

Question on Notice
No. 431
Asked on Wednesday 29 March 2006

Mr LANGBROEK asked the Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing (MR SCHWARTEN) –

QUESTION:

With reference to instances where public housing dwellings (houses) in Residential A zoned areas (or equivalent) are being razed and converted to multiple unit dwelling –

How often has the Department of Housing sought Local Government approval for this increase in density and isn't this concentrating public housing in areas of disadvantage, with no consideration given to transport nodes and community facilities?

ANSWER:

The Department of Housing continually examines opportunities to realign its housing portfolio to better meet the needs of persons requiring accommodation.

Where there are large numbers of older houses which are under-utilised and incurring excessive annual maintenance, the department will, as would the private sector, assess the future use of such dwellings.

It is not the department's intention to provide concentrated areas of social housing. In fact, the department is working on a long-term strategy to decrease the concentration of social housing in areas where there is a large number of departmental houses.

In regard to accessible transport and community facilities, the department, for many years, has considered such infrastructure benefits when reviewing its housing portfolio and the provision of accommodation.

In relation to seeking local government approval for an increase in density, all social housing projects are assessed under Chapter 5.6 of the *Integrated Planning Act 1997* and, in this regard, local government approval is not required. However, the department provides plans and details of all social housing projects to the local government, together with an assessment of each project against the relevant town planning scheme for comment.

If the department's assessment is that the project is substantially inconsistent, it is then publicly notified and all submissions are considered before a decision is made on whether or not to proceed.

The department merely seeks to act as any other developer would and I trust the Honourable Member is not swayed by the contemptible behaviour of Councillor Schrinner and the Member for Chatsworth.