



Achieving Decent Homes – an affordable housing framework for the future

In April last year the Housing Minister published a White Paper called “Achieving Decent Homes – an affordable housing framework for the future”. For 12 weeks people in Jersey were asked to tell us what they thought of the ideas in the White Paper. This created a lot of very useful debate and discussion and one thing was very clear from the feedback people gave – that change to the way Jersey manages its social housing needs to happen very soon.

We are now sending you this leaflet to provide an update on where we are with this important piece of work since receiving all of your feedback.

Key changes that are being considered:

We asked a wide range of people in Jersey for their views on the White Paper and the four key proposals that it included. Those four key proposals were:-

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| 1. Establish a Strategic Housing Unit (SHU) that would recommend an Island-wide housing strategy that was clearly joined up. | 2. Create an independent Regulator to ensure the stock is improved, that social housing providers have high standards and that social housing is financially sustainable for the future. |
| 3. Establish a new wholly States-owned Housing Association to deliver decent homes with commercial efficiency and enhanced Tenant focus. | 4. Return social housing rents to previously agreed Fair Rent Levels (90% of market value) to make the whole sector financially viable and remove the current unintended hidden rent subsidy over time. |

The key benefit of these proposals is that the social sector would be in a more sustainable financial situation so that homes could be improved to meet the Decent Homes Standard within the next ten years.

What feedback was received and what are we doing about it?

The main things that people told us during the consultation period were:-

- The current system isn't suitable;
- There is high demand for homes which meet the Decent Homes Standard;
- There is a high demand for new social and affordable housing;
- People are concerned about rents and affordability;
- There is a need to develop and broaden customer services;
- The Housing Trusts prefer "light touch" regulation and want to retain their financial freedom.

The Housing Minister has given full consideration to all of your feedback and is now ready to take his proposals forward to the States for debate.

His proposals for the Strategic Housing Unit, independent Regulator and the new wholly States owned Housing Association remain mostly the same. However, to address people's concerns about the return to the near market rent level of 90%, the Minister has elected to adapt the approach.

He is no longer recommending an immediate return to the near market rent level for all existing tenants and is instead proposing to use this rent policy for **new tenancies only**. This means that:

- Existing tenants will only pay the (90%) Fair Rent Level if or when they transfer to alternative accommodation. As now, all rents will be subject to an annual inflation based increase;
- This proposal will still enable the necessary investment to bring homes up to the Decent Homes Standard within the next ten years.

Next Steps

The Minister will be taking this proposal to the States Assembly to consider in the Spring of this year.

If the States give their consent to the change, the Minister will then bring Enabling Laws to the States Assembly in the Summer of 2013 to establish the Regulator and the basis of the Transfer to the New Association, with Regulations setting the Rent Policy being brought forward in early 2014.

This will allow the establishment of the new Housing Association in the Summer of 2014.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about these changes, please write to us at the address below or email us at **DecentHomes@gov.je** or visit us on Facebook at

<https://www.facebook.com/jerseyhousingtransformation>

Housing Transformation Programme

Housing Department,
PO Box 587,
Jubilee Wharf,
24 Esplanade,
St Helier, JE4 8XT