

#### **4.7 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Minister for Housing regarding access to the details of the Housing Transformation Plan:**

Will the Minister inform Members when he will bring the Housing Transformation Plan to the Assembly for debate and what provision, if any, will he make to ensure that Members can examine in detail the figures which underpin the business case for the plan?

#### **Deputy A.K.F. Green of St. Helier (The Minister for Housing):**

I am presently concluding discussions with my fellow Ministers in respect of the Housing Transformation Programme and anticipate bringing my proposals to the Council of Ministers in February and to lodge as soon as possible thereafter. It has always been my intention to share the full business case and the financial model with States Members when I lodge my proposition. Indeed, the Health and Social Security and Housing Scrutiny Sub-Panel and some States Members have already taken the opportunity to look at the proposals as I had them initially and to give me lots of useful information and feedback on that. That is the reason why I am slightly delayed in bringing it forward. But I will give Members adequate time to examine the full business case, which is a good one but a complicated one.

#### **4.7.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Does the Minister not accept that the reason for his proposed rise in the States rental levels to 90 per cent of the private sector levels is solely or largely due to the continued payment of up to £24 million annually into the States Treasury under the H.T.P. (Housing Transformation Plan) proposals in order to make the scheme viable?

[11:30]

#### **Deputy A.K.F. Green:**

In a word, no, I do not. I am committed to a number of different principles. Firstly, I do not wish to subsidise people who no longer need to be subsidised in their rent. Secondly, as a member of the Council of Ministers, I support fully, as this House did, the Medium-Term Financial Plan and, thirdly, is that people keep saying about this return. Yes, the return does happen but that return is part of a legacy and most of that goes to paying the housing component at Social Security so I do not accept it is as simple as the Deputy is saying.

#### **4.7.2 Deputy M. Tadier:**

The Minister talked about a hidden subsidy and he also mentioned that some of the money of that goes towards Social Security to pay private landlords. What joined-up thinking is the Minister doing with his department and the Minister for Social Security to make sure that any of the increases in social rents do not simply end up being handed over to Social Security and go into the back pockets of very wealthy local landlords?

#### **Deputy A.K.F. Green:**

That is an interesting question but we have to separate the rent component that is paid in the private sector from the rent component that is paid in the States sector. We have to keep that separate. The private sector is a matter for Social Security. The social sector is a matter for myself and I have had tremendous support, not only from the Minister for Social Security, in working my way through some very sound advice and guidance from the Scrutiny Panel and members that have been to see me and the Minister for Treasury and Resources. That is why I have taken slightly longer but I am close to concluding my thinking on them.

#### **4.7.3 Deputy T.A. Vallois of St. Saviour:**

Could the Minister advise whether the social housing will be defined by this House before anything is decided going forward so that we will have an in principle decision made by this House as to what social housing is in the 21st century?

#### **Deputy A.K.F. Green:**

I will be defining when I bring my full business case forward what social housing is and, of course, it is up to Members to amend that if they think it is different.

**4.7.4 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Can the Minister attempt to justify, which he has failed to do in 2 written questions, his logic which says that the continued payment of £24 million into the Treasury, which has handicapped the building of housing and the state of repair of housing for the last decade, why he is planning to continue that set-up under his new system and why does he not do something about that which has crippled social housing on this Island?

**Deputy A.K.F. Green:**

Because I live in the real world. If we are going to stop that and if you gave me a choice, do I want to spend that money on housing or do I want to contribute to the housing component of Social Security, the answer would be I would like to invest it in housing but I live in the real world. If we are going to lower that component or stop that component, what are we going to stop doing? Are we going to not give Health the money they want or perhaps give Education a bit less or are we going to put G.S.T. (Goods and Services Tax) up? I live in the real world. I am committed to the Medium-Term Financial Plan and I am working with my colleagues to come up with an acceptable system that will work for social housing.

**4.7.5 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Does the Minister not at least accept that the continued drain of £24 million-plus given to the Treasury is likely to make more difficult the provision of sufficient housing of sufficient quality by the H.T.P.?

**Deputy A.K.F. Green:**

I will come up with a plan that takes that into account.