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Deputy Hilary Jeune
Chair, Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Panel
BY EMAIL

18 June 2024

Dear Chair,

Right-sizing policy

Thank you for your letter dated 11 June requesting clarification on some of the areas in my recently published [Right-sizing](#) policy.

1. Section B, Social housing right-sizing: Policy R3

Please could you detail your expectation of Social Housing Providers ('SPH') in relation to the development of their own right-sizing policy/offer given that they could potentially be subject to review and further measures should the offer not be considered adequate?

a. What impact do you hope Policy R3 will have on Social Housing provision?

My overall expectation is that social housing providers should have arrangements in place to enable them to assist their tenants to downsize, without inadvertently applying disincentives through their rent policies. I will, therefore, be engaging with social housing providers to discuss how they may best develop their policies in a timely manner to achieve right-sizing in their stock, and I will review this accordingly. My expectation is that providers will engage proactively in this process, and I will offer support and assistance where required. The anticipated impact is to see an increase in right-sizing transfers within social housing and a resulting availability of larger family homes, contributing to the efficient use of social housing stock.

2. In a letter to this Panel dated 10th April 2024, you stated that: "The policy on right-sizing in social housing is connected to a broader review of the social housing rents policy, and the disincentives that it might create for households to right-size, amongst other matters. The findings and policy options will be presented to the Assembly in due course." When do you intend for the findings and policy options on social housing rents to be undertaken and completed?

Although I have not set a date for the completion of this work, I will update the panel when there are developments in this policy area.

3. Section B, Social housing right-sizing: Policy R4

R4 provides that 'specific provision for social housing tenancies' will be included in the new Residential Tenancy Law. On 23rd April you published a Ministerial Statement – Residential Tenancy Law: the way forward in which you outlined your rationale for descope social housing regulation from the initial draft law. Please could you clarify:

- a. **How the work on Policy R4 and the Residential Tenancy Law are aligned?**
- b. **What potential impact the lack of a definition for social housing provision within the law will have on the implementation of R4?**

It is anticipated that the new Residential Tenancy Law will require reasons for giving notice, with extended notice periods based on tenancy length to enhance security of tenure. I am seeking a provision in the new Law that will align with Policy R4; this will allow social housing providers to give tenants notice to move into a home that is the 'right size' for their needs, on the basis that they are under-occupying their homes (i.e., exceeding their established bedroom need).

Given that we know – and actively work with – the Island's social housing providers, I do not anticipate that the absence of a definition will have any impact on the implementation of Policy R4.

4. Section C – Open market right-sizing

Please could you explain how you anticipate this policy enhancing the level of 'open market right-sizing [which] takes place without Government intervention'?

The policies contained in the Right-sizing Policy seek to increase right-sizing that otherwise occurs naturally in the open market by addressing some of the barriers to doing so. The Housing Advice Service will be taking the lead on this, offering guidance to those who want to right-size. Given that a person's reasons for right-sizing will be personal, it is right that bespoke support is offered.

5. Section C – Open market right-sizing: Policy R5

What specific advice the Housing Advice Service would be able to provide on rightsizing?

The Housing Advice Service already provide advice and guidance to support people when they wish to move home. The portfolio of advice and guidance will be enhanced to include information tailored specifically towards right-sizers. This will include providing advice and signposting to support and services relating to challenges that some right-sizers may experience during the process of moving into a smaller home, including managing logistics, timing and preparing to move furniture and belongings. I will enhance the accessibility of this advice via the Housing Advice Service webpages, through direct contact with the Housing Advice Service (i.e., in person or by telephone), and information leaflets disseminated across parish halls and other community buildings. I am happy to inform the panel when this is complete.

6. Section C – Open market right-sizing: Policy R7

Can you outline the level of policy directive your Ministry has in order to 'encourage and support the development of suitable right-sizing support packages on SoJDC's future housing developments, in addition to the provision of assisted home ownership products that are aimed towards first-time buyers.'?

As Minister for Housing, I am actively engaged with the work of SoJDC, in partnership with the Minister for Treasury and Resources (as shareholder representative). We have already been having regular discussions about the type and affordability of homes that SoJDC will provide on future schemes, including what wider packages of support SoJDC can offer to help make moving home easier for Islanders.

I am currently in the final stages of discussion with SoJDC on the package for South Hill, and hope to make some announcements on this very soon. I also note that [P.37/2024 – affordable](#)

[and right-size housing provision on the Waterfront](#) has been lodged by Deputy Miles, which seeks a minimum of 15% of housing designed to encourage and enable Islanders who are looking to right-size. I have expressed my support for this, as it aligns with the work I have already been doing with SoJDC.

7. Fees and Stamp Duty

The Panel note that the cost of fees and Stamp Duty are noted on p17 of the policy document and that ‘The Minister for Housing will seek to work with the Minister for Treasury and Resources to consider fiscal incentives in the future’. Please could you inform the Panel what ambitions you have during this term of office to introduce fiscal incentives and what conversations are taking (or have taken) place with the Minister for Treasury and Resources to date.

Conversations have taken place with the Minister for Treasury and Resources during the development of the Right-sizing Policy to consider Stamp Duty relief to alleviate some barriers to right-sizing. As noted in the report, open-market Stamp Duty relief is not currently being pursued, however our cooperation on developing support packages for provision of right-sizing homes on SoJDC developments continues, and this will include the offer of fiscal incentives. I will continue to work with the Minister for Treasury and Resources to seek opportunities to explore any other fiscal incentives for right-sizing during this term of office, should opportunities arise. I see this as being about working collaboratively in an ongoing way amongst the Council of Ministers, and I welcome thoughts and any proposals for debate from States Members in this regard.

I trust the above is of assistance to the panel.

Yours sincerely



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