

2015.03.10

4.1 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of the Minister for Planning and Environment regarding energy efficiency rating systems:

Will the Minister consider the introduction of an energy efficiency rating system for all residential properties and, if so, how does he envisage it would work and what would the timescale be?

Deputy S.G. Luce of St. Martin (The Minister for Planning and Environment):

I have provided an extensive answer to this question in my reply to written question 8687 asked by the Deputy in today's Assembly. But I thank him for his interest on the work that we are already currently undertaking at the department. I reiterate that I remain open to any discussions with the Deputy on improving energy performance and I am happy to take other further questions. But as I stress, I have already given an extensive written answer today on this question.

4.1.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

Does the Minister envisage a time in the near future - and perhaps he could put a timescale on it - whether one is buying a property a Jersey or renting it in any of the particular rental domains one would be able to see very clearly a rating system, which we perhaps are all familiar with, which goes from red to green in order to assist the purchaser or potential renter to know what the likely bills are going to be for that property?

The Deputy of St. Martin:

There is already a system in place for new builds and extensions which we administer through the bylaws. The Deputy's question about a new scheme to do with all properties in the very near future I would just say that before I would make any decisions in that direction there are a number of questions I would need to answer. I am aware that in other jurisdictions you can get energy performance certificates but while they might sound wonderful it is sometimes only the question of a phone call and the person at the other end of the line will say: "What age was your property and what sort of windows have you got?" and will issue you a certificate on that basis without visiting or asking questions about cavity wall or loft insulation, so there are a lot of questions that need to be answered. I would add this: I would like to know what system would be most effective for the Island, the cost of introducing it and administering it, what support or facilitation the industry would need to service such a scheme, and what new resources the legislation or other policy changes would be required? At the end of the day without this sort of legislation it is quite straightforward at the moment for potential buyers to inquire of vendors to see the size of energy bills. I think in the immediate short term that is probably still the best way.

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

Will the Minister commit himself to at least maintaining the level of grants referred to in section 2 of his answer 8687 to improve the energy performance of badly-performing properties and, if possible, look to expand that particular grant system in the new M.T.F.P. (Medium-Term Financial Plan) coming out later in this year?

[9:45]

The Deputy of St. Martin:

I thank the Deputy for his question and it does give me the opportunity to highlight that since 2009, as Members will see, nearly 2,000 properties have been fitted and had their energy efficiencies improved. Those properties were owned or rented by people who were not in a position to financially afford to have those improvements made. I can certainly commit that we will, as a department, continue to help those people unable financially to improve their properties with regards insulation. The Deputy will also know that we are potentially on the changeover to looking to help the people who are able to pay, but I will certainly want to look very carefully before this Assembly or the Government commits funds to helping people who are able to pay to improve their

properties with grants from Government. But certainly I would say to the Deputy, people who are unable to pay and cannot afford to do this work we would very much look forward to continue working with them and helping them in the future.

4.1.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Supplementary, if I may. When the answer refers to 2,000 properties that was 2,000 properties over what timescale and could the Minister further indicate what targets he has for the M.T.F.P. or for this particular scheme going forward?

The Deputy of St. Martin:

The target would be to continue. As I said just now, I think we are almost in the position where all the people who have applied - those who are not able to pay - all those people who have applied, have been helped and we are on the verge of moving into the “able to pay” sector. As the answer says, since 2009 nearly 2,000 properties have been fitted and assisted and I consider that that number will reduce. Because we have done so many we do not think there are very many more to do. But as people come forward we will continue to help them if they are not able to pay.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I do not need to ask a final supplementary, just to thank the Minister for his answer and I will no doubt ask more questions in future.

The Bailiff:

The next question was to have been asked by Deputy Higgins of the Minister for Treasury and Resources but as Deputy Higgins is *malade* that will not be possible.

[Dep Higgins to T&R re the proposed International Finance Centre?]