

Design for New Homes

ACTION PLAN

AGREED BY THE MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT
(1/08/07)

On 11 September 2007, the Environment Scrutiny Panel presented its report entitled 'Design of Homes Review' to the States.

In my response, I have warmly welcomed the report and I have asked that Deputy Sean Power takes responsibility for integrating the document into the planning process and the work of the Planning Department. To this end, I have declared my intention that the Panel's report be used to inform:

- (i) the current Island Plan Review process; and
- (ii) the emerging Supplementary Planning Guidance on 'The Design of New Homes'.

My report makes a number of commitments in this regard which require action, as follows:

BY THE ISLAND PLAN REVIEW TEAM

- 1) To ensure that a choice of broad options regarding future locations for development are presented in a 'Strategic Options' consultation paper to be published early in the New Year.
- 2) To consider my view that, should housing development on greenfield areas prove unavoidable, it makes perfect sense to locate it close to an existing community where the development and future residents can benefit from, support and enhance existing community amenities, such as schools, shops and public transport.
- 3) To consider the concept of designating "village neighbourhoods" within the main built-up areas and whether broad locations for new housing can provide opportunities to incorporate new social facilities to help in creating real communities.
- 4) To examine how the land use planning system can be used to encourage delivery of a greater mix of housing (type, size and form) in new developments.
- 5) To examine how the Island Plan might move away from 'neatly' segregating different land uses in urban areas and encourage developers of suitable housing sites to

consider making provision for appropriate small-scale commercial activities/workplaces.

- 6) To explore the concept of 'Home Zones' in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including community groups and highway authorities.
- 7) To ensure the IP continues to promote the economic and efficient use of land (in new housing developments and other developments) through a design-led process (i.e. as opposed to using density standards as a means of design control).
- 8) To ensure that the issue of car parking space provision in new housing and other developments (including whether underground car parking should be actively promoted) is consulted on, by its inclusion in the 'Strategic Options Paper'.

BY THOSE REVIEWING THE EMERGING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE ON 'THE DESIGN OF NEW HOMES'

- 1) to ensure the concept of 'neighbourhood context' is introduced into the guidance;
- 2) to give more prominence to the notion of social mix in new developments and to reinforce the point that in larger housing developments the aim should be to create mixed and inclusive 'real' communities (with different types, sizes and tenure of housing) and not just housing estates;
- 3) to set out the potential advantages of providing appropriate small-scale commercial activities/workspaces on suitable housing sites;
- 4) to modify and refine the section on sustainable forms of housing development to reflect the Environment Scrutiny Panel's findings.
- 5) to give more emphasis to encouraging robust and adaptable housing designs (e.g. where the structures are supported by external walls, to allow easy movement of internal walls and the reconfiguring of spaces);
- 6) to touch on the concept of 'Home Zones' and flag up potential design implications which might be used in new housing developments;
- 7) to give further consideration to the potential for more use of prefabricated and modular building techniques;
- 8) to reinforce the requirement for a 'design-led' approach to new housing development and also reinforce the need to avoid using density standards as a means of design control;
- 9) to examine alternative means of measuring density for guidance purposes (i.e. in addition to 'habitable rooms per acre');
- 10) to address the issue of reducing surface water run-off from new developments and how it might be successfully addressed;

- 11) to place greater emphasis on creating pleasant environments for residents, which are not dominated by cars, including consideration of basement and semi-basement level parking provision;
- 12) to give greater prominence to 'green roofs' as a positive design feature;
- 13) to ensure minimum floorspace standards are increased by 10% over published standards;
- 14) to revisit ways in which the residents of new housing development can have access to high quality amenity area;
- 15) to address the potential advantages and disadvantages of increasing ceiling heights in new developments and providing double-height rooms;
- 16) to give more emphasis to the advantages of open plan living units;
- 17) to highlight the space saving advantages of sliding doors built into walls.

Senator F. E. Cohen
Minister for Planning and Environment

Date: 27th November 2007