

Housing Policy Development Board



Minutes of the Housing Policy Development Board Meeting 5 – Thursday 19th September, 12pm to 2pm

The meeting was attended by the following members –

Michael De La Haye, Independent Chair
Deputy Kevin Lewis, Minister for Infrastructure
Deputy John Young, Minister for the Environment
Deputy Lindsay Ash, Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources
Deputy Gregory Guida, Assistant Minister for the Environment
John Le Bailly, Connétable of St. Mary
John Scally, Independent Lay Member

In attendance –

Andrew Scate, Group Director – Regulation, Growth, Housing and Environment
Sue Duhamel, Policy Director, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population
Richard Jouault, Deputy Director, Social Policy, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population
Ralph Buchholz, Principal Planner, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population
Jack Norris, Policy Principal, Strategic Policy, Performance and Population
Jim Shilliday, Treasurer and Exchequer
Matt McCormack Evans, Principal Consultant, Altair Ltd.
Sarah-Joy Lewis, Principal Consultant, Altair Ltd.

Apologies had been received from –

Senator Sam Mézec, Minister for Children and Housing
Deputy Carina Alves

1. Minutes of the last meeting 23rd July 2019

1.1. The Board agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd July 2019.

2. Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting

2.1. Foreign ownership of property: The Board was informed that the work undertaken to date in relation to foreign ownership of property has been provided to Altair and the Chair so that the issue can be included in the solutions phase. A summary of the work was discussed setting out the likely positive and negative effects of foreign ownership on the local property market in relation to supply and demand. The work to date has considered the policy interventions used across a wide range of jurisdictions and identified that the size of the issue is not satisfactorily understood locally due to the way in which the information is captured. Changes underway in the Tax Department mean that future data capture will provide for better accuracy as to the size and nature of the foreign buy to let market in Jersey.

2.2. Social housing rents policy: The Board noted that an officer-led working group had been set up to review the rents policy and would report to the Board with its finding by the end of 2019.

2.3. Coordination of work: The Board agreed there was a need for its work to be coordinated with other ongoing policy initiatives, including migration and the Island Plan. This would ensure that the links between different areas of policy were properly considered, and there was an opportunity for the Board to have input (and vice versa) into policy proposals that would affect the housing market. It was noted that the Council of Ministers had also identified this matter and planned to hold sessions over the coming months to discuss the strategic coordination of policy work.

3. High level policy solutions to challenges in Jersey's housing market

3.1. The Board considered a paper, prepared by Altair, which set out potential policy options to respond to challenges in Jersey's housing market that the Board had identified in the first phase of its work. The paper provided a series of demand- and supply-led approaches that could be used to address the challenges, including measures to increase housing supply, improve housing affordability, raise housing standards and strengthen security of tenure.

3.2. The Board was asked to apply its knowledge and experience of Jersey's housing market to evaluate each potential policy intervention. The Board was, moreover, asked to agree a shortlist of potential policy interventions that could be taken forward for more detailed exploration and developed into an overarching policy approach to address challenges in the housing market.

3.3. The Board considered each potential policy intervention in turn. The following points were made:

- The paper set out potential solutions in relation to the planning system that could support the delivery of housing. The Board agreed that the planning system had a role to play in addressing housing challenges and supported further consideration of policy interventions in this area. It was noted that potential policy measures affecting the planning system should be fed into the ongoing Island Plan Review process.
- While any approach to addressing challenges in Jersey's housing market needed to focus upon the delivery of new housing, the Board agreed that it was also important to make efficient use of existing housing resources. The Board therefore supported consideration of potential policy interventions to address under-occupation and vacant properties, and support downsizing in older-age.
- The Board agreed that Government should facilitate new housing supply and there was a need to consider options to release publicly-owned sites for housing development.
- The Board agreed to examine potential options to increase the availability of home ownership products to support households who required assistance to purchase a property.
- At the same time, the Board agreed there was a need to further explore policy measures to increase the supply of housing and improve standards in the rented sector. It was recognised that many households could not afford to purchase a property and required equal assistance to access affordable and good standard accommodation.
- Thereon followed a discussion about the importance of the Board establishing a strategic vision for Jersey's housing market, recognising that any potential policy interventions should provide the basis for sustainable, long-term changes that enabled everyone to have access to good

quality and affordable housing. Independent Lay Member, J. Scally, emphasised the need for the Board to take account of the full socio-economic aspects of housing, and the need to secure decent standard housing for all citizens irrespective of whether they lived in Jersey’s qualified or non-qualified housing sectors. The Chair asked Altair to ensure that this perspective was adequately reflected in the final report.

3.4. Having discussed the measures set out in the paper, the Board requested Altair to commence more detailed work on the potential policy interventions that it had indicated its wish to consider further, and to report to the next meeting.

3.5. It was noted that officers would hold separate meetings with the Minister for Children and Housing, Senator Mézec, and Deputy Alves, who had sent apologies for the meeting, to ensure that they had the opportunity to contribute to the high level policy solutions phase of the Board’s work.

4. Any other business

4.1. There were no other items of business.

5. Date of next meeting

5.1. The Board noted that it would meet next on Tuesday 15th October.

Signed:
Chair

Date:

Minutes agreed for publication –

Signed:
Chair

Date:

The Board endorsed the publication of the following papers on gov.je:

- Affordability and Housing Supply in Jersey
- Jersey Housing and the Wider Economy