

23.10.03

**9 Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade of the Chief Minister regarding the policy intention of the Government in respect of the number of private landlords in Jersey (OQ.188/2023)**

Will the Chief Minister advise whether the policies adopted by Government are intended to reduce the number of private landlords in Jersey, and if not, what measures, if any, are being taken to ensure that this is not the outcome?

**Deputy K.L. Moore (The Chief Minister):**

Proposals brought forward seek only to ensure that Jersey has a well-regulated rental market, which provides safe and secure accommodation for Islanders. We are aware that some landlords may be considering their position as these improvements are brought forward. We believe our proposals, notably those in the Rented Dwellings Regulations, are proportionate and will ensure that we are able to properly implement the health and safety standards that already exist for rental accommodation in Jersey. The Residential Tenancy Law consultation earlier this year sought the views of both tenants and landlords at an early stage of policy development. The Minister for Housing and Communities is currently working through the consultation response and will be publishing his response later this autumn. We cannot always prevent individual landlords from choosing to leave the market of course, but this is our duty to ensure that we adopt a proportionate and fair approach to future changes which I believe we are doing.

**3.9.1 The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Would the Chief Minister agree that the many smaller - that is in terms of properties - landlords might be a degree fed up with the arrogant attitude adopted by some States Members that they are a baying crowd in relation to their resistance to the Government's proposals? Would the Chief Minister agree that these landlords to whom I refer provide the central housing in the Island at no public cost?

**Deputy K.L. Moore:**

I do have to state of course that I am a small landlord myself, and of course the details of that appear in my declaration of interest, and so I can tell the Constable that I am not part of a baying mob; I have not seen them recently either. But I am aware that there are many differing views and there has been a long-standing debate on these matters and many attempts to find the right balance in terms of protecting landlords and protecting tenants also. I believe that we have now found what is a proportionate way to progress to ensure that we do both of those things. Yes, accommodation is of course greatly needed in our community. We prize providing good-quality homes so that Islanders can thrive and enjoy their life in our Island.

**3.9.2 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

In terms of the model of the private rental sector in Jersey, does the Chief Minister have a policy over whether it is preferable to have a model based on lots of small-time landlords without much professional expertise or flexibility in their financial arrangements versus a model with fewer number of private landlords but who have larger portfolios and are therefore able to benefit from economies of scale and more professionalised services?

**Deputy K.L. Moore:**

I do not think the Deputy will be surprised by my answer. He will be very familiar with the fact that I believe in the free market and therefore people who wish to make investments in property and to provide accommodation to others through private enterprise is a matter for those people who are willing to enter and participate in the market. Where Government comes in is to do exactly what we are proposing to do at the moment, which is to ensure that the playing field is well-regulated and that there are appropriate rules, regulations and standards in place for both parties to participate in what is a private agreement between themselves.

### **3.9.3 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

I think we will be forgiven for forgetting the Chief Minister's free market credentials given the answers we were given to the Jersey Reds' situation earlier today. But is the Chief Minister saying that she really thinks an approach where the Government does not attempt to provide some kind of strategy for providing the best private sector rental accommodation model possible is a good strategy, given that the free market approach we have had up until this point has objectively been a complete failure?

### **Deputy K.L. Moore:**

As the Deputy states, there is an objective view. It is widely understood and agreed that an appropriate balance needs to be sought in terms of providing appropriate standards of accommodation for everybody who lives in private rented dwellings and that is exactly what we are determined to do.

### **3.9.4 The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Would the Chief Minister confirm that many of the smaller landlords to whom I have referred earlier have contented tenants within the properties that they rent and that they are generally better at looking after the properties than perhaps the larger institutional landlords? Would she agree with that?

### **Deputy K.L. Moore:**

While I do agree with the Constable, I believe that there will also be a mixture in the marketplace. Of course, we also benefit in Jersey from a fantastic social housing provider and housing trusts also who operate in a responsible way. Indeed, Andium, we can all be proud of having met the Better Home Standard for 100 per cent of their properties.