



Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny

Panel

Quarterly Hearing

Witness: The Minister for Children and Housing

Tuesday, 3rd December 2019

Panel:

Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade (Chair)

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. Lawrence

Connétable J.E. Le Maistre of Grouville

Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier

Witnesses:

Senator S.Y. Mézec, The Minister for Children and Housing

Mr. R. Jouault, Assistant Director, Social Policy

Mr. J. Norris, Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population

Mr. A. Scate, Group Director for Regulation, Growth, Housing and Environment

Ms. M. Claire, Private Secretary to the Minister for Children and Housing

[10:27]

Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade (Chair):

Welcome to the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel quarterly hearing with the Minister for Children and Housing. For the record, I will just go around the table and introduce ourselves.

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. Lawrence:

Deputy Kirsten Morel, member of the panel.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Constable Mike Jackson, Chair of the panel.

Connétable J.E. Le Maistre of Grouville:

John Le Maistre, Constable of Grouville.

Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier:

Inna Gardiner, Deputy of St. Helier, member of the panel.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Senator Sam Mézec, Minister for Housing.

Assistant Director, Social Policy:

Richard Jouault, Assistant Director for Social Policy.

Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

Jack Norris, Policy Principal.

Group Director for Regulation, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Andy Scate, Group Director for Regulation.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

At the back?

Private Secretary to the Minister for Children and Housing:

Marie Claire, Private Secretary to the Minister for Children and Housing.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Welcome. I am going to go straight into the Affordable Housing Gateway and review of access, which is a point we are keen to follow up on. So following the publication of the report on the independent review of access to social housing in Jersey in June and in light of your subsequent ministerial response published last week, can you advise what stakeholder engagement was undertaken during the time between Government and social housing providers to discuss and consider the report and its recommendations?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

We were in contact with social housing providers and they provided me responses based on what they had seen in that initial report, what they thought was good, what perhaps was not necessarily

as relevant for them and I received correspondence from them and considered it when putting my response to that report together.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Specifically in terms of recommendation 3, to introduce a revised banding system for the gateway, what stakeholder engagement are you undertaking prior to that implementation?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

So as in how we move forward from now?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

I have only just published my response to that initial report, so it is not imminent in a particularly short period of time that that banding system will be revised, but in the process of coming up with the specifics of what new bands may look like, what criteria an individual will have to fit to be put in a particular banding, we will of course speak with the social housing providers because they have a day-to-day engagement with tenants and understand their needs and often unique circumstances particularly well. We will also have to be fully engaged with those who work in the housing gateway, as they can be the front door to that, so they are aware of lots of these issues as well.

[10:30]

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Will there be support and information available to applicants of the gateway to explain this and will it dovetail into the services being provided for the proposed options service in terms of awareness and providing information? I suppose the question is how are you going to inform the applicants?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Yes, so there is frankly a lot that we need to do to improve people's experience going through that gateway system. It is a good system and works well at what it is trying to do right now, but there is some stuff that probably ought to have been done a long time ago, so publishing a guide to how the gateway works, how the founding criteria works is something that I am just surprised nobody has ever done before, frankly. You go on the Government website and try to look at it, and I did it a couple of weeks ago just to see what it was like, and it is not particularly helpful. If you are an individual going through it, it is quite easy to see how some people can be confused. So we need to put information together in a way that will be understandable for applicants. We know what the

rules are, but if we just publish them as they are, they will probably still be as incomprehensible to people, so it has got to be put in an easy to understand way. But at the same time, when we put a housing options service together, that can potentially be a physical front door that people can go through, so if they are somebody who is not necessarily able to do it by themselves online or whatever who does need to sit down next to someone and say: "Right, my circumstances are ... I am not sure if I tick this box or not. Can you help me go through that?" and that can be a place where people can go through that and get active support as opposed to a few words of advice.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Under the new banding system, where do the people who want affordable to buy homes fit in? Because they were in a band of their own.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

They are band 5 at the moment. I think the view is to separate those out, because what is currently band 5, it is weird, because if you think you are in band 5, it makes it sound like you are low priority, but in actual fact what you are receiving is totally different to what the rest of the gateway is for, so separating it out I think makes sense there. You are on that waiting list for a completely different purpose, so you can own your home at the end of it, not because you are in need of social rental, whether that is because you have got health needs that necessitate that or because you are at risk of homelessness or whatever. Because they are different, it makes sense to keep them apart.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Will there be any transitional arrangements? Will there be a revised banding? What will it mean for those on 1 to 5 at the moment? Will they be reassessed under the 1 to 3 arrangements?

Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

I think that if you are on the waiting list for certain specific reasons, obviously you have come on the basis ... and I do not foresee there being changes unless the circumstances of the individual change. But that is something that has to be worked through as we do the policy development around it, how there is a transitional arrangement so that it continues to be people who had the expectation that they are going to get a house or a property and then suddenly we are moving the goalposts, that is not necessarily going to be fair, so I think that those are things we have to consider as we progress with the work early next year.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Have you got a plan as to how you might communicate that to them? Because that may not go down terribly well in a lot of cases.

Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

As I say, I think that that would be part of the work, making sure that the transitional arrangements are clear and that people understand how the changes might affect them.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Can I just ask, going back to you talked about kind of access to the information itself and you are looking at improving it, are you sitting down ... not you, but is somebody is sitting down within the department and kind of working with the end user to see how the current journey is on the website at the moment, in the sense of having people who use the website to show them where the problems are, if you know what I mean, rather than just doing it purely within the department and not having any user information?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Sure. I do not know for definite if that has taken place or not. I do not think there would be too much harm in doing that, but the point ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

There would be a lot of good, rather than anything ...

