

STATEMENT BY THE GSLP/LIBERAL OPPOSITION

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It is incredible that the Government do not have the humility to accept that the reason why there continue to be so many people with housing problems is because of their failure to provide adequate housing in a much more timely way for people on the different medical lists and on the housing waiting lists in general. The response by Housing Minister Fabian Vinet to the comments made by Shadow Minister Charles Bruzon has therefore completely missed the point and thrust of the argument.

The plain fact is that there are so many medically categorised and other persons waiting for a Government flat because there are not enough flats to go round given that the GSD Government have not made adequate provision over the years. This is the core of the issue which the Government have chosen not to elaborate upon in their response.

The Government have not denied that in February there were 256 people on the various medical lists. How can they when it was them who supplied this information in Parliament in the first place? It was also the Government itself that told the House five years ago when questioned about the creation of the A+ category that the new category simply meant that those urgent cases could have a house whenever one became available. This is being repeated in letters sent to people on the medical lists which say that "it has to be understood that this priority is always dependent on the availability of houses." All that Mr Bruzon has said is that this is the criteria that applies in all housing cases to everyone who is waiting for a Government flat.

It is absurd that the Government should claim in their defence that there are 20 A+ medically categorised people waiting for a flat in new developments who are happy to wait for such an allocation. The reality is that these people are waiting because they have to and even then the completion of these projects have been subject to lengthy delays. They cannot possibly be happy to continue with the hardship posed by their medical condition in their present accommodation in such circumstances. It will be recalled that all those who received letters allocating them flats in the rental estate at Rooke just before the 2007 general election were also very happy to receive the letters. No doubt they are less happy now in April 2010 that they are still waiting for a flat and that the promised draw for the flats which was supposed to take place in December 2007 has not happened.

The Government should note that there is no way that Mr Bruzon will regret having made his statement on the medical lists. On the contrary, Mr Bruzon is

very pleased to have made the statement because it has resulted in the Government placing information into the public domain which was not known before and which would probably not have been made public otherwise.

Commenting on the matter, Shadow Housing Minister Charles Bruzon said:

“The Government are simply trying to cover up the failure of their housing policy and of their responsibility to build low-cost houses for people within a reasonable timescale. I am glad that my previous statement has been successful in producing more information than was provided in answer to my questions in Parliament. Mr Vinet may yet come to regret the reply that he has given because this means that in order to get information that was not given in Parliament all I have to do is come out with press releases criticising his policies.

We could have used words other than ‘gimmick’ to describe the Government’s creation of the new A+ category. They raised the expectations of people who were placed in this new category when it was introduced in 2005 giving them the impression that they would be getting a home as a matter of urgency. Unfortunately, in many cases this did not happen. If this was not a ‘gimmick’ then I do not know what is.”

ENDS