

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING
BY DEPUTY M. TADIER OF ST. BRELADE
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 24TH MAY 2016**

Question

What consideration, if any, has been given to banning the charging of 'finders fees' and 'contract renewal fees' by letting agents to renters? If none, would the Minister support such a move?

Has the Strategic Housing Unit given any consideration to the possible benefits of a code of conduct for letting agencies, voluntary or statutory? If so, what was the outcome of any such consideration?

Answer

The issue of fees charged by letting agents was recently highlighted in the Jersey Consumer Council 'Rents Matter' report so I am aware of concern about the transparency and level of fees, which was highlighted in the report.

I have not given consideration to banning the charging of certain fees by letting agents, and I would be reluctant to intervene in the market unnecessarily. I believe that a letting agent should be able to charge fees towards the costs of its administration, but any fees should be set at a reasonable level and properly explained to clients before they commit to engaging the service of an agent.

The Strategic Housing Unit is working with the Environment Health Department to launch the Rent Safe landlord accreditation scheme, which will cover letting agents. Landlords and letting agents who join the scheme will be required to comply with a set of standards and good practice guidance, including on the charging of fees and expenses.

I believe that this approach will help to drive improvements in rental management standards and enable consumers to make informed decisions when choosing an agent. Renting a property is a big commitment and people need to shop around and register with agents that are transparent about their fees and members of professional accredited bodies.