The Minister for Children and Housing:

There is a difficulty with it though in that often people's circumstances are so unique they may well be the only person that has a particular problem with how the system works.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

But the normal way to design websites, any website - it could be for a game, it could be for information, it could be anything - is to work with the users to make sure the user gets the best experience.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

No, I fully accept that it is the right thing to do. It is just that the point I am making is that it will be difficult to capture every single type of experience going through that.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

That is not what I am suggesting. I am suggesting we ...

The Minister for Children and Housing:

I am trying to be helpful by offering a caveat as to why it is a good idea, but will not necessarily help fix everything.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

It is not intended to.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I am in the process with one of my constituents and I have helped her to register. Basically I would sit and help her to register online and it was not that bad, I have to be honest. It was pretty clear questions. She did not know all the answers; it has gone through. The second good point, that she got an appointment and response really quickly: "Come and see us." The third point, I am wondering what is the policy, because basically at the meeting she has been told: "Oh, you are taking this one or you are losing the band" without really going into the details of why, for example, the first offered accommodation may be not suitable for her for various reasons. Is it any policy that you are moving people from the band or downgrading the band because they did not accept the first property?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

That does happen, that people get downgraded if they are not making expressions of interest for homes that are suitable. If it is the case that people are being downgraded because they are not expressing interest in properties that are unsuitable, then a dialogue needs to be had with that individual to let it be known on the system why those properties were unsuitable, because purely from a point of fairness, it is not right for people who are in band 1, who are in most urgent need, to have a choice of homes that are suitable to their needs and to keep saying no to all of them. If they are saying no, you start to wonder if they ought to be in band 2 rather than band 1. But if it is the case that the system says these homes are suitable but in reality the homes are not suitable, it means you need to have that conversation and have that put on the system, why these homes were unsuitable. It has been the case in the past that I have been aware of people who have been at risk of being put down a band and we have stepped in to say: "No, that person has to stay in that band because of their situation."

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Can you please inform us the process? Because that particular case, she does not know what the process is and I am not sure what the process is.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

It should be done internally by the gateway themselves if you go to them with the information that demonstrates why those homes were unsuitable. They should be able to deal with that, but in the last instance you can come to me and we can have that conversation, as we do do that frequently.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The report suggested by quarter 4, 2019 a social housing forum would be established. Are we close to that?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

I do not think so.

Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

In terms of getting stakeholders together and ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The recommendation said that - recommendation 14 - a social housing forum would be established.

Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

In terms of the providers, there would be ongoing dialogue and we will be in the process of establishing that forum, yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

"In the process of"? Timescale?

Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

Getting the trust together, getting Andium Homes together to take it forwards. For instance, we do have a homelessness cluster at the moment where all of the groups are represented. That is not specifically just for social housing providers, but equally to get them together on a regular basis to discuss operational issues. That is something that does happen and we are taking that forward.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Who runs the gateway then, your department?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

It is Social Security. That is where it is housed, but obviously we go straight to them when we need to engage with them.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So the 90 per cent market rent policy, what stage are you at with regard to reviewing it? I know you have expressed concerns in the past.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

As things stand, I believe I am meant to be getting an update from officers by the end of the year. They have been looking at what the implications are for particular types of change, what would be feasible without changing too much, or if things are more drastic, what would have to change alongside that. I have not had that update now, but officers in policy and Treasury have been looking at what different options could look like and what their implications would be.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes, the consequential effects.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Yes, indeed, because there is a bottom line that has got to be met at the end of this. There is a return that Andium provides to the Treasury and if you walked into Andium and simply said: "Right, you are lowering your rents" then that jeopardises the viability of a whole host of other projects that they are working on, so there has got to be options looked at that help us understand exactly what the implications will be.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Do we know where the level is in the sense of how much Andium needs you to bring in in order to deliver ... in order to be able to continue to invest in their own ... where is their profit, basically?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

There is not. They ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

No, in the sense of ... because in terms of profit, profits are going to be invested in the business. That is essentially what is happening here.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Yes, exactly.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

So profits are probably ... well, it is the right word, to be honest. So do we know where that level is, like could they bring their rents down and still be generating enough? Have you sat down with them and worked out what that level is or should be?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

I would say that they probably could not do that on the basis that they are involved in pursuing a whole host of schemes. They want to be able to do more and would have the capacity to do more

if they had the money at their disposal to do that. They are giving £30 million back to the Government. If the Government said: "Right, we are not going to take that £30 million, we are going to take less than that" then that would change things, but as far as I am concerned, pushing ahead with the projects that they are working on is non-negotiable. I would not want to see a reduction in that.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Is that £30 million a kind of guaranteed level, they have to give £30 million back at the end of the year?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Yes.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

It cannot be reduced under the current circumstances?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

We could find a way of doing that if we chose to, but then we would have to say how does that affect other Government finances, so that £30 million comes back to us and how does that affect everything else? That £30 million is a choice we can make, we just have to know what the alternative is and what we have got to do to meet that.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Before Andium was created, how much was sent back to the Government from the organisation that ran the Housing Department?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Good question. I will not know the exact number for that. I do not know if any of the officers do, but I remember from that point there being a perception that a lot was coming back to Treasury and then not a lot was going back into supporting housing, which was a real problem.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

So I could put the question the other way around: how much more is being reinvested now compared to the Housing Department?

Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

In terms of how it was previously, the reason for setting Andium up was that it did not have the ... the rents and everything had to go back centrally to Treasury. Setting Andium up, they had the control over their own finances, so ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

That is right. No, I appreciate that, but what are the figures? How much did Treasury give back in those days to be invested in housing and how much is, by Andium, going back into housing?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

If we do not know that, we will have to get you those figures, but it is an interesting question, yes.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Did you not last year persuade Andium to keep their rents lower than the 90 per cent?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

No. What we did is we agreed to cap potential future rent increases. There are still lots of homes which are not being rented out at 90 per cent because they have been rented out to their current tenants for a long time and it would be unfair to just come overnight and jack rents up, so there had been a slow process of getting them up to that point, which was based on R.P.I. (Retail Price Index) plus a bit extra and last year R.P.I. was higher than people had anticipated it. We looked at it and thought that by adopting the same formula and imposing that rent increase on those people, it was going to be difficult for some of those tenants to handle, so we froze the amount by which rents can go up.

The Connétable of Grouville:

That was those specific people, but generally speaking Andium ...

The Minister for Children and Housing:

That was for everyone.

The Connétable of Grouville:

So you did cap it lower than the 90 per cent then?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

No, we are talking about rent increases, so it is the journey to 90 per cent and people who are already at 90 per cent.

[10:45]

The Connétable of Grouville:

So if they are already at 90 per cent ...

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Yes, right. I see what you mean, yes.

The Connétable of Grouville:

... you cap their increase, so they were no longer at 90 per cent?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Yes. Well, they would be so close to 90 per cent it would make no odds, yes, 89.9 per cent recurring or whatever, but yes.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Because if you did that for a few years, you would be compromising the Andium model.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Yes, potentially, in which case we would have to re-evaluate it, yes.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Will there be a freeze this year, or this year you would go with the higher price?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

I believe it comes below what that cap would be, so it is what would have happened previously, but R.P.I. is lower so it is not as bad, yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So it goes back, it reaffirms the point you were making earlier in terms of the 90 per cent review will have an effect potentially on the financial viability of Andium and there could be consequences to that.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Sure. Yes, indeed, and that is why, as Minister, I am determined that whatever alternative is considered, it must not be one which jeopardises the viability of the schemes that Andium is involved in because the effect of increasing supply in both social housing and their affordable purchase schemes as well is so important, given the inflation that there is in the private sector for housing and

having a public option which attempts to have a stabilising effect is so important. So balancing that is difficult, but I do not want to see a reduction in Andium being able to deliver more homes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just picking up on the - shall we say, I suppose - turmoil that Andium have found themselves in of late, do you think that is compromising the ability for you to deliver the review on the 90 per cent market policy rate?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

I have certainly not felt that. I am sort of in a fortunate position in that turmoil, which I presume you are referring to has been a discussion between Treasury, who is responsible for governance with Andium, so for policy I have been able to continue basically business as usual, which has been very good, yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So has any consideration been given as to what the impact might be on other housing providers? We have spoken about Andium, but obviously there are other providers. Is there any communication with them with regard to impact that the change of policy might have in terms of servicing existing loan requirements, on delivering new homes?

Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

We have had a discussion now on the same position, that the 90 per cent makes schemes viable for them. That is their finance model, that is how they service loans and any changes will have implications for their ability to fund new projects and, as I say, to service their existing lending, so that as we review the policy that their views are being taken into account as well.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Similarly, when assessing the present position and the effect of the policy on tenants as well as the impact any changes might have, will you be doing this with the social housing tenants as well as the Andium tenants? Does that cover everybody? Andium is not separated out in any way from the others, is it, they are all treated the same?

Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

The tenants?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes.

Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

In terms of the rents they pay or ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes.

Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

Yes. I mean, the policy is that social housing providers may charge up to 90 per cent of rent. Not all the trusts choose to charge 90 per cent, it depends on the circumstances of the trust. They might not feel that they need to.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Are you aware of each trust's methodology in achieving that?

Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

Yes. They will seek a valuation of the property, what they think is sustainable funding for them, so they might think that if at certain values they can achieve 80 per cent of market rent, they will do that, but the policy is up to 90 per cent. So they will seek an independent surveyor's valuation and they will make a determination of what the rental value for that is at whichever level they choose, but it is for the trust to choose what they think is viable for them.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Can I just ask, as Minister, do you ... because obviously it is quite unusual for an organisation to be given a target and say: "You can charge up to that level." Another way to do it might be ... and I am asking basically have you ever sat down with Andium and asked them to do this exercise? It would be to say: "Right, what are your costs? What are your current incomes? How much do you need to be able to invest and to service the debt?" and kind of look at that together and see that maybe that comes to ... they could charge 70 per cent or they could charge 75 per cent. What I am saying is you are effectively giving Andium a target to hit. Have you ever sat down and said to them: "Could you do it for less? Could you move to lower than the 90 per cent level" by kind of working through their costs and their expenses and so on?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

I do not know if the question has been termed in that way.

Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

That is the purpose of the ongoing discussion we are having: "What level of rent is viable for you as an organisation? Can you move to 80 per cent or could you move to 80 per cent? What could you

move to in terms of your existing debts, the repayment to the Treasury?" That is part of the ongoing discussion that we are having with them, what is a viable level.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

But it is also looking at what their tenants' situations are, because a large proportion of their tenants get all of their income from income support and therefore if rent fluctuates, income support covers it, whichever way it goes, but then there are also people living in those homes who do not get all of their income from income support. Some of it might be other benefits, whether it is sickness benefit or something like that.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

There are plenty of working people in those homes.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

There are plenty of working people as well. There are also, because of legacy tenancies, quite possibly people living in these homes who, because of the fact they like their home and the security they have got in their tenancy, are probably now earning above the threshold who would be perfectly viable living in the private sector if they wanted to. It is about trying to get the data that establishes the demographics of their tenants and where their tenants live and what they could afford and what they are struggling to afford, because not everybody is in the same position there.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Absolutely.

