
Housing Policy Development Board (the 'Board' or the 'HPDB') Meeting 1
Tuesday 9th April 2019, 10.00 – 12.00

Board:

Minister for Children and Housing, Senator Sam Mézec (SM) (interim Chair)
Minister for the Environment, Deputy John Young (JY)
Minister for Infrastructure, Deputy Kevin Lewis (KL)
Assistant Minister for the Environment, Deputy Gregory Guida (GG)
Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources, Deputy Lindsay Ash (LA)
Connétable of St. Mary, John Le Bailly (JLB)

Executive Support:

Strategic Policy, Performance and Population:

Kevin Pilley – Policy Director (KP)
Richard Jouault – Deputy Director, Social Policy (RJ)
Jack Norris – Policy Principal (JN)
Matthew Viney – Policy Principal (MV)

Treasury and Exchequer:

Jim Shilliday – Head of Shareholder Relations (JS)

Planning & Environment:

Andrew Scate – Group Director Regulation (AS)

Ministerial Support Unit

Marie-Claire Hannigan (MC)

Apologies:

Minister for Treasury and Resources, Deputy Susie Pinel (SP)
Deputy Carina Alves (CA)
Sue Duhamel – Policy Director (SD)

1. Welcome and apologies

1.1 SM welcomed all those in attendance. Apologies were noted from SP and SD. SM presented apologies from CA who had been appointed to the Board as a non-ministerial lay member.

2. Review and agree terms of reference

2.1 The terms of reference were reviewed and discussed. No actions were arising that required a revision of the terms. The following points were noted:

2.2 Independent chair and lay members:

- Mr. Michael De La Haye, former Greffier of the States, has recently agreed to take the position of Chair of the Board.
- JLB and CA are to be non-ministerial members of the Board.
- SM asked for views on lay members. It was agreed that an approach would be made to Mr. John Scally of Caritas Jersey. Officers agreed to contact Mr. Scally following the meeting.

Action Point 1: Officers to approach Mr. Scally about joining the Board.

The Board suggested that representatives of the following sectors should also be considered to discuss and inform individual items arising from the programme of work:

- Property development or construction.
- Legal/Chartered Surveyors (via the RICS).
- The Parishes.

2.3 Prioritisation of work programme:

SM requested the following items be noted for immediate consideration by the Board as they had formed part of recent discussions with the Chief Minister:

1. A review of external (off-island purchased) buy to let properties.
 - a. GG stated his view that the aim should not be to stop investment, rather to stop speculative purchase.
2. A review of the Social Housing Rent Policy. This would require engagement with - numerous stakeholders including – Andium Homes, Social Security and Treasury.
3. A long-term piece of work to investigate issues in Jersey's housing market and the potential levers available to government in order to create a sustainable market. This would need to be aligned with the work of the Migration Policy Development Board, and it was suggested that a joint meeting of the Boards should be held in due course

The Board agreed to the inclusion of these items in the work programme.

- SM - asked the Board to identify other areas for discussion.

The Board engaged in a wide-ranging discussion. The key points arising were:

- SM informed the Board of anecdotal reports of tenants discovering property owners not paying tax they owe. It was indicated that the proposed landlord licence scheme, being proposed by the Minister for the Environment, could provide oversight of this issue.
- The Board highlighted the need to review the Share Transfer system of property ownership as part of buy-to-let property investment
- LA – noted the issue of vacant properties and questioned why it occurred. GG observed that the most recent 2011 Census showed 3,000 vacant properties in the Island. There were various reasons why properties were vacant, including related to inheritance and another similarly valid reasons e.g. vacant pending tenants.

SM - noted that Census figures were out of date and suggested that new data was required. RJ indicated that the likely result would show that the number of vacant properties has reduced due to latent demand. Analysis would be needed to confirm this.

KP – highlighted that a critical work stream was focusing on making use of current housing stock (e.g. due to under-occupation) - rather than building new/developing land.

- JY – suggested a policy review on the subject of multigenerational dwellings in order to help younger people by making the system more flexible. Guernsey's - dower policy was cited.

GG - cited France, where planning permission is based on the percentage of land that is built on - not what you build.

