

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY DEPUTY M.R. HIGGINS OF ST. HELIER
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 31st JANUARY 2022
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 7th FEBRUARY 2022**

Question

“Following the States decision in September 2020 to establish a digital register of all commercial and residential properties by the end of 2021, will the Minister advise –

- (a) when his department started work on this register and what actual steps, if any, have been made towards bringing this register into being;
- (b) if work has commenced, the key stage timelines of work and the date on which the register is expected to be introduced; and
- (c) if work has not yet commenced, the reasons why it has not begun and how the department is able to make effective policy decisions in this area without the supporting evidence arising from this work?”

Answer

- a) I have recently signed a Ministerial Decision and announced steps to develop a digital register, explaining that we have commissioned a scoping study to map out the establishment of a register of all property and ownership. The scoping work will also support the wider strategies of government, helping data and digital management and provide increased levels of information.
- b) The scoping analysis will provide the foundation for the next phase of work, including timescales, projected costs, and recommendations on best-fit with the wider strategies and policies of the government and the decisions of the Assembly.

The analysis will be available to the next Council of Ministers, so they have a good, evidence-based foundation to support their implementation decisions. The Assistant Chief Minister, Deputy Rowland Huelin, has now been given political responsibility for this project, and I have confidence that he will drive this work over the coming months, including supporting the realisation of wider benefits around data management.

- c) Work on this project was delayed due to capacity issues, including the significant existing pipeline of work and the Government’s response to COVID.

The aim of the register as set out in 2020 is to provide information on the ownership of commercial and residential property to help the Government set policies to avoid abuses or distortions of the market.

In terms of housing policies, over the last year the Government, led in this area by the Minister for Housing and Communities, has developed and is now implementing at a rapid and urgent pace a range of housing policies to improve the supply of housing, to promote good practice and innovation across the residential market and to create improved access to affordable housing.