

19-21 Broad Street | St Helier
Jersey | JE2 3RR

BY EMAIL

Deputy Hilary Jeune
Chair, Environment, Housing & Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel

2 September 2024

Dear Chair,

Re: Jersey Homelessness Strategy

Thank you for your letter of 13 August regarding the delivery of the Jersey Homelessness Strategy. Given that this is a vital piece of work, I am pleased that the panel are scrutinising its progression.

The panel asked for a list of groups working on implementing the strategy, as well as Terms of Reference and membership and group structure, where appropriate.

The Homelessness Cluster

The Cluster is responsible for the coordination and delivery of the strategy. The Cluster comprises organisations involved in the provision of homelessness accommodation and support. It includes representatives of the Government of Jersey (**GOJ**), social housing providers and charitable organisations. I have attached the Cluster's terms of reference and membership.

Hard to accommodate

A task and finish group focused on supporting Islanders who have found it hard to remain in accommodation. The group is comprised of members of the Cluster, GOJ officers, Probation, Adult Mental Health, Adult Social Care, and Andium Homes.

Homelessness data

A group led by my policy principal officer involving all of the homelessness providers to focus on data collection in line with the definition of homelessness.

VAWG

A group comprised of GOJ officers (from housing policy and the Housing Advice Service) and Freeda to implement the recommendations in relation to Violence Against Women and Girls.

Critical Support Team

Led by GOJ officers based at CLS to target support for Islanders who are facing homelessness. The team works with the Salvation Army, Caritas, the Housing Advice Service and accommodation providers.

Quarterly meetings

I chair quarterly meetings with the homelessness organisations that make up the Cluster and representatives from the Homelessness Strategic Board. The purpose of the meetings is to discuss homelessness issues, and to provide an update on the GOJ's work to deliver the strategy's priorities. The Minister for Health and Social Services, the Minister for Children and

Families, the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs, and the Minister for Social Security are invited to attend the meetings given the importance of a cross-government response to homelessness.

Quarterly meetings with Andium Homes

I meet quarterly with the Chair and Chief Executive of Andium Homes. As the Panel will be aware, Andium are building more homes to enable more Islanders to access social housing.

Housing Crisis Emergency Taskforce

The Homelessness Strategy is a regular item of discussion at the Housing Crisis Emergency Taskforce, where I discuss with officials the programme of work underway to deliver the strategy's priorities. I will also receive updates on the work undertaken by the above groups. Members of the Taskforce include senior policy officers, the head of the Critical Support Team and the Assistant Chief Minister.

Homelessness Strategic Board

Following the Panel's recent meeting with representatives of charitable organisations connected with the strategy, I have attached the letter that I sent to the chair of the 'Homelessness Strategic Board' on 6 June. The letter explains the reasons why GOJ officials stepped down from the board, and my intention to work collaboratively to deliver the strategy. I have attached another letter sent to the chair of the Board in March, following a series of questions on various homelessness issues. I hope you find these useful.

Hierarchy or structure

The groups with ministerial attendance are chaired by myself, and there is an agenda circulated ahead of the meetings. The administration of the Homelessness Cluster and the other groups above are undertaken by GOJ officers, in partnership with representatives from each organisation.

Roadmap

The Panel asked for my delivery roadmap for the Homelessness Strategy. Although there is no defined roadmap, I can confirm that I am working with the Cluster to take the following actions connected to the strategy:

1. Discuss priority routes for women and families experiencing domestic violence. This also includes people with less than five years' residency.
2. Create a complex needs panel.
3. Homelessness data report – review homelessness data collection across government and partner organisations.
4. Raise awareness of homelessness in Jersey on World Homelessness Day (10 October) through events and education in schools.
5. Focus on support for Care Leavers and those with care experience.
6. Raise awareness of the Housing Advice Service and ensure they have the appropriate level of support.
7. Provide individuals with holistic pathways and mental health support through partnership working and communication between organisations.

In addition to this, the Panel will recall that in April I published a [statement](#) outlining my proposed changes to the Residential Tenancy Law. The strong emphasis on the rights of tenants and the enhanced protections and standards that I plan to introduce are aligned with the Homelessness Strategy in helping to alleviate homelessness.

Another key aspect of addressing homelessness is to ensure that all Islanders in need of affordable housing are supported to access it. To ensure better equality of access for those who

need financial assistance with housing costs, the age of eligibility for Gateway has been gradually reduced from 40 to 30. In October, the age at which an applicant can access social housing will be further lowered to 25. In addition, maximum annual income thresholds for applicants have been increased so that more Islanders can access social housing.

The actions being taken forward by the GOJ are a significant part of the successful delivery of the strategy but, reflecting its co-produced nature, the strategy is owned by all the organisations involved in the Cluster.

I trust that the above is of use to the Panel, and I look forward to discussing these matters at our next meeting. I would be happy to provide further information on the strategy in the meantime.

Kind regards,



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