpayers' money to produce a calendar and 3 other publications in the course of the year in times of recession?

Deputy S. Power:

Yes, I do. I regard it as absolutely essential that we keep our tenants informed, that they know how to engage with the department, that they understand some of the ... There is a whole page on income support, there is a whole page on how getting involved..., there is a whole page on the tenants' forum, there is a whole page on emergencies, there is a whole page on high rise and on tenants' conferences, and I think it is an extremely good value way of engaging with 4,600 households or 13,000 tenants. I visited a property yesterday at the low rise at La Collette with Deputy Trevor Pitman and I was very pleased to see in the tenant's living room, one of the calendars hanging up with hand written notes in it. So, I think it is a very cost effective way of engaging with our clients.

3.4.3 Deputy S. Pitman:

Could the Assistant Minister say that this calendar will be produced next year and really was it necessary to provide all this information with nice glossy pictures of himself and the Minister?

Deputy S. Power:

I cannot answer that in January 2010. Deputy Gorst is waving round a photograph of 2 dubious looking characters on the front of the calendar. I could not possibly comment on that but I can say that this calendar was largely modelled on calendars of housing associations and council housing, right from Solihull in the Midlands to Bristol, to Essex and it is essentially a copy of what a lot of other housings associations or county councils are doing and I think it is a very useful tool.