

3.7 Deputy D.J. De Sousa of the Minister for Housing regarding the number of new 3 and 4-bedroom houses due to be built for States rental in the next 3 years:

Will the Minister inform the Assembly how many, if any, new 3 and 4-bedroom houses are due to be built for the States rental in the next 3 years and how many similar homes from current housing stock are intended to be sold to existing tenants?

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

The following properties will be developed over the next 3 years: Le Marais Phase 2, nearing completion, 24 3-bed homes, 4 4-bed homes; Le Squez Phase 2, 18 3-bed homes, 7 4-bed homes; Salisbury Crescent, 7 3-bed homes and 2 4-bed homes. The programme of sales is demand-led from tenants wishing to buy the homes they occupy or properties which become void elsewhere in the stock throughout the year. It is, therefore, not possible to forecast exactly how these sales will be made up. Apart from a very small number of open market sales previously agreed by this Assembly, all of the 113 sales carried out to date have been to existing States tenants who would otherwise be occupying a rental home as a tenant rather than as a home owner. Members will no doubt recall a very important element of the social housing programme which was that sales would be carried out in a managed sustainable way without imposing unnecessary strains on the wider housing market and relate at all times to current levels of supply and demand within social housing. It is believed essential that decisions on sales for the open market and for tenants should be balanced against the delivery of new social rented housing and the needs reflected in the States rental waiting list. In the present economic climate, the department is keeping a very close eye on the waiting lists and would not pursue sales if the waiting lists indicated a significant increase in demand for rental homes.

3.7.1 Deputy D.J. De Sousa:

I have a supplementary if I may. The buyers that are sought for these homes, where do they come from, what criteria do they have, i.e. children and, as these properties do not appear to be sold to sitting tenants who are they sold to?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

All the tenants are entitled, as a tenant, to purchase their existing homes and all of them that have purchased family homes have got children and they are tenants and they all qualified, even if they have been home owners before. If they are a tenant they qualify to purchase as a first-time buyer, with first-time buyer onward sale conditions.

3.7.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

The Minister failed to put any figures on the question of how many houses have been sold or will be sold over the coming 3 years. Will he assure Members that he will come back to the House with a viable estimate of how many he intends to sell in the coming 3 years?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

No, I will not come back with a viable estimate but I have promised to come back this year with a full report on the way the sales are going, the demand and everything. So all the information that the Deputy and anybody requires on how we are going with

the sales demand and otherwise will come back as a report some time in the middle of this year.

3.7.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

As a supplementary, can the Minister state yet when he would be producing Professor Williams' (is it?) report? I hope it is before June this year.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Hopefully before June this year. As I said, I think the last occasion in question time, Professor Christine Whitehead's report has been in draft form for some time but due to the economic climate and with the issues on home purchasing and what have you ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

I think you said hopefully before June.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Well, I did not say that, Sir. I said a report would come before June on how we are selling homes. The Christine Whitehead Report will come in sometime hopefully in the summer this year.