- KL raised the issue of downsizing, suggesting that there was no incentive for households to downsize as moving from a house to a smaller property, could result in the same costs. Several suggestions on how to resolve this were discussed.
- KP noted that the Island Plan would outline the number of homes required in Jersey over the next 10 years based on the findings of the Objective Assessment of Housing Need Report. It was noted that an important piece of work for the Board would be to review the mechanisms available to deliver affordable homes as this will inform the development of the Plan. The housing needs of the unqualified sector also needed to be analysed.

- JY noted that retaining open space is vital. KP informed the Board that an open space audit has been carried out and will be fed into the Island Plan.

2.4 Social housing rents policy:

- SM raised the issue of the social housing rents policy and his wish to consider this as part of the work of the Board. Full discussion was deferred until a future meeting. However, SM mentioned that a separate a sub-group may be required to consider this issue (with the permission of the Chief Minister), which included the Minister for Social Security.

2.5 Timescales

- The Board agreed a 12-month plan would be produced. An indicative or draft report would be needed before year-end to inform the Island Plan.

3 Engagement of external advisors

- It was noted that the Board hoped to be able to engage an independent housing advisor to produce a report on issues in Jersey's housing market and the long-term measures required to deliver a sustainable housing market.

4 Structure and regularity of future meetings

- Nothing noted on meeting structure. Future meetings noted as follows:

Tuesday 14th May, 10am-12pm, Broad Street, La Pulente Room
Tuesday 11th June, 10am-12pm, Broad Street, La Pulente Room
Tuesday 23rd July, 10am-12pm, Broad Street, La Pulente Room

5 Future items for consideration by the Board

5.1 The following active areas of work were noted:

- **Key worker strategy**
JN noted that an independent housing advisor had previously produced a preliminary report in this area. The report will be presented at the next meeting.
- **Foreign investment in share transfer property**
Discussed previously
- **Social housing rents policy**

Officers would begin to commence work on a review of the social housing rents policy and report back to the Board in due course with potential areas for review and next steps.

- **Homelessness review and strategy**
Work is ongoing to progress a homelessness review and strategy. An update would be brought to the Board in May.
- **Review of access to social housing**
An independent housing advisor has previously undertaken a review in this area and the report will be presented at the next meeting.
- **Treatment of housing trusts' tax status**
An update would be provided at the next meeting in relation to the tax treatment of housing trusts under the Charities (Jersey) Law 2014.

6 Future briefings for the Board

6.1 The Board identified the following groups or organisations from which they would like to receive briefings:

- Statistics Jersey – housing affordability; future housing needs
- Andium Homes – strategic business plan and alignment with the work of the Board
- Economics Unit
- Law Officers Department
- Update on the preparation of the Island Plan
- Government or commercial representatives from other jurisdictions
- Representatives from agriculture.

The Board agreed that briefings should be given separately to the regular meetings.

7 AOB

7.1 Further to items 2.4 and 5.1, SM reported that the Chairman of the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel had written to the Minister requesting information on the proposed terms of reference and timeline for the Board's review of the social housing rents policy. It was noted that the Panel had indicated its interest in undertaking a review and wished to ensure that the work programmes were coordinated. SM stated that he believed this Board was best placed to undertake the review. SM requested guidance on how the Board wished to respond. JN advised that discussions would take place between officers from STE, SPPP and CLS to consider a review of the rents policy. An update would be brought to a future meeting of the Board.

Action Point 2 – Social Housing Rents – update for Board on outcomes of officer group

7.2 It was queried whether residential/non-residential qualifications were in scope for review. JN advised that this could be included in the scope of work to be undertaken by the independent housing advisor when they are appointed. The Board agreed that it was important to cover this matter within the scope of the review as it was one of the complexities of Jersey's housing system.

Action Point 3 – request the independent housing advisor to include Jersey's system of residential qualifications (in relation to residential accommodation) within the scope of its work.

7.3 There being no further matters for consideration, the meeting closed at 11.35 hrs

8. Action Points

	Action required	Allocated to	Required by	Date completed
1	Officers to approach Mr. Scally about joining the Board.	JN/RJ	30/4/2019	
2	Social Housing Rents – update on outcomes of officer meeting	JN/RJ	11/7/2019	
3	Residential qualifications - extend the scope of work of the independent housing advisor (once appointed) to include Jersey's system of residential qualifications	JN/RJ	31/5/2019	

Minutes agreed

Chairman:

Date:

Agreement for publication

Chairman:

Date:
