

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 4th JUNE 2013**

Question

In the light of the Jersey Housing Assessment 2013-15, will the Minister estimate what the current demand for social rental accommodation by size is currently, and state what impact the 10 population projections published by the States of Jersey Statistics Unit in September 2012 will have on this demand in the short (2020) and medium (2035) term?

Will he also state the extent to which he expects to be able to meet any of the needs required by these projections over the short and medium term?

Further, in the light of the findings contained in the 2011 census report that there was a propensity for immigrants from Portugal and the EU accession countries to remain in Jersey following the reduction in qualification periods and that some 90% of these recent arrivals were economically active and concentrated in elementary occupations, will he state what impact, if any, these factors may have on the demand for social rental accommodation?

Answer

The Affordable Housing Gateway month end report for May 2013 confirms that there are currently 1305 active applications on the list for social housing.

Only Bands 1, 2, 3 & 6 from the Gateway (which are the highest priority) should be compared with figures generated from the Housing Departments rental waiting list in the past, and therefore used to indicate true demand. In the absence of significant new supply we have to rely on void turnover within the current housing stock and the number of new applicants presently exceeds the turnover. Demand is likely to keep increasing until a significant supply of new homes is delivered mid 2014 – late 2015 for existing schemes that are in development.

The current requirement in terms of numbers of units need to meet the demands of the waiting list is broken down as follows;

Net Requirement (Bands 1,2,3, & 6 only)

Bed Size	Number
One Bed	305
Two Bed	234
Three Bed	139
Four Bed	31
Five+	1
TOTAL	710

The full month end report for May 2013 is available on the States website.

The Jersey Housing Assessment produced by the Statistic Unit states the potential shortfall (supply minus demand) for social housing over the three year period 2013 to 2015 is 420;

“An overall potential shortfall of more than 400 dwelling units is apparent in social housing. Potential shortfalls were observed for every size of dwelling in this sector; the greatest demand, and potential shortfall, in the social rental sector is for 2-bedroom properties.”

“The largest component of the demand for social housing was from existing households wanting to move into this sector there was also notable demand from concealed households.”

We can see from the current Gateway statistics that the greatest demand continues to be for one and two bedroom properties, it is also important to note a number of larger units that could be released if there was a greater supply of one bedroom properties, particularly for those waiting to downsize.

The concealed demand, which was highlighted by the Statistics Unit in their report, is something that I have raised concern about in the past and is one of the reasons why I brought forward my proposals in P.33/2013. I am committed to making housing more accessible for those that are in need of it and expect the Strategic Housing Unit to consider the widening of eligibility criteria for social housing once the Island Wide Housing Strategy, already commissioned, is produced. Any widening of the criteria needs to be linked to an increase in supply but we need the strategy before considering that further.

The Jersey Housing Assessment 2013-15 report makes the very interesting point that over the short term (2013-2015) the need for social housing is unaffected by migration levels.

“Although there is also demand from in-migrant households for accommodation in the qualified tenures (primarily from j-category households), the potential shortfalls and surpluses in the owner-occupier, social housing and private rental categories are relatively insensitive to the level of net migration in the short-term.”

Over the short-term period defined by the Deputy's question (to 2020), the Jersey Housing Assessment does not take into account the potential effect of the large number of inward migrants in 2006-2008 (more than 1,000 people each year) who (if they remain in Jersey) will gain residential qualifications in 2016-2018 and may have a potential impact on the demand for social or affordable housing.

Any changes in migration, different to current trends, will no doubt affect the levels of the potential shortfalls or surpluses in qualified and non-qualified accommodation. However, it would be very difficult to predict the effects over the longer term as projections are based on a whole range of criteria.

It would be very difficult to predict the effects of population growth on the need for social housing over the longer term. The need for affordable homes is a complex issue that cannot be explained by changes in the population alone; demand for affordable housing and its sub-tenures is also sensitive to economic fluctuations.

The important thing is that we have put in place the structure necessary to respond to the changing housing requirements of the Island and have the capacity and flexibility to react to changing requirements.

The proposed Housing Company stock development plans are noted in section 5.4 and Appendix B of the Housing Transformation Programme Full Business Case (R.15/2013). The Housing Company plans to deliver a net 434 new social housing units. Additionally, certain Social Housing Trusts may be able to deliver a further 203 new social housing units.

The proposals also include the sale of 300 States social housing units to tenants which removes those tenants from the social sector and creates more home ownership. All the properties sold will be retained as affordable homes in perpetuity. These proposals taken together will allow 637 families to be housed from the Affordable Housing Gateway in addition to the normal vacancies created each year.

The next round of the Housing Needs Survey will provide further enlightenment as to any change in demand for social and affordable housing. In addition, should the Strategic Housing Unit require further homes to be delivered by Social Housing Providers, then these will be delivered as long as appropriate sites are made available.