

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 14th DECEMBER 2015**

Question

What specific targets for additional units of accommodation in the social rental and subsidised purchase sectors does the Minister have for the coming 4 years of the Medium Term Financial Plan in order to bring down housing costs which are pushing households into relative low income?

Can she further indicate what effect, if any, the decision to move to 90% of private sector rentals levels had on the increase in the proportion of social rental households (from 50% to 66%) in relative low income over the period of the Income Distribution Survey 2014/15?

Answer

The primary means of supporting affordability is to deliver an adequate supply of new, good standard housing for our population, while also getting the most out of our existing housing, including reviewing options to get empty homes back into use.

Over the life of the Island Plan, 1,000 units of affordable were planned. An analysis is underway to provide details on delivery to date and expected delivery over the life of the Plan, across all tenures, including for rent and affordable purchase, with this to be published in early 2016 (with initial indications suggesting a further 750+ affordable units over the next 4 years).

Alongside this, the Council of Ministers is focussed on supporting a strong economy to help with the delivery of new private sector housing. The Scrutiny Panel have been very clear that we need deliver more housing. This is why the Housing Strategy is so important.

The Income Distribution Survey shows that people in social housing, in particular those of working age, have found the recent economic climate difficult. This needs further, detailed analysis. The forthcoming rental price index, which will be published by the Statistics Unit in February 2016, will further inform this analysis.

At the same time, the 90% rent model enables us to invest in more and better housing, delivering decent homes. This is important, and reflects States decisions. At this stage, 20% of tenants in the largest social housing provider are on 90% rents, some of whom will be fully supported by Income Support, being unable to meet these costs. For the people who are not supported by Income Support, we need to deliver not just better homes, but continue to improve our economic performance, improving standard of livings – which is why it has been so welcome to more recently have experienced record employment growth, earnings above inflation, and unemployment falling.