

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 29th JANUARY 2008

Question

Will the Minister inform members what proportion of new-build flats have been offered for sale as share transfer transactions over the past two years and advise how many of these have been sold as block purchases to either local or overseas investors?

Can the Minister advise the proportion of properties, including 3-bed houses that are purchased by those with qualifications, either resident or not, as investments, thereby reducing the housing stock available for purchase?

Does he accept that with house prices continuing to rise faster here than in other parts of the United Kingdom, the attraction of the Jersey housing market for investment purposes is increasing and if so, will he advise what action, if any, he plans to take to protect the interests of locals who wish simply to purchase and occupy housing?

Answer

Jersey is special in that its Housing Law restricts the ability to purchase property, with free standing property reserved almost exclusively for the ownership of locally qualified persons. The purchase of property by locally qualified persons and subsequent lease of that property to another locally qualified person is not something the housing law seeks to prevent, nor are any measures planned to prevent such a thing occurring.

As to flats, it is highly unlikely that investment is creating difficulties, with prices remaining largely static, and share transfer flats only being able to be leased by locally qualified persons. As to information on purchasing trends for flats, as previously explained in an answer to a question tabled on 15th January, 2008, we do not have information on how many share transfer properties are sold, as their purchase is not controlled by the Housing Law, and there is no requirement to register the sale through the Royal Court. With the introduction of Stamp Duty on share transfer properties this situation will change, and in the meantime, the Statistics Unit have separately estimated that about 3/5th of flat sales in any one quarter are share transfer sales.