The Connétable of Grouville:

It would be unfair if somebody who is on income support and renting in the private sector was paying 100 per cent effectively of market rent and then suddenly was subsidised in a similar situation, but happened to be in social housing paying 70 per cent. It would seem to me that that would be pretty unfair.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

I would agree with that. There are lots of other unfairnesses there. I am routinely hearing from people who claim income support and would be happy renting in the private sector, but cannot find landlords who are not discriminating essentially against income support claimants, saying that they do not want tenants who are claiming income support. That is something we have got to think about.

The Connétable of Grouville:

How would they know?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

I assume because they told them.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

The issue is they tell them, yes.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Because you get paid by Social Security. As a landlord, you get paid by Social Security.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Yes, at that point, then the rent would come to you. But it is also the case that income support is subsidising lots of private sector tenancies as it is. I think it is about £10 million or something like that. We can double-check that figure. There is a lot of income support that is going out that way.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Social Security pay the rent then directly?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Yes.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Do they pay rates as well?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Parish rates? I do not think so, no.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

There has been debate about that because there has been difficulty, I think particularly in St. Helier and St. Saviour, with the rates payments made.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

At the same time, if there are people who are now above the threshold and can easily rent private accommodation, they stay in cheap accommodation that can be available for the people who are entitled for this cheaper accommodation, and as a Government we would pay less for private accommodation that they are staying in. Kind of the question is when the people are not entitled, how long they will continue to use cheap accommodation when they can afford private market and vice versa?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

There is a question of fairness there about people who, for perfectly decent reasons - they might have had job progression or that sort of thing - are now getting a sort of subsidy for cheaper housing and that arguably that subsidy ought to be going to people who are more needy. I am not saying the solution to that is to kick people out of their homes, that is not the sort of thing that I would like to see, but you can look at how rent policy works there to say: "Because your means are now substantially greater than when you first entered the situation, if you want to carry on living there, that is fine" but there should be a discussion about the rental arrangement, so somebody else can benefit somewhere else rather than an indirect subsidy being used for that purpose.

The Connétable of Grouville:

So are you saying somebody in that circumstance should perhaps pay 100 per cent then?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

It is a discussion to be had. There is an argument that says rather than just looking at a percentage of the market rate, having a system that is also tied to earnings as well. That could be a way of saying to people ... and everything is still on the table at this point, so this may not necessarily happen, but there is an argument that says if you are able to pay a market rate and you were paying a market rate, that would then enable Andium to have some income that it could use to deliver for other people elsewhere, so you are not being treated unfairly then, you are paying what is a fair rent for your means, you are not being kicked out of the place that you consider your home and where all your happy memories are and all of that. So that is a potential way of helping with the rent policy, but all things are still on the table at this point.

Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

It is an interesting point, because it kind of comes down to the fundamental question of what your social housing is for. Is social housing just an ambulance service for people who are in serious housing need? Now, in Jersey we have a long waiting list of households, but when supply comes online that will reduce and you can have these discussions about is it providing long-term security for people who might never be able to afford a home? Should they be able to rent from Andium Homes or the housing trusts to give them that long-term security that they might not have in the private sector? You can start having those sorts of policy questions about what the role of the social housing sector is, what the role of the private sector is, what is the role of home ownership, but yes, it is difficult when you have got about 900 people waiting on the waiting list.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

That leads us nicely into the Housing Policy Development Board.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Sorry, before we go there, I just wanted to know more about the methodology.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Absolutely. Carry on, yes.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

With regard to the methodology of the 90 per cent market rate, how is that calculated?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

They have their internal procedure.

Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

The evaluation is from an independent surveyor. They will provide what they think the market value is and then that will be then framed at 90 per cent of the market rate.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

These independent surveyors, how are they chosen?

Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

It is for the housing provider to determine. They need to be qualified through the Chartered Institute of Housing.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

As the Housing Department, how do you set the market rate yourselves? How do you decide upon the market rate?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

We do not.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Who does?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

The market.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

No, but how do you decide? Yes, but the market is not telling you: "Hello, it is £1,000 a month." You have to satisfy yourselves where the market rate is because you can go to one flat and it is X, go to another flat and it is Y. So how do you decide upon what the market rate is?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

I do not. There are measures that, as Jack has mentioned, social housing providers can use to work out what it is or what it can be justified as being. If you want to ask me to defend how we work out what the market rate is, you cannot ask me to do that, because ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I am asking you to tell me how it is worked out, not to defend it, to explain it.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

I would not defend it if you did ask me to, but I do not do it. It is not for me to do. There is a science behind it. I do not know if it is particularly credible or not.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

But what you are suggesting is each social housing provider works out its own market rate. That is what I am thinking of.

Assistant Director, Social Policy:

No, each social housing provider will use - certainly as a starting value - qualified surveyors to establish the market rate for a property. I think, Jack, that is right for the other ones as well, is it not?

Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

Yes.

Assistant Director, Social Policy:

They are using qualified professionals who know the square footage of a building, its location, its type and therefore what its market rent will be.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

But what you are telling me is that it is effectively, rather than a market rate, an independent surveyor's view of the market rate?

Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

Yes, correct.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

So each independent surveyor could have a different view of that market rate.

Assistant Director, Social Policy:

They might have a slightly different view. I mean, we meet them on a quarterly basis at the housing price index meeting and they discuss ... there are a variety of factors that are at play, not just the type and size of the building, but also what the market is doing and what the supply and demand of it is in that particular area of which price ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

So what happens at this housing price index discussion?

