

2.4 Deputy J.A. Martin of the Minister for Housing regarding the development of 150 two-bedroom units on the Summerland and Ambulance site.

How did the Minister determine that some 150 2-bedroom units could be built on the Summerland and Ambulance site, as stated in his comments on P.92/2012 Police Station Relocation: review of decision, and on what were these calculations based?

Deputy A.K.F. Green of St. Helier (The Minister for Housing):

The simple answer is that I did not calculate it. I relied on expert advice from the Planning Department and that advice is to be found in the Supplementary Planning Guidance document, page 9, that was issued by the Minister for Planning and Environment to help the Assembly. The guidance document said that the preliminary block plans have indicated for a development providing up to 150 2-bedroom units of accommodation.

2.4.1 Deputy J.A. Martin:

Does the Minister not think when he is issuing comments in the name of the Minister for Housing that he should absolutely make sure that they are aspirational? They are not his comments and they could mislead the House - bullet point 3 - and then comments does not say what he has just said. I asked where he got the comments from and why he produced them.

Deputy A.K.F. Green:

I have just given the answer to the Member. I got the comments from the Supplementary Planning Guidance and people would not expect me, as Minister for Housing, to be the expert on planning. That is why we have a Planning Department. That is why we have architects. That is why we have planners and the Minister will go to the best source of advice, and that is what I did.

2.4.2 Deputy J.H. Young of St. Brelade:

Would the Minister advise the Assembly whether he was advised of what density of development that scale of units involves and whether he is satisfied that that is a satisfactory density for that site?

Deputy A.K.F. Green:

I was not advised on the density. However, I do know that various other schemes have been looked at which could yield 170 units but at the moment the advice I am getting is 150. I am always looking for opportunities to increase density while not impacting on the quality of life but we are very much at the beginning stage. I took the conservative view of 150 being the minimum number that that site could yield.

2.4.3 The Connétable of St. Helier:

Does the Minister agree with me that generous allowance must be made in the planning for these sites for such things as open space, parking, pedestrian and cycle routes, bus stops and bus shelters and community facilities?

Deputy A.K.F. Green:

I think it is yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

2.4.4 Deputy G.P. Southern:

The Minister says that we are in the early stage of this. It was in his full business case for the Housing Transformation Plan. I note on appendix B there are no costings and no numbers at all attached to the indicators in appendix B for the Summerland site.

Deputy A.K.F. Green:

Members will know that the Summerland site will not be available for a number of years yet. The Summerland site depends on the building of a new police station, which we debated at the last Assembly, which has to go now through the planning process and then out to tender and then be built. There is ample time to be planning what it is going to cost and what will go on that site. What I will say to Deputy Southern though is that if the Housing Transformation Programme is accepted by this Assembly, it will put my department in a position where on a site by site basis, independent of States financing, providing the rents pay the mortgage, we will be able to borrow any sum of money that stacks up in the business case, so site by site we will do that. This is a fantastic, exciting opportunity to really do something about the shortage of housing in this Island.

2.4.5 Deputy J.A. Martin:

I do not know why we are here because the Housing Transformation Plan has not been passed by this Assembly and all these comments and everything else that the Minister for Housing and Treasury are saying should at least come to this House and maybe it will get passed. The Minister said he relies on expert advice. The experts who are managing this land are Property Holdings. Property Holdings' comments say there is no budget, no plans and they do not know what is going on there, so how can the Minister for Housing, I still say, and I need to find out which department misled the House because it is either Housing backed up by Treasury, but somebody misled this House in a very, very important debate and I need to find out who it is. Now, is the Minister for Housing sticking to his comments that he made on 5th March about P.92/2012?

Deputy A.K.F. Green:

Yes, I am sticking to my comments because the site exists. We can get at least 150 units on there. I have explained how we will finance it. I have also explained that we are probably 5 or 6 years off doing that and with the comment about the Housing Transformation Programme, can I remind the Deputy, P.53/2012, we will be debating this fairly soon.