

3.3 Deputy S. Pitman of St. Helier of the Minister for Housing regarding Housing Trusts' responsibility for maintenance issues:

What action, if any, is the Minister taking to ensure that housing trusts take responsibility for maintenance issues?

Deputy A.K.F. Green of St. Helier (The Minister for Housing):

Before answering the question I believe it is right to pay tribute to the work of the housing trusts and thank those who voluntarily work as trustees, but Members will be aware that I have highlighted in the past that housing trusts have developed in what is a largely unregulated sector and the lack of regulation is something that has concerned me for some time and, as Members hopefully know, it is something that I am committed to addressing and I am committed to do this through the housing transformation programme. The proposals that will flow from this programme will significantly improve the manner in which social housing is delivered and regulated; a key proposal of the introduction of primary legislation, which will establish a regulatory framework. This new law will allow regulations to be developed, one of which will be focusing on housing standards and will require all social housing providers to put in place procedures that ensure all their homes are maintained in accordance with the English Decent Homes standard. I will set out how I propose to organise this regulatory framework in the White Paper, which I hope will be published by the end of March this year.

3.3.1 Deputy S. Pitman:

What action, if any, can the Housing Department take on trusts which are not currently living up to standards?

Deputy A.K.F. Green:

I am encouraging at the present time. Although there is a lack of regulation, I meet regularly with the trusts and I am encouraging them in developing longer term plans. I am not suggesting that we wait 30 years for the work, but I want the 30-year plan where there is proper planned investment both for new properties and in maintenance of properties. Of course, this needs to apply to all social housing, and that includes the accommodation that the Housing Department controls as well.

3.3.2 Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier:

Will the regulations contain any reference to ensuring that any maintenance contracts are open to tender from other companies in an open way?

Deputy A.K.F. Green:

This is quite likely, certainly in my thinking at the present time, and obviously will be part of the consultation in the White Paper.

3.3.3 Deputy T.M. Pitman of St. Helier:

I am not sure if you will allow me to slip this in with maintenance but is the Minister aware of housing trusts who requested a resident to pay for the construction of a cage to put their mobility scooter in, when it really should have been done by them?

Deputy A.K.F. Green:

No, I am not aware.