Assistant Director, Social Policy:

At that point, Statistics Jersey will discuss with the various estate agencies/surveyors about what has happened in the last quarter and they will give their views also about what they have experienced in terms of what supply is like in those particular markets. That is quite interesting.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

How many estate agents and surveyors are invited to this discussion?

Assistant Director, Social Policy:

I think they are all invited. Anything between 5 and 20 would turn up for it.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

They will sit down and discuss what they see as ... and so at the end of that meeting you have a market rate set?

[11:00]

Assistant Director, Social Policy:

No. That is simply ... because do not forget that Statistics Jersey are working on information that relates to a quarter back in time, but what estate agents and surveyors are able to tell you is what is happening this afternoon in terms of what their experience says. So that can also tell you about how things are likely to be in the next quarter, so that is quite useful future intelligence.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So you get comfort really from the information coming out of the Stats Unit and they are getting that from these meetings? That is what I assume.

Assistant Director, Social Policy:

No, Stats Jersey are getting the information based on actual sales going through.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

But Stats Jersey do not set the market rate, they are just doing their backwards-looking report, so to speak.

Assistant Director, Social Policy:

Correct, correct.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I asked a written question in the States to say how does Andium Homes set their market rate and I thought it said something about 3 estate agents being used.

Assistant Director, Social Policy:

I think it is 2. Jack, is it 2 or 3? I think it was 2.

Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

I do not know, but they do get a sort of a spread of different agents who will give them ... from which they can make a decision based on what the spread is that they are telling them.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

If you do not know, who wrote the answer to the question that I asked then?

Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

That might have been Treasury, as the shareholder.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

That might have been Treasury as the shareholder?

Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

Yes.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I see.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

But that question you are asking, it is really worrying, because I have in mind specifics like a line of small cottages, and the rent price there varied between £1,000 and £750 to another one that I know that they just rent at £2,080, which is ...

Assistant Director, Social Policy:

A big range, yes.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

... a big range. What we are doing, we are leaving this 90 per cent in the hands of the housing providers. Are they are picking £1,700 for one or they are picking £2,000 and doing 90 per cent? It feels very complicated and confusing and unstable.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Yes, which is why, if the question had been asking me to justify it, I would not have justified it because I do not think it is a particularly great system, but the other thing that you can throw into it that I think distorts it is the fact that irrespective of what the quality of the home is, the quality of the landlord in social housing is often substantially better than an equivalent-sized property in the private sector, because Andium can benefit from economies of scale. The fact it has so many properties, it can have in-house support, that if you were renting an equivalent property from one landlord who only owned one property, they just would not have the means at their disposal to provide you landlord services that a large social housing provider can. How do you factor that into your rent?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I mean, I would not go so general. I think there are very good landlords that can provide an immediate response and there is some social housing that do not provide immediate response. I would be careful to generalise and say that the private landlords are not ...

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Well, I would not. I would have no issues, being careful or otherwise, in saying that Andium is a fantastic landlord, that there will be ...

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I do not have any problem with Andium. I do not think that the private landlords, putting them in one quarter there, are worse than others.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

I did not tar them all with the same brush, but there are some landlords who, not out of any bad motivation, do not have the means at their disposal because they are not as professional in operation as the social housing providers are and must be because of the scale of the service they are providing. That is just a fact. I know of plenty of people who have had awful experiences with landlords. Even though the landlord has tried to do the right thing, it is just if you only own one property, you do not necessarily have somebody you can call upon at 5 minutes' notice to fix a boiler, whereas if you have thousands of properties in your portfolio, you can deliver a lot of that in-house. I mean, that is just a fact.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

But going back to the 90 per cent, are you looking to change the system or it will stay as it is now?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

My ambition is to change it to a system that does not have the negatives that I see in having a market rent policy which is set so close to what the market allegedly is. I think when you have it set so close there is a risk of it having an inflationary effect, especially when you have Andium with substantially better landlord services than most of the private sector. I worry about what it does to the overall market and I think part of the purpose of social housing is not just to provide homes to people who are vulnerable, but it should also be aiming to have a distortive effect on the wider market to keep rents lower.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

It may well have a distortive effect, but not to keep rents lower. I have just found the answer to my question and it says: "Andium has appointed 2 local estate agents to conduct a rolling cycle of independent valuations of their properties." Are you concerned that it is using estate agents and not professional surveyors? Because estate agents, while I am sure they are a wonderful business, they are not professionals in the sense of chartered professionals, I do not believe. So would that concern you?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

To be perfectly honest, the whole system concerns me. I do not like this system of working out a market rate policy. I think there are flaws in it, irrespective of whether you go to the professionals or the estate agents. I struggle to justify any of the system.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Can I pick up then that ... do you think you, as Minister for Housing, would prefer to have more involvement with the methodology of how we have arrived at this percentage, whatever it might end up being? Ought you to have more input, do you think?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

I do not think it necessarily matters. What matters to me is the system and how directly involved a Minister for Housing is I do not think is the big question. If we had a system for calculating rents that was not based on a 90 per cent system, was based on ... whether it were a lower percentage or something based on earnings, I do not think it is consequential whether the Minister for Housing is actively involved in that, so long as the Minister is told what is going on and has the ability to change the policy if it needs to be changed.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I suppose what I am looking at is thinking we seem to be quite clear that the valuations are decided by the housing providers. Ought there to be some completely independent monitoring of those valuations from a body such as the Housing Department, if you like, who are completely independent of the trade?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Yes. We are looking at social housing regulation. This I think was in the housing strategy. I forget what year that was.

Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

So this is going to 2013. We had the proposal for a social housing regulator, which one of the standards that they would have regulated was rents and how they were calculated, they would have provided an independent oversight of rents. That proposition went to the States in 2017, but it was rejected, so we do not have a social housing regulator, which was the last part of P.33/2013. So you set up Andium as a separate company, you set up the Minister for Housing and the Strategic Housing Unit for policy and you had an independent regulator of standards, so tenancy management rents, all those financial managements with a regulator. Unfortunately, we are not at that position where we have a regulator, but we did bring forward proposals for that regulator.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Were they rejected, those proposals, because it was seen as just excessively burdening the entire system with red tape and driving up costs?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

I voted against it, so I can tell you why I voted against it.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

That would be really helpful.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

I voted against it because my view at the time was that we were not at a corresponding stage with private sector tenancies. I worried about one falling behind the other and the effect that that would have. We are now in a position where there are things in motion to substantially improve what is able to happen in private rented tenancies now because of the minimum standards that have been introduced. Because the licensing scheme, if that goes through, hopefully that I think makes things a bit more even ... more even, so that puts us in a better ... that was not a Freudian slip. So this puts us in a more even position that I think would be a better place to be moving forward on, whereas it concerned me last time that we were going to completely leave out one massive and important part of the housing market. We are in a substantially better position now. That means we can look at it, I think, from a better starting point.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Are you talking about regulating rents for both private and public sector?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

No, not necessarily. What the social housing regulator would do would be different to what happens with the private sector ones. So we have got minimum standards being introduced for the quality of properties and those apply to social housing anyway. This would be about the methodology for how they are calculating their rents. This would be for making sure their allocation system is working properly and that sort of thing, whereas obviously the allocation system does not ... there is no equivalent in the private sector, people just ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

To me that sounds like the work of the Minister.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

You could theoretically have it done in-house by a Government department.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

You kind of already are, are you not?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Sort of, but it is not great, how the system works. There are some reserve powers I have and there are certain appeals that can be made to me, but it is not a great system. I personally do not like appeals going to Ministers, whether that is an appeal for being on the housing gateway or whether it is the appeals that I have to deal with for employment licences through the Housing and Work

Advisory Group. I personally feel uncomfortable about appeals going to elected politicians, where I would prefer that to be done without an elected politician ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The trouble is regulators are not accountable in the same way that you are at the ballot box.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

True, but then you may get ... I do not want to sound terrible in saying this, but I do not think political calculations ought to be in what you are doing.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I appreciate that, but they should not be in that.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

You are meant to be objective and I try my best.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The public can hold you to account in a way they cannot ever hold a regulator to account.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

True. It is a balancing act, but I do not like the political considerations on that sort of thing. I try my best to not have them included in my mind, but I will not be Minister for Housing for ever and there are previous Ministers for Housing who I would never have trusted with the power, personally.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I will not ask which.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I am going to go straight to housing policy development. Can you update us on progress with regard to what the board has done to date as well as the timeline you are working on to publish the findings?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Yes. So we have had countless meetings, briefings, workshops and discussions with the Housing Policy Development Board. We are not at a position to identify exactly what recommendations are likely to come about from that work, but there is ... I will not use the word "radical" but there are things that are being spoken of that have not existed in Jersey before that may end up featuring in our report, which will be interesting and exciting, I think. I think we are looking to contribute something to assist with the Island Plan process because of just timelines. They are having to start

their work before we publish our report, which is just bad luck, the timeline. Is it quarter 1 we are looking for our report or is it 2? Yes, quarter 1 for our report then to be public for the world to examine.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Just if the Minister can please advise me, the website has not been updated or what has happened? Because the last minutes I can see it is 19th September and it has been advised that the next meeting is due 15th October, that I cannot see that something happened from 19th September or it is the website or if something happened. If you can get us an update and see ...

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Yes, we have met since then, so ...

Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

The minutes were not approved. The minutes will be approved. They have just had their meeting; that is on 18th December and they will go up on the same day.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Why did you not have a meeting in November?

Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

Because there was a workshop at the end of October, so based on that it was decided that there was a lot of work which Altair had to do, so they would come back with a full package of potential interventions at the meeting on the 18th. Because of the Government Plan we had to cancel the November meeting and then it would just be by the time we got the one for 18th December instead.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

How much involvement does Altair have? Is the Policy Development Board being led by Altair? Essentially are you buying their solutions?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Altair are proving to be very useful in that they have got experience from elsewhere and they know about how housing works in all sorts of places around the world and they are feeding that information to us to help us understand what theoretical options could be at our disposal. It is not just about looking at what exists in the U.K. (United Kingdom), for example. We have looked at New York, we have looked at Vienna and other places as well. They are good listeners, I find. When we are having our discussions they are sort of holding back and not leading us to particular conclusions. They are sort of saying: "If that is what you were interested in, we can tell you about this place where

they have something similar or where this place has tried this and it perhaps has not been as good as you might think it would be.” They are very good at listening and then they come back to us at the next meeting we will have and say: “You all discussed this at the last meeting. This is what we have been able to find or what options we think could work, based on how your systems work.”

[11:15]

Because they have spent a lot of time looking at our systems as well, so that is generally how the meetings go.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

The Early Years Development Board, they have published full timelines when everything will be published and how they will continue to work through the year, so we know what to expect. Do you consider that the Housing Development Board needs to publish some timeframe, how and when it will go forward? I mean, follow the good practice from the other Policy Development Board.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Yes. I sit on the Early Years Policy Development Board and the way in which we are conducting work on that board is nothing like how we are doing it on the Housing Policy Development Board. The boards are just totally different in how they are choosing to work in their membership. I do not consider them comparable in that sense. But we have said the Housing Policy Development Board will publish a report in quarter 1 next year, so that is an important deadline to look forward to.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Is it difficult to work on something when we do not know what the population policy is?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

It is to a degree, but then there is a huge amount of stuff that is irrelevant to what the population is. How a tenancy is managed and how you provide security to a family who have got a tenancy, you do not have to think about whether that is for a population that has got 100,000, 120,000 or whatever. The biggest difficulty that the lack of population policy does is help us find sites and know how much we need to build and in what stages we ought to be building them, then bearing in mind at what points in that cycle the market may get heated and we will have to respond to that, so those are the difficulties. But there is substantial work that I think the population policy is not directly affecting.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I am going to move on to key worker accommodation and the reports, the Altair report which was produced for that and a very comprehensive report. Among its findings and recommendations it has

identified the need to review employment practices that may create barriers to the recruitment and retention of key workers. Have you got any observations on that or how will you be taking that forward?

