

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 30th NOVEMBER 2010**

Question

Will the Minister provide evidence to substantiate his claims made at the Health, Social Security and Housing Scrutiny public hearing on 10th November 2010, that the replacement of old centralised wet heating systems with new individual electric heating systems in several estates (Clos Gosset, Clos de Roncier, Oak Tree Gardens) has reduced heating bills for tenants?

Answer

The Department is part way through a major programme to replace fossil fuelled heating systems in many rental homes with new electric powered heating and hot water systems.

These systems bring a number of benefits for tenants, including:-

- Improved reliability.
- Individual control over previous district heating systems controlled by the Department.
- Opportunities to benefit from energy saving. Clearly each tenant's electricity bill will be dependant upon their individual energy consumption.
- Greater stability in energy prices.
- A single energy bill which is more transparent.

The programme of heating changes is being run alongside maintenance programmes to improve the homes. During the installation of the new heating the opportunity is being taken to increase loft insulation to a minimum of 300mm bringing each home up to current building regulation standards. Mains operated smoke detectors are also being replaced and the general electrical system inspected. At Clos De Roncier the new heating was installed along with external wall insulation and double glazed windows and at Le Petit Clos Gosset a programme of cavity wall insulation was carried out prior to replacing the heating systems. The aim always is to make each home as efficient as possible and therefore as cheap to heat as possible.

Quantifying the actual savings made needs to be carried out with care and is best done after a full year has elapsed after changeover and the tenant has had the opportunity to go through a full annual cycle of heating. It has been possible to do this for the homes at Clos de Roncier. When comparing the combined cost of domestic electricity consumption and heating oil charges per household for the 12 months prior to heating changeover against the cost of electricity supply only for the 12 months following heating changeover it is apparent that on average, tenants on that estate are making a saving of £467.13 a year in energy costs.

A system of monitoring consumption on a home by home basis has been in place throughout the heating changeover programme. This ensures that the JEC can identify tenants who appear to have higher consumption than anticipated. Where this has happened in a small number of instances the JEC have intervened to ensure that that tenants are using their systems correctly.

I have already said that one of the benefits for tenants in switching to the new systems is stability in energy prices. At the beginning of 2010 the JEC reduced their electricity prices by 5% and they have just announced that there will not be a price increase in 2011. That will directly benefit any tenant who has already switched and would otherwise be facing increases of 16% in the cost of gas and 18% in the cost of oil which have just been announced.