4.3 Deputy S.J. Gleave of St. Helier South of the Chief Minister regarding residential and nursing home capacity. (OQ.121/2026)

Given that responsibility for meeting the accommodation and care needs of Jersey's ageing population spans several Ministerial portfolios, will the Chief Minister advise whether a single Minister has overall responsibility for ensuring sufficient residential and nursing home capacity, alongside the development of retirement communities and supported living, is available to meet current and future demand, and if not, why not?

Senator L.J. Farnham (The Chief Minister):

In response to the Deputy's specific question, I can confirm that no one Minister has overall responsibility for developing care homes, retirement communities and supported living. This is because, as the Deputy pointed out, the issues run across a range of Ministerial portfolios, so Ministers work together where their specific responsibilities overlap. In addition, the Council of Ministers holds specific responsibility for the Common Population Policy. This policy, as Members will know, addresses a range of the demographic challenges, including the impact of the growth of the older population and the need to ensure the Island has suitable housing and care and nursing homes to meet the growing demand. All Ministers work together to maintain this policy. The latest report on the Common Population Policy was published earlier this year by the previous Government. This includes details of Government activity under the ageing world road map. I would also finish by informing Members that officials have been tasked with putting together a strategy and proposal, specifically looking at care and nursing homes on the demographic challenges. I will report back to relevant Ministers, including the Minister for Health and Social Services, in due course.

4.3.1 Deputy S.J. Gleave:

I am really pleased to hear that that work is under progress. That is very welcomed. Given the vulnerability of Jersey's care sector, should a major provider withdraw from the Island ... and putting this in context, a small provider withdrew within the last 18 months and it took 6 months to house 8 residents. Can the Minister confirm who is responsible for assessing that risk if a major provider withdrew and ensuring contingency arrangements are in place, including sufficient alternative capacity to accommodate affected residents?

Senator L.J. Farnham:

Again, I think the Minister for Health and Social Services leads on a number of those issues, especially related to extended care. That is one of the issues we have asked officials to look at the contingency for such circumstances. We also want to make sure we have a plan in place that sees a number of places growing. I think also an important consideration is to make sure we do not end up with care home and nursing home stock in the hands of too few. I think it needs to be spread commercially. Perhaps we could look at bringing some of those facilities in-house, run by Government or Parishes, or working more closely with the sector to provide more cover.

4.3.2 Connétable I. Gardiner of St. Helier:

Can the Chief Minister tell the Assembly how many extra residential and nursing beds Jersey will need by 2035? If that figure does not exist yet, who is responsible for producing it around the Ministers who have a political responsibility?

The Bailiff:

I think that may be some way from the question. I am not sure it is reasonable to expect the Chief Minister to know the answer, unless he does.

Senator L.J. Farnham:

It is almost a 65(c) Standing Order one. I think I would need notice of that, but I will provide the information.

The Bailiff:

If you want to ask another question.
[10:15]

4.3.3 The Connétable of St. Helier:

The Chief Minister mentioned the Parishes are already providing some sheltered accommodation and care beds. How does the Chief Minister think to work with the Parishes to ensure that we have a joined-up approach between the Government and the Parishes to support the necessary numbers of care and residential support?

Senator L.J. Farnham:

I think the Parishes are doing an extremely good job with the care homes they run, and should know that the Government stands ready to provide support wherever needed. I understand, where required, communication between Parishes and Government from the care home perspective is working well at the moment. But I think that the Parishes are a good example of where they do provide care homes, providing them commercially successfully and also competitively.