Assistant Director, Social Policy:

It was identified that while accommodation is very important as a part of the offer for key workers, it is not the only issue at play and other issues can cause problems in both recruitment and retention. One of them is about, for example, probationary periods and people are not particularly keen to ... it is very difficult to take out a tenancy for a one-year agreement when you have got a 6-month probationary period.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Indeed.

Assistant Director, Social Policy:

It is about making sure that the offer that is put to individuals when they come to Jersey is appropriate and that we can make people stick as best as we can. It is also considering about the package that goes with people in terms of removal costs and what is the best way of achieving people's move smoothly and their family to Jersey. That is, I think, about a wide range of things and not just about bricks and mortar.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

It is odd because most private businesses do not have 6-month probationary periods anymore because the law ... it is up to 6 months, so if someone is not good enough you need to get rid of them before the 6 months, so is the States is still operating to the 6 months?

Assistant Director, Social Policy:

I am not sure of the arrangements, but that was certainly something that was identified as an issue, other than accommodation, that we needed to fix. It is just really identifying that while we are looking at key worker accommodation solutions that in terms of recruitment and retention, there is a broader piece of work that needs to be done.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

What about developing new good quality key worker accommodation? What is your direction within the department for achieving that?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Hue Court is the first one that is being undertaken at the moment. That refurbishment was going to happen anyway, but the opportunity has been taken to look at making that key worker accommodation. Beyond that, we simply have to evaluate what happens with sites that we are able to obtain. The hospital debate can be a little bit of a pain because ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you think different sites could accommodate different levels? There is a notion to short-term accommodation sort of up to 6 months or 6 to 9 months and then there is the longer lease and then there is the partial ownership proposals. What are your views on that?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Sorry, can you just ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

What are your views on the proposed short term, longer term or perhaps shared owner, part-ownership arrangements that were proposed in the report?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

I think those are sensible options to pursue. Those homes will look different in that if it is a short-term thing then obviously it is more likely to be an apartment based somewhere in town that is easy to get to where you will be working, whereas if you are looking at part-ownership ones they do not necessarily have to be in town; they will likely be for key workers who are coming with children and will have a car or whatever. We have to think about how that can be incorporated into what future schemes we might be looking at.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you think legislation changes - which would, I would have thought, be necessary - will be particularly palatable to the general public, making exceptions for key workers? How do you feel that is going to go down?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

What a good question. I do not anticipate problems. I know there has been some resentment about the Hue Court situation. I am upset by that because I think some of that was because of misinformation and I did my best to sit with Hue Court residents and go through things. My feedback I have had since then is that pretty much everybody was happy with how that was handled. People were found homes and people's circumstances were catered for quite nicely. I think most people understand that we have got particular areas in these key services that are so important to have the right people, the best people and the people who are hopefully going to be staying for the long term

in them, that it has to be part of our offer. I think people might resent it if it got used for things that people fell out of the definition of what a key worker is. I think income bands as well, if we are bringing somebody in to do a particular job that they are getting paid £100,000 a year from, they can find their own accommodation. We do not need to help them too much with that. But if you are looking at nurses or children's social workers or whatever, I do not think there will be that much resentment from people accepting that, a bit of a hand. There is nothing wrong with saying the help is for a period of time and then once you have been here for a length of time it is expected that you will probably want to move on into the private sector or whatever.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

What entity is the landlord for the key worker accommodation?

Assistant Director, Social Policy:

At the moment we are working with Andium to provide that, but we could work with other social housing providers. The key there was to try and not have the relationship between the employer and the employee as holding the tenancy, so that was an item that came out of the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

How is the rental levels? How are they being set? How are they being calculated?

Assistant Director, Social Policy:

Complicated, unfortunately, because the offering includes more than you would have for your average social rent. For example, they are fully furnished, the landing accommodation is everything down to the knives and forks and so it is a rental based on the cost, so it is different again.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Yes. Would you expect a key worker to be paying the same, less, more than for social housing?

Assistant Director, Social Policy:

It is better than the open market and I think is about ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

No, but the cost of the rental, better, and when you say better, you mean lower than?

Assistant Director, Social Policy:

It is a different product from what is being provided to the social renter because it is furnished.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Yes. No, I appreciate that, but you could still work out, were you to take the furniture out, where the rent levels would be. Because all I am thinking is that Islanders may not be happy to find that key workers are perhaps paying lower rents than they are in Andium. I think they would find it hard to stomach.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

With regard to the Altair report, what are the next steps in implementing the recommendations?

