

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING
BY DEPUTY J.A.N. LE FONDRÉ OF ST. LAWRENCE)
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 20th JUNE 2011**

Question

Could the Housing Minister provide –

- (a) the total built area of residential properties in the Housing Department's portfolio and what that represents as a proportion of the total area of property owned by the States;
- (b) the total land area of property in the Housing Department's portfolio;
- (c) the current density of housing estates administered by the Housing Department in terms of both habitable rooms per acre and dwellings per hectare?

Answer

I can only conclude from these questions that the Deputy is trying to demonstrate that if we simply cleared all our housing sites and redeveloped them at much higher densities we would be able to provide all the homes that we need without the need to rezone anymore land. Despite the fact that I do not believe this to be true, such a utopian outcome ignores the fact that the 4517 homes which make up the social housing stock are occupied by real people who are in need of secure homes right now. Whilst I am in favour of appropriate intensification of existing sites and have a number of schemes in the department's forward programme which will deliver additional homes in this way, we need to be careful that in our attempt to maximise the output of our existing social housing assets we don't lose sight of the human aspects. All too often we do. It feels at times as if people have become pieces on a chess board, to be moved at the whim of others, with no say as to their future and no thought as to the consequences. I think many have had enough of being part of some fanciful, grandiose building scheme, which produces much hot air and no action

The information requested by the Deputy is not readily available and I do not intend to commission a very significant and costly exercise to compile it without very good reason.

What I am able to say with some confidence is that the Housing Department administers some 4,517 homes of which:-

321 are bedsits
1,644 are 1 bedroom flats
1,116 are 2 bedroom flats
92 are 3 bedroom flats
2 are 4 bedroom flats
69 are 1 bedroom houses or bungalows
395 are 2 bedroom houses or bungalows
750 are 3 bedroom houses or bungalows
119 are 4 bedroom houses or bungalows
7 are 5 bedroom houses or bungalows
2 are 6 bedroom houses or bungalows

These properties provide homes for approximately 13,000 of our population.

Given that it is the Department's role to provide and manage homes for those in need I believe that these are far more meaningful statistics.

It might also be timely to comment on staff numbers. The Housing Department has some 40 staff. As part of the Housing Transformation Project, we are looking at Housing Associations/Arms length organisations across the UK. It is evident, even discounting the employment of direct labour that our Housing Department is half, if not a third in size, to comparable organisations in the UK. We should applaud that so very much is done with so few. Sadly, we do not seem able to be positive about any aspect of our Public Services right now.