

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING
BY DEPUTY D.J. DE SOUSA OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 23rd FEBRUARY 2010**

Question

“Can the Minister state why, after over 10 years as President or Minister of Housing, and 4 years after Housing Trust Regulation appeared as an aim in the States Strategic Plan, the States are still waiting for action to be taken on this matter?”

Answer

My priorities and those of my Department are set by the States and articulated in the States Strategic Plan. The 2006 – 2011 Strategic Plan did not make specific reference to Housing Trust regulation. What it did task us with was, reviewing, developing and implementing strategies for the provision of Social Housing in the Island, including the long term management of states rental accommodation. The plan also set out a number of high priority tasks for the Department in respect of increasing the level of home ownership and perhaps most crucially putting in place a programme to bring States rental homes up to a decent standard.

The issue of the regulation of Housing Trusts needed to be properly considered in a complete review of social housing provision in the Island as it was clear that any new regulation would have to apply equally to all social landlords. The Department commissioned a Fundamental Review of Social Housing by Professor Christine Whitehead OBE in 2008. The Professor examined and commented on the issue of appropriate regulation in her report. She identified that providing regulation could be costly for such a small jurisdiction as ours and she makes some recommendations about how regulation could be achieved without making it unduly costly and bureaucratic.

I will be bringing forward a Report and Proposition later this year which will deal with the issues raised in Professor Whitehead’s report and the feedback that we have received during the consultation process. That Report and Proposition will have to consider the issue of regulation and it will be for members of this Assembly to ultimately decide what form that regulation should take and crucially, how it will be paid for at a time when the pressure on our public finances is so great.