Assistant Director, Social Policy:

We have still some work to do to conclude that piece of work. Issues looking forward, for example, of what the care model will be and what our hospital might look like and giving us some sense of what the future demand might be, so we have still got some numbers to crunch and talk about how we might cost out a variety of different products.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I am short of time, I know. A couple of points I would like just to bring in: homelessness boards, you announced the establishing of a Homelessness Board recently. You suggested that we will need to address this and we should not shy away from it. Can you tell us what you feel the biggest challenges are?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Not the cost of housing, surprisingly, so that is something that is often put to me is the cost of housing that is the biggest contributor to homelessness. I do not think it is. I think it is people facing a crisis, whether that is a health crisis or whether it is an employment crisis and getting support to help them deal with that crisis in a timely manner is the difficult thing, especially when often the support that somebody may need crosses over different agencies and different departments. There is a homelessness cluster which is operating at the moment as a result of the work that is going on with the homeless.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

How many homeless people do you believe there are in Jersey?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

I would love to give a number as an answer. I just cannot tell you because we have the homelessness shelters that will look after people, but we know that they are not getting everyone. We know that there is probably not a huge amount, but there are some people who sleep rough. I have met a few of them in the last few weeks who have told me about their experiences, but they

are sofa surfing. There are people who would not consider themselves homeless and therefore would not identify themselves to us, so ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

What work are you doing to make sure? You have made some statements in the States Assembly about homelessness but at no point have you put a figure to it, so you have not quantified the level of homelessness. Surely before you do any work within Government you should quantify the scale of the situation before you start trying to deal with it.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

No, I do not necessarily agree with that because there are systems which are causing homelessness and if you can fix those systems that will bring down the number anyway. I do not think we need to wait until there is a number, especially when that number will be a moving number all the time.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

But then you cannot monitor it. If you do not know what the monitor is you have no way of knowing how successful your fix systems have been.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

There is always going to be a degree of that and I do not think that is a bad thing. You can know that a system is not working based on a small number of cases you encounter. You do not need to know the definite number of how many other people have been failed by a particular service or have not had help in a timely fashion. You can still improve things without knowing ultimately what that number is. If we are going to say it is 200 people and in a year's time I am going to make it 100, I would love to be able to do that, but ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

But you will not know whether you succeeded or not because you do not know if it is 200, you will not know if you have brought it down to 100 or moved up to 100 if you were suddenly to count it. You have not got a baseline for a start.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Moving the number up can be a consequence of setting your definition.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

It can.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

We do not have a statutory definition of what constitutes homelessness.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Have you ever thought of creating your own definition that the department can work with?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

The homelessness strategy is looking at what that definition is going to be, that is part of its work and what they recommend I suspect will probably be a wide definition of homelessness. It is not just going to be rough sleeping. If they want to go for a very concise definition, it would be easy to get a number, but if they go for a wider definition it will be less easy. But I would still welcome that because it would still be setting our aspiration at the right level for trying to help more people.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Once you have the definition, regardless of how wide or concise it is, will you then be trying to understand how many people fit within that definition?

The Minister for Children and Housing:

We will be trying to do that. Whether we will succeed in getting a number I am not necessarily convinced we will, but it is not necessarily my aspiration to have a number that we can define it at any point.

Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

Can I just add to that point, Minister? As part of the homelessness strategy, the review recognises the data collection is a problem. There was a question that Deputy Ward asked in the Assembly a couple of weeks ago regarding the number of homelessness, people who experience homelessness. I think that we said that, as part of the review, a census was taken with Sanctuary Trust and The Shelter for Battle of Flowers nights, I think, in August and it came up that they had 116 people living in temporary accommodation. You can move that definition: it could be people who are also sofa surfing; we do not have that data. You can take the housing gateway figures of how many are in band 1; they would be deemed homeless. But that is because of insecure accommodation, a lease has come to an end, so you have got all these different data sources that we need to get a handle of. Also, as part of the homelessness strategy, there is a proposal to set up the Housing Advice and Guidance Service. That would be a one-stop shop for all housing advice and you can start to build up the number of cases which are coming through and say: "Right, that person is homeless, but that data collection will be part of that." I think we fully recognise that there is a lack of data out there and that is what the review and the strategy will try to tackle because you cannot get a sense of what interventions or how successful it is going to be unless you have that data to follow it, so what the outcome is.

[11:30]

That is absolutely recognised in the review and strategy and it is also getting the likes of the voluntary and community sector to work with us. There are a number of agencies out there: you have got Sanctuary Trust, you have got The Shelter, Women's Refuge, Causeway, Jersey Association for Youth and Friendship all doing their own thing with their own clients and getting a handle of who is coming through their doors. We have the homelessness cluster. Again, that is helping with that, bringing those organisations together to get all that data. It is underway but I think we recognise that the data is limited at the moment but that should improve.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you. The membership for the Homelessness Board, has that been established yet?

Group Director, Regulation, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Certainly I am on it, along with Simon Burgess chairs it. It is a variety of whether it be Government, charitable or private sector, so it is a very mixed board. I think it is a good example of a board tackling what would traditionally be, I guess, a Government thing, for Government to think about, but it has got some inputs from private sector in there as well and also the charitable sector. We have got a mixture. We have got obviously social housing providers, we have got Government officers, we have sort of private sector interest in terms of from housing, surveyor housing, housing letting agent type perspective and it is chaired independently through sort of private sector organisations.

Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

And the police as well, is it not, Andrew?

Group Director, Regulation, Growth, Housing and Environment:

The police are on there as well, yes.

Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

Caritas, Andium, so there is a whole range representing different organisations and sectors.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It would be useful at some point just to let us have a list of those.

Group Director, Regulation, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Minister, I am going to close there - we have overrun a few minutes - and thank you for coming this morning with your officers. It has been much appreciated, thank you.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Thank you very much.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

May we send you some further questions? Because I have not finished my questions.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Yes, absolutely, either privately or ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Answers which will be published as a result.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Yes, absolutely. Thank you.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Good, and I think we will see you a bit later.

The Minister for Children and Housing:

Yes.

[11:32]