

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
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ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 4th MARCH 2014

Question

Could the Chief Minister provide a list of all legislation and policy used by Ministers that relate to all initiatives for the provision of housing in Jersey (both private housing and social housing) and give an analysis showing how the legislation and policy relate and interact with each other for the betterment of the public of Jersey?

Answer

A Strategic Housing Unit (SHU) has been established, under the leadership of the Minister for Housing, to co-ordinate all housing policy. This follows an Assembly debate on “The Reform of Social Housing” (P33/2013).

A Ministerial “Strategic Housing Group” has been established to advise the SHU, with ministerial representation from Health and Social Services, Treasury and Resources, Planning and Environment, and other Ministers as required. Social housing providers and officer groups will support this ministerial group.

This structure will help to develop housing policies for the betterment of the public of Jersey, and will culminate in the production of a housing strategy. This is a complex piece of work. Research is being undertaken in 2014 so the strategy can be published in 2015.

The “provision of housing” as outlined in the question is taken to relate to all laws, policies and functions that govern the supply and management of housing.

The relevant laws:

- Planning and Building (Jersey) Law, 2002
- Building Bye Laws and supplementary planning guidance
- Residential Tenancy (Jersey) Law, 2012
- Lodging Houses (Registration) (Jersey) Law 1962
- Dwelling-Houses (Rent Control) (Jersey) Law 1946
- Statutory Nuisance (Jersey) Law 1999
- Loi (1934) sur la Santé Publique

Various organisations have relevant functions:

- The provision of social housing by the Housing Department and housing trusts
- The development of housing by the States of Jersey Development Company
- The provision of States owned land by the Treasury and Resources Minister through the Property Holdings Department to provide social housing

There are also a range of policies which affect housing, including:

- Our tax and benefit regimes
- Support for home ownership, for example, the Building Loans (Jersey) Law 1950, and the Starter Homes Deposit Loan Scheme
- the Control of Housing and Work (Jersey) Law

Legislation and policies interact with each other in a number of ways, for instance:

- Improvements need to be made in some areas, for example, in coordinating the regulation of housing standards across social housing, registered housing (formerly called unqualified housing) and private rented accommodation. This is why, for example, the Chief Minister's Department, Strategic Housing Unit, Public Health Department, and others, are developing new policies in this area to improve standards.
- We need a focused approach to the issue of affordability in Jersey. This is why, for example, the Strategic Housing Unit is developing a housing strategy, and why the Economics Unit is reviewing barriers to housing supply.
- The Housing Transformation programme will deliver a wide range of benefits for social housing. This includes £250 million investment to improve standards and supply, and the removal of hidden rental subsidies through changes to rent policy and Income Support rules.
- The draft Revised Island Plan aims to tackle the shortfall in social housing provision, providing sites where additional funding from the Housing Transformation Programme can be invested.
- The Residential Tenancy (Jersey) Law, 2012, significantly improves the regulation of landlord and tenant relationships, providing protection against eviction and from excessive utility charges.
- The new Control of Housing and Work (Jersey) Law, 2012, enables registered people to lease property. This gives them the same protection as entitled residents for the first time in more than 60 years.

This work will continue and accelerate.