

Scrutiny Committee – Public Questions and Answers (29 September 2025)

Name of Person Submitting Questions	Questions and Answers
Paul Elstone	Agenda Item 9 - Housing Repairs and Maintenance makes full reference to monitoring home safety i.e. the internal living conditions of social homes. This in terms of recommended minimum and maximum temperatures and maximum CO 2 levels. The minimum internal temperature being 18 Degrees Celsius The maximum internal temperature being 26 Degrees Celsius The maximum internal CO2 being 1,000 parts per million. I have provided all Mid Devon District Council Members with a copy of a report prepared by the University of the West of England and for a ZED PODs modular development in Bristol. A modular development with exact comparisons to Shapland Place. A low temperature of 17 degrees or 1 degree below the minimum being measured in this development. This with heating switched on. A high temperature of 36 degrees measured 10 degrees above the maximum. A temperature with real safety issues for the young, elderly and the vulnerable. CO2 measured in excess of 1000 PPM and with ventilation switched on and with known impacts to resident's health and wellbeing. A Shapland Place resident with a young child has already reported an internal temperature of 32 degrees and this was not even during a heat wave. A Member of this Committee and at a recent Tiverton Town Council meeting made reference to the high internal temperatures affecting a ZED POD development and saying that these high temperatures were in part due to windows not being opened. It is a matter of fact that windows are being fully opened but windows that should have restrictors on them but not and therefore are not in compliance with a planning condition this to prevent overlooking.

There is further and ample evidence to warrant a proper investigation into the suitability and integrity of the MDDC ZED POD contract awards. Will this Scrutiny Committee do exactly that?

Response from the Chair of Scrutiny Committee

The Council has provided repeated assurance to the questioner regards the thermal performance of the Zed Pod modular homes in its area. This includes formal assurance with regards to full compliance with Part 'O' Building Regulations. The Council has also repeatedly provided responses on the Bristol report which has been used highly selectively by the questioner without full context.

The Bristol scheme was the first of its type and any issues with thermal performance were found to be user related and the post-occupation evaluation played an important part in refining and improving the tenant on-boarding experience that has subsequently been adopted locally here in Mid Devon. To quote the report with appropriate context "*There were some specific instances of individuals reporting finding their homes either too hot, or too cold, in discrete periods of extreme weather. Review of all the evidence is thought to suggest that this was likely a result of insufficient induction and training regarding the best use of the modern technologies installed in these homes, and appropriate use of the openable windows.*"

Given this position and the Council's full responses to date, it must be noted these factual responses are in essence being continually ignoring and these latest public questions are repeating subjective concerns without validity or basis.

In reference to temperature guidelines in homes, it is important to clarify there are multiple recommended published guidelines (not regulations) from different sources. It is not clear which source or sources the questioner has used.

	To a major extent, temperatures within any property will depend on choices made by the occupants, and every temperature will be affected by the decisions they make and how they use their home. In reference to factual information, using the data we do hold for our stock where we have environmental sensors installed, almost all properties have gone above the maximum and below the minimum recommendations quoted by the questioner at some point regardless of the age of the property or whether it is traditional or modular build. For instance, in the modular properties that have environmental sensors the highest temperature recorded to date is 28 degrees on the 11th of July 2025 with an external temp of 26.2 degrees, and if we look at a system within a traditional bungalow, less than 200m away on the same day the highest temp recorded was 27.7 degrees. We have been unable to find an occasion where the temperature has dropped below the minimum recommendation in a modular property. Where the questioner is making reference to an elevated temperature at a specific unit occupied by a young family within our Shapland Place development, this was discussed in the presence of the questioner at the June meeting of the Homes PDG and further clarified in a written response to questions raised. To repeat the response provided previously, this arose due to a system fault that was subsequently resolved where the tenant has also had additional guidance on use of the system. Given the questioner is fully aware of this, to raise this as evidence of a design or broader thermal issues with these properties may be viewed as misleading. In respect of CO2 readings in the context of the Bristol report, this again can be caused by many occupation factors such as large numbers of people within a property at the time. The following statement from the UK Health and Safety Executive highlights that levels need to be considerably higher than 1000ppm in rooms to become a health risk. <i>Understanding acceptable CO2 levels in indoor environments can help create a safe and comfortable space for occupants. The UK Health and Safety Executive suggests that CO2 levels up to 1,000 ppm (parts per million) are generally acceptable for most indoor environments. This level ensures minimal adverse impact on health and overall comfort.</i>
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However, if CO2 levels rise to 5,000 ppm or above, it signals inadequate ventilation and can lead to more severe health effects. Thus, knowing these thresholds is essential for facility managers and building owners to ensure the well-being of the building's occupants.

Drawing attention to a reading above 1,000ppm is therefore not indicative of an unacceptable environment. Notwithstanding this, our environmental sensors are recording typical CO2 levels in modular properties of around 500ppm with no peaks above 1,000ppm whilst the same sensors in our traditional properties show CO2 closer to 1,000ppm on average with some peaks around 1,500ppm – highlighting neither typically see high readings close to the 5,000ppm HSE guidance but modular performs better than traditional build due to its modern air handling systems.

Consequently, on a factual basis there is no evidence to support concerns with the Zed Pods developments that the questioner sets out.

Question 2:

I have once again had my integrity questioned in the answer to a public question this time suggesting I was being “*deleterious*” when challenging the credibility of the Shapland Place Energy Certificates this including the energy consumption and CO2 savings quoted.

To put the record straight. During repeat engagements with more than one Elmhurst Energy Technical expert and with Elmhurst Energy being the very company who provided accreditation to the Energy Assessor used by ZED PODs the experts confirmed my position.

That it is a statutory requirement for the secondary infra-red space heaters installed at Shapland Place to be recorded on the Energy Certificate. Therefore the energy consumption and CO2 savings stated on the Energy Certificate must be different. A situation further justifying a proper investigation. Again, will this Committee do exactly that?

	Response from the Chair of Scrutiny Committee The Council understands that Elmhurst are one the largest UK providers of energy assessment, retrofit and property professional training, software and accreditation. The training they provide is industry recognised and they are a Government approved Accreditation provider for energy assessments. They are correctly independent of Zed Pods Ltd as an accreditation body as is the subsequent assessor trained by them who has provided the EPC assessments for our modular schemes. We also understand that similar queries have also be presented to Ashford Council (who have also commissioned Zed Pod developments) where for assurance purposes they commissioned some new EPC assessments by a different provider which came back with exactly the same score. Consequently, we have no evidence to suggest any concerns with the EPC certificates provided for our schemes. Nonetheless, if the questioner has particular concerns about an Elmhurst accredited EPC assessor/scheme member then Elmhurst have a specific complaints resolution process which can be accessed at Complaints Resolution - Elmhurst Energy
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