



JERSEY ESTATE AGENTS' ASSOCIATION

### **Affordable Housing: Supply and Delivery – Scrutiny Review**

The Jersey Estate Agents' Association (the "JEAA") has been asked to make a submission to the Panel concerning the above review.

*In the first instance it should be noted that the JEAA represents 16 Estate Agency firms in Jersey and that there are currently, as far we are aware, over 53 agents in Jersey. Estate Agency in Jersey is not regulated, and it is an aim of the JEAA:*

- *To represent Estate Agents in communication with Government and other parties*
- *to bring more professionalism and qualifications for estate agency to the industry in association with our affiliation to PropertyMark, a leading UK Estate Agency representative body.*

*As a collective we voluntarily offer our time to the running of the Association.*

### **How do you think Government can address the supply and affordability of homes?**

This must be done in conjunction with private developers and public developers. There needs to be a sensible approach to Planning and consideration must be given to brownfield sites. Particularly, it is noted that several properties appear to lie idle for many years, without any apparent planning activity, i.e., by way of application or proposal, and such properties are, it appears, unfortunately in public ownership or the ownership of publicly owned companies. A review should be undertaken of all such sites to enquire:

1. Why are they lying vacant?
2. How long they have been vacant?
3. What proposals are for the redevelopment of such sites?
4. If they are deemed unsuitable for redevelopment as residential, why are they deemed unsuitable and has this been tested by offering such sites to the market?

Example sites would be the site in La Motte Street and Westaway Court. This is obviously not an exhaustive list, and we are aware some are being considered in the interim Draft Island Plan however a joined-up approach is needed.

A streamlining of planning laws may also need to be considered, for example the situation where commercial premises such as retail and offices are clearly not being used for that purpose and never will be again, where the owner/developer has to advertise the unit for rental.

### **Do you think the target delivery of 2,650 open market and 1,500 affordable homes before 2025, as outlined in the Draft Island Plan is adequate and achievable?**

This is dependent upon

1. the Planning process,
2. the cost of materials and labour



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3. the cost of the sites.
4. the availability of labour and materials
5. the suitability of infrastructure such as mains drains, mains water, and traffic management.

### **Do you think the proposed site allocation, as outlined in the Draft Island Plan, is sufficient to meet current housing demand for affordable homes?**

No, but as mentioned above consideration needs to be given to all possible sites, and it is noted that the Covid Pandemic delayed the Island Plan.

Prime site allocation, for example the site at South Hill, with views of St Aubin's Bay, should be allocated to private housing with the aim of bringing the best return to the public. A first-time buyer block could be included in the scheme, but not to the entirety of the scheme.

In these situations, there is hope that there would be a balance of release of local housing stock to the market thereby contributing to a stabilisation of prices.

### **In relation to the type and size of homes, what demand for housing have you identified?**

There is, and remains, serious demand for houses, 2-, 3- and 4-bedroom. There is demand for first time buyer homes as well as homes that could be targeted at retirees, which would then hopefully release some secondary housing stock to the market. In addition, demand for apartments remains strong and in general from local buyers looking to live in the apartments rather than buy to let investors.

### **What barriers to housing supply, if any, have you identified and how, in your opinion, could these be resolved?**

There remains a perceived conflict between some politicians stating a desire for new homes to be built on the one hand and then in public utterances stating opposition to new construction. This may impact on the target delivery dates.

The length of time for the planning process also needs to be considered.

Whilst the affordable housing scheme is laudable consideration should perhaps be given to the reintroduction of a States Loan scheme which would target those who would not necessarily be able to reach the affordability criteria required by Banks but would give the First-time buyer hope that they could enter the market either with First Time Buyer only properties or secondary market properties.

### **To what extent does a lack of housing supply play in the rising house prices in Jersey and what other factors might be at play?**

A lack of secondary housing stock coming to the market and a lack of new houses being constructed contributes to the affordability and price rises.

If there is nowhere for someone to move to, they will not move.



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Skilled immigration also has an effect where the local housing stock is sold or rented and there has not been the equivalent replacement by that person selling locally, namely the buyer is selling in the UK for example and buying in Jersey, it is not releasing stock to the local market.