

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY THE DEPUTY OF ST. MARY
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 19th JULY 2010**

Question

Can the Chief Minister outline what has been done since the approval of the Strategic Plan in respect of the three commitments in section 8 (to encourage community involvement and voluntary service, work with the Parishes to develop community initiatives and preserve, enhance and promote community values)?

Answer

Enhancing the role of the community is a key component of promoting social inclusion on the Island and one to which the Council of Ministers is strongly committed. Promotion of community values and the enablement of civil society require changes in behaviour and attitudes. These processes take time to achieve but we are already putting into place mechanisms which will allow this to happen. A central feature thus far has been to develop a relationship with the Third Sector through the creation of a Social Policy Forum. This Forum, made up of representatives of the voluntary sector, is designed to act as a link between the public and the States on social policy issues, and is currently investigating ways in which the community can contribute to supporting the ageing population. This work will be complemented by the plans H&SS are developing with the parishes and the Third Sector to help maintain the independence of older people. As a start, an Information Sharing Protocol that will identify those in the community who may require additional support has been developed to promote stronger working between the Parishes and the States.

Moreover, the Housing and Planning departments and some parishes are also working together to provide "lifetime homes" in which older residents can live independent lives in the community. Parish communities will continue to benefit from Sheltered Homes developments, as has been the case in Trinity and St. John, and which will be extended to further parishes like St. Peter and St. Ouen over the coming years. These initiatives are being driven by Parish Connétables with the support of departments, and help to build and maintain communities.

Furthermore, States departments continue to work to develop community-based initiatives, which will help preserve, enhance and promote community values. Housing tenants associations supported by the Housing Department, for instance, have enabled States housing tenants to become more involved in their neighbourhoods and to have influence over the decision-making process for issues affecting their communities. Such associations have allowed people to come together to represent their views and concerns, helping to encourage participation and a greater sense of community.

It should also be noted that major policy issues such as the Fiscal Strategy Review (FSR) being undertaken by the Minister for Treasury and Resources and the Island Plan being undertaken by the Minister for Planning and Environment have provided opportunities to support community involvement in States decision-making, and Islanders have been actively encouraged to participate in these consultation processes. By various means, including public consultation and public meetings in parishes, views of Islanders have been sought about major policy issues and how they may be affected by them.

In addition to work being carried out on Island, Jersey is also a member of the British-Irish Council and is actively engaged in the Social Inclusion work stream. Over the next two years the BIC will be focusing on how community cohesion can be achieved through use of the Third Sector and how wider civil activity can be enabled. This work stream provides Jersey with a valuable opportunity to learn, in a supportive way, from our partner administrations as we look to promote social inclusion and community values. It also enables us to contribute to that work stream the particular benefits of the Jersey honorary system and the strength of an Island community.