

Homes PDG – 18 March 2025 - Public Questions and Answers

Name of person submitting	Questions
<p>Paul Elstone</p>	<p><u>Question 1</u> My questions relate to Agenda Item 7 Housing Service Delivery Report Q3 Specifically, Paragraph 2.4</p> <p>Quote: “Councillors also have a responsibility to ensure that Mid Devon Housing is being open and accountable with regard to how the organisation meets its objectives and regulatory requirements”. Unquote.</p> <p>I have provided Homes PDG and Scrutiny Members with a document and related “as built” drawings. Drawings that confirm and beyond doubt that the MDDC Social Housing modular build developments at both Shapland Place, Tiverton and St Andrews House, Cullompton, fail to fully comply with the UK Government’s Nationally Described Space Standards. This despite what Members of this Council have been told several times previously that they did.</p> <p>How can this Council justify spending extremely high and limited funds on social housing developments that are built smaller than the Government’s described space standard requires and to the detriment of the residents of these dwellings?</p> <p>Response from the Homes PDG Chair:</p> <p>As the questioner is fully aware, the St Andrews House and Shapland Place developments have been independently checked by approved Building Control and the MDDC Planning team and confirmed to be fully compliant with the national space standards. This included follow-up ‘as built’ checks at Shapland Place which further confirmed compliance.</p> <p>Written responses have been provided in full and published as appropriate. It is therefore erroneous to continue to state space standards have not been met and to question members and the wider Council on this matter.</p>

Question 2

How can this Council enter into a partnership arrangement with a developer that designs then builds and installs social homes developments that fail to comply with very basic Government standards?

Response from the Homes PDG Chair:

The questioner does not state which basic standards they believe these developments fail to meet. Nonetheless, the Council can confirm that all developments have full planning approval and the completed schemes all have full independent Building Control approval as required prior to occupation. This ensures the developments comply with planning and building regulation requirements in full.

The Council is aware that the questioner has previously raised a significant number of specific queries regarding these developments. This is in relation to a range of perceived issues including space standards, contractor competencies and accreditations, modular build quality / design life, fire safety, heating and cooling etc. Each of these queries have been further answered in full with additional supporting information as provided to the questioner in order to demonstrate the developments wholly meet or exceed relevant technical and regulatory standards. Therefore, the statement made above regarding compliance with standards is factually incorrect.

Question 3

Why are MDDC Officers including those in Housing, Planning, and of real concern Building Control, not identifying these standards failings and at various stages of the development program?

Response from the Homes PDG Chair:

See response to Q2.

Question 4

How can this Council apply for and receive grant funding from a UK Government funded entity i.e. Homes England and for developments that fail to comply with the Governments own space standards?

Response from the Homes PDG Chair:

See response to Q1. Space standards are met in full.

Question 5

Is there not a case of Homes England being made aware of these space standard non-compliances?

Response from the Homes PDG Chair:

See response to Q1. Space standards are met in full. Meeting relevant regulatory requirements including space standards is a condition of Homes England funding.

Question 6

How can this Council, as well of the developer, routinely “trumpet” even this past week that these developments have won multiple awards given they fail to meet the most basic of standards?

Response from the Homes PDG Chair:

See response to Q1 and Q2. All required standards are met or exceeded in full.

Question 7

Is there not a case that the various entities making these awards being made aware of the standards non-compliance failings?

Response from the Homes PDG Chair:

See response to Q1 and Q2. All required standards are met or exceeded in full.

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