

2020.01.21

**7 Deputy S.G. Luce of St. Martin of the Minister for Children and Housing regarding the availability of four-bedroom houses through the Affordable Housing Gateway: (OQ.1/2020)**

How many vacant 4-bedroom houses are there currently available through the Affordable Housing Gateway?

**Senator S.Y. Mézec (The Minister for Children and Housing):**

I am not aware of any 4-bedroom properties available through Andium Homes but at the last check I was aware of one 4-bedroom property available through a housing trust.

**2.7.1 The Deputy of St. Martin:**

Does the Minister consider that enough 4-bedroomed houses are available at his discretion?

**Senator S.Y. Mézec:**

Absolutely not. This has always been an area of difficulty because there are not that many 4-bedroomed homes in the social rental sector. We are aware through the *Objective Assessment of Housing Needs* report that there is a need to build more 4-bedroom homes. I am slightly surprised by the number that is suggested to us; the number that is suggested to us is 10 new 4-bedroomed homes over the course of the next Island Plan but then when I look at the Housing Gateway where there are currently 28 applications for 4-bedroomed homes I think that probably does not necessarily add up and so some looking has got to be done to see how we can incorporate more of these homes in future social housing developments.

**2.7.2 The Deputy of St. Martin:**

I share the Minister's enthusiasm for finding 4-bedroom homes. Could I get an assurance from him that he will look at those few homes that he does have at his disposal to make sure that they have been properly used and that the 4 bedrooms are being used for bedrooms and not ... I am aware that there are families desperately in need of this type of accommodation.

**Senator S.Y. Mézec:**

That is absolutely a good point and one that I am certainly conscious of. There are currently 6 4-bedroom homes where the occupants are looking to downsize and as more of the supply comes online this year, we are onsite currently for 732 homes, that will enable people to move to homes that are most suited to their particular needs and hopefully free up some of those, so those who need to go up can do so. I am also in the process of looking to see if there is some arrangement we can do with the rent situation where there are some anomalies where some people can downsize and end up paying more rent, which is clearly inappropriate. If we can do something with those anomalies we can make it easier for people to downsize when that is appropriate for them without suffering financial penalty essentially for doing so and then people are housed in homes that are best suited to their needs.