

4.10 Deputy S. Pitman of St. Helier of the Minister for Housing regarding the amount of former States-owned properties sold since the implementation of the Housing Property Plan:

Would the Minister inform Members how many former States-owned properties have been sold to States tenants since the implementation of the Housing Property Plan and how many have been sold to non-States tenants?

Senator T.J. Le Main (The Minister for Housing):

To date, 96 States rental properties have been sold to States tenants, as specified in the Property Plan. Excluding new developments - Le Squez and Le Marais - all but one of these properties were sold to sitting tenants. To date, 7 non-core States rental properties have been sold on the open market to non-States tenants as specified in the Property Plan.

4.10.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

The Minister referred to the exceptions of Le Squez and Le Marais. Would he indicate what figures were sold there, or are intended to be sold there?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I have not got those figures with me at the moment. In fact, Phase 2 at Le Marais is not completed yet, and no sales have taken place.

4.10.2 Deputy S. Pitman:

I have 3 families living in 2-bedroomed flats in my constituency while States property is being sold off. Could the Minister comment on that, please?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

There is a backlog of accommodation for particularly one-bed accommodation for elderly people, particularly with disabilities, and we have a backlog and a log jam at the moment within our stock. Once we can get some of these one-bedroom apartments and one-bedroom accommodation to move some of these people, then it will release some of the 3-beds that are currently being occupied by people that families have left.

4.10.3 Deputy C.F. Labey of Grouville:

Could the Minister confirm that there are 65 self-catering units above the transport station that he designated for the tourist industry?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I think the Deputy is talking about the Apart Hotel, and I understand there is an Apart Hotel with some 60 apartments. Yes, I understand that is the case. Nothing to do

with Housing at all. The Deputy is pulling faces. Housing had no control over the permission granted for that development of the Apart Hotel.

4.10.4 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Would the Minister explain why, when the sell-off plan was announced, a major part of its rationale was to generate maintenance funds for housing? He has since recently announced a massive renovation programme. Why have we now got 2 programmes, one maintenance from the sell-off, and another refurbishment programme?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

No. The total sales attained up to now in the Property Plan are approximately £26.5 million, and that is going into ongoing work in refurbishment, maintenance and what have you. But we are in discussion with the Minister for Treasury and Resources and rather hopeful that a stimulus package of extra funding will be available so we can put some work back into the economy, and there is still a lot of work to do, and that is what we are hoping to do.

4.10.5 Deputy S. Pitman:

As the Senator has outlined in his answer to a written question by myself, there are 157 tenants on the waiting list, waiting for 2, 3 and 4-bedroom houses. Why, then, is the department selling-off property when there are families waiting for appropriate accommodation?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

The issue is quite clear. We have got a very, very low waiting list at the moment for family homes, 43 at the moment: 43 families that need 3-bed and 4-bed homes. The issue is that we are selling homes in the Property Plan to sitting existing tenants, and it is the policy of this Assembly to create home ownership. As the Island Plan develops, if we feel the need arises for further homes for social rented housing, then there is an opportunity to create more homes there. Also, one large Housing Trust is building considerable reserves; we met with them last week and there is going to be a further opportunity for the Trust themselves, without any letting of comfort, to provide more accommodation for rental if it is required.

Deputy S. Pitman:

May I have another supplementary?

The Deputy Bailiff:

I had indicated that was your final one, but anyway, yes. Do you want to ask another one, one final one?

4.10.6 Deputy S. Pitman:

The Senator has just said that Housing Trusts are building social housing while the States are selling-off property which is needed by States tenants. It does not make sense.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

That is absolutely erroneous. It is not right. What we are doing, we are giving an opportunity for a tenant who has been living in their own home for many years to have the ability to be a home-owner. We are not taking the home away from anyone else. At the moment the demand for 3 and 4-bedroom homes is very, very low. There are 43 currently on the waiting list, and many of those can be accounted for within the movement which will occur as soon as we can move people out of some of the homes that are over-occupied.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Very well. Question 12 falls away in Deputy Tadier's absence. We come to the next question that Senator Syvret will ask of the Minister for Economic Development.