

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

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 13th MAY 2008

Question

Does the Minister accept that the findings of the Housing Needs Survey 2007 recently published by the Statistics Department are the most rigorous ever produced and form a sound basis for the planning and delivery of homes in the coming years?

Will the Minister explain to members why the potential shortfall in 2, 3 & 4-bedroom accommodation, first identified in 2004, has not been properly addressed by his department resulting in an increase of two-thirds in the shortfall? Does the Minister accept that this failure has contributed substantially to the unsustainable price rises in this sector?

Does the Minister accept the findings of the survey of an over-supply of 1-bed flats in the (under-55) market? Further will he inform members what number and proportions of 1-bed accommodation units are under construction or have planning permission for 2008 and 2009? What measures will the Minister take to address this issue?

Answer

I do accept that the findings of the Housing Needs Survey which was carried out independently by the Statistics Unit are most certainly robust. The data collected will in my view be an invaluable tool for the planning and delivery of homes particularly over the next 2 – 5 years.

I wholeheartedly disagree with the Deputy's suggestion that the shortfall in 2, 3 & 4 bedroom accommodation has not been addressed. The Planning Minister and I work closely on these issues, for it is the Planning process which delivers new homes and new opportunities. I am delighted that two Propositions will shortly be debated by the States, regarding Lifelong Homes and Jersey Homebuy. I am also delighted that in 2007, the States agreed to give States Tenants an opportunity over a ten year period to buy a home. I would suggest that the findings of the survey report completely vindicate the decision of this Assembly last year.

The Planning and Environment Minister and I enjoy an excellent working relationship and much has been achieved since 2004 in delivering sufficient homes to meet the level of need indicated in 2004.