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1 Connétable R.A. Buchanan of St. Ouen of the Minister for the Environment regarding plans to engage with bodies such as the Jersey Landlord's Association to ensure that the Public Health and Safety (Rented Dwellings)((Jersey) Law 2018 is implemented successfully: [OQ.127/2018]

What plans does the Minister have to engage with bodies such as the Jersey Landlords' Association to ensure that the Public Health and Safety (Rented Dwellings) (Jersey) Law 2018 is implemented successfully?

Deputy R. Labey of St. Helier:

Just a point of clarification. Should the Connétable declare that he is a member of the Jersey Landlords' Association in asking that question? I just ask.

The Connétable of St. Ouen:

My apologies, I forgot to do that. It is not me that is the member, it is my wife who is the chairman of the Association, and my apologies for not declaring that before I asked the question.

The Bailiff:

Thank you, Connétable. You should have declared it, and I am glad you now have.

Deputy J.H. Young of St. Brelade (The Minister for the Environment):

Environmental Health Officers will be engaging with all major stakeholders to ensure the law is implemented successfully. Such engagement has previously happened with the Jersey Landlords' Association and many others. Four education and awareness sessions have been arranged at the St. Helier Town Hall on 9th October for landlords, agents and other parties. These can be booked online. There are a range of various times in the day and the evening to facilitate as many people as possible. An engagement with agents, housing associations, Parishes are also planned. If more are needed they will be done. Technical training for interested parties are being arranged and all this will be done before the minimum standards come into force. Good landlords with decent properties have nothing to fear from these regulations. Officers will work with landlords to achieve and improve incremental improvement in standards of rented dwellings.

5.1.1 The Connétable of St. Ouen:

Would the Minister agree with my view that legislation such as this is probably best implemented sensibly to start with, but backed up by firm application for those people who do not comply?

Deputy J.H. Young:

Yes, I think the general principle is one of all enforcement procedures need laws, and of course the issue of legal proceedings and enforcement is a final resource. All our efforts will be put into this new law, the same as it is in all the other regulatory law, to try and work with people in partnership by persuasion, education, informing, to try and bring about that standard. But there is no question, when no standard is not achieved then the prospect of enforcement is there and the law will be enforced, if that does not happen.

5.1.2 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

In order to convince the landlord population that the motivation for this legislation is one to safeguard standards rather than to make money for the department or to fill a budget cut, which it has had in the past, will the Minister ensure that there is a cost recovery process, and nothing more than that, in regard to the fees that are going to be applied to the registration fees?

Deputy J.H. Young:

The Deputy's question addresses the future situation which would apply if this House approves regulations which are set out in a licensing scheme. At the moment, the law is enforced from 1st October and the minimum standards will be in place as soon as possible after that. The question of fees will not arise at that time. But in prospect, there is this issue, which the department are working on, and there will be consultation on the regulations and the arrangements for licensing, and indeed the fees with the Environment Scrutiny Panel and others before those regulations come to the States. Those decisions are yet to be made. I anticipate that those regulations are likely to be at the House... our aim is to have them here by the end of March next year.

5.1.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

Does the Minister agree that in order for even the first phase to be effective there will need to be a compulsory registration scheme for all landlords? Is he saying that there will be no charge initially for that registration?

Deputy J.H. Young:

I apologise, I cannot have been clear. The law that is in force now, that has been agreed, sets minimum standards. Those minimum standards we will try to progress by a process of education, training and gaining support from landlords, as I just said, but we will be working in a reactive mode, responding to complaints and dealing with known issues about applying those minimum standards. But there is no question in my mind that the principle of registering all rental dwellings is right and it is a fundamental point in the regulations. There are many potential advantages for that, but of course that cannot be put into effect until the regulations are in place, as I have said. But we do need to consult on the detail of those and, please, I give the Assembly an assurance that that material will be properly consulted on with the Environment Scrutiny Panel, and there will be plenty of opportunities for Members to state their views on the details. But the principle of registration is, I believe, absolutely right.

5.1.4 Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade:

Would the Minister be able to give Members some idea of how representative the Jersey Landlords' Association is of landlords in the Island in general?

Deputy J.H. Young:

I asked the same question myself. I have looked at their website, finding that it looks very impressive at the front end. There is a picture there of a certain person's very prominent personal hotel. The website links do not work. I do not know how many there are. I have not been able to find out. There is no indication on the website but apparently they do have ... the website says that there are fees, £25 per annum, to join and that fee is determined by the number of rentable units and that Members are allowed to advertise on the site. I am sorry to the chairman of the Scrutiny Panel, I have only got that information. If I can find out more I will let him know.