

22.04.25

**4 Deputy G.J. Truscott of St. Brelade of the Minister for Housing and Communities regarding balcony floor plates in Les Quennevais flats (OQ.73/2022)**

Further to the Government-backed project to repair the balcony floor plates in the Les Quennevais Park flats, will the Minister provide a progress report and an indication of when the works will be completed?

**Deputy R. Labey of St. Helier (The Minister for Housing and Communities):**

Members will remember approving a loan scheme to assist some of the owners of these apartments with advancing the money for the much-needed repairs, but the States is not involved with the administration of the repair contracts. That is down to the property management agency. The public is still the co-owner of some of the apartments so Property Holdings take an interest and are informed by the property management company of how the works are progressing. Deputy Truscott might have seen the scaffolding having gone up on block A, which is the block they are going to start with. There are 8 blocks in all. Survey work is being undertaken now. I do not think the physical construction and replacement of the balconies has begun yet, but when that does begin systematically they will go through the 8 blocks, A to H, and the works will take 2 years. I did speak to the property management agency last night when I got in and asked if they were able to retain the contractor that they had in place when we were having the debate about the loan scheme, and they were able to do that, which is good news. I also asked if the loan scheme that Members approved ... how that had helped and the answer was it had helped enormously. That is why they were able to progress. I hope that satisfies the Deputy.

**3.4.1 Deputy G.J. Truscott:**

I thank the Minister for his answer. I am sure the Minister is aware that a number of local building projects have been severely impacted by inflation. Could the Minister confirm that this project is expected to be delivered within the originally agreed price?

**Deputy R. Labey:**

I do not have information on that but I do not have information to the contrary either. The works were scheduled to begin block A mid-October 2021 to mid-February 2022, with the final block being mid-July 2023 to mid-November 2023. We know that that schedule has been delayed because it is quite hard to get construction work and builders in. You have to take your place in the queue. So I believe that the delay is nothing more sinister than that.

**3.4.2 Deputy M. Tadier:**

Can I thank my fellow Deputy for raising this issue? It is important to the 96 flats that are there, even if they do not all have balconies. Could the Minister give us an update - preferably now but if he does not have the information could he circulate it - about the uptake of the loan scheme, about how many people have asked for a loan and what the nature of the loan was, whether it was capital repayment or interest only? I think that would be really helpful in knowing some of the circumstances that these individuals are in. Because some have told us, as he knows prior to the debate, that they would have trouble paying back the loans.

**Deputy R. Labey:**

Yes, I can get the information for the Deputy. I think that is better done privately and I will email it to him.

#### **3.4.3 Deputy M. Tadier:**

It does not need to be done privately. I think this is public money which is being given. I do not think there is any secrecy about the uptake. It would be good for all States Members I think to know what the uptake of the loan is. We do not need any private details of any of the individuals. Is that okay with the Minister?

#### **Deputy R. Labey:**

Yes, it is. I do understand from my conversation last night that the loans are all in place, the required loans are in place, but I will get the breakdown for the Deputy.

#### **3.4.4 Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade:**

Walking around the area on Friday, I noticed that there was a significant amount of builders' equipment laid out in one of the blocks. Will the Minister agree that it is all very well for the work to be done for the flats that need it, but for those who do not need it the outlook is not very aesthetic? Would he agree that he will put pressure on the contractors to move the job on as quickly as possible?

#### **Deputy R. Labey:**

Well, I think that is a job for the Minister for Infrastructure, who is in the Chamber and listening.

#### **The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Thank you. I will take that up with the Minister for Infrastructure.

[10:15]

#### **3.4.5 Deputy G.J. Truscott:**

If the cost of the project due to inflation has risen, could the Minister indicate which party would be expected to absorb the additional cost involved, the taxpayer or the flat owners?

#### **Deputy R. Labey:**

I do not have that information. That is a question for Treasury or Infrastructure. We can find that out for the Deputy.