

STATES OF JERSEY



HOMEBUY OR SHARED EQUITY SCHEME: APPROVAL BY THE STATES (P.163/2011) – COMMENTS

**Presented to the States on 6th December 2011
by the Minister for Planning and Environment**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

As the Senator rightly points out, the Homebuy scheme under P.74/2008 was introduced with the right intent, in order to increase the ability for people to gain entry into the home ownership market at a price which was affordable.

The scheme was successful in delivering this home ownership dream to 46 families at the La Providence site in St. Lawrence.

It is also a matter of record that the scheme was reviewed by the Comptroller and Auditor General and the Public Accounts Committee in 2010.

The results of those reviews are a matter of public record, as was the input and position of the Planning and Environment Department.

In short, whilst the Department disagreed with some of the emphasis placed on items within these reviews and some of the conclusions formed, it has nonetheless agreed to work with the Comptroller and Auditor General and the Public Accounts Committee in reviewing the scheme, and especially the Supplementary Planning Guidance which is required.

The commitment to bring these details back to the States Assembly has already been given during the debate on the Island Plan earlier this year, following debate on the amendment (amended by the Minister for Planning and Environment) from the Senator on this issue.

The following amendment was adopted by the Assembly on a standing vote.

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Substitute the words ‘a shared equity scheme established by law’ with the words, and associated footnote, “a form of intermediate housing, be that Homebuy or another/alternative form of shared equity housing⁽¹⁾”.

“(1) The Jersey Homebuy scheme is the subject of review. Whatever the form of intermediate housing ultimately adopted following that review it must be soundly based, robust and have clear operating guidelines, which will be approved by the States.”.

Work on the Homebuy guidance was effectively placed on hold during the Island Plan debate, as the principle of the scheme could have changed as a result of that debate. However, the principle of a Homebuy/Intermediate type of ownership as an aim is now included within the Plan.

Following this, a commitment was given in the Island Plan debate that a political steering group would be formed to consider affordable housing policy contained within Policies H1 and H3 of the Plan, and that details would be brought back to the Assembly before the policies progressed. This work is ongoing, and it is more than appropriate for this group to consider issues in relation to Homebuy or its successor.

In accepting this proposition, there will be no impact on any other sites in the planning pipeline. A bespoke solution has been found for the planning scheme at Field 1218, Mont à L'Abbé due to the unique circumstances on that site and the planning permission which it received.

The other permission with reference to Homebuy is P/2007/0223, Fields 190–192 La Rue de la Sargente, St. Brelade. However, the planning permission on this site is much clearer than on the Field 1218 site, and it requires a 55% first-time buyer, 45% social rental split. The permit states that Homebuy would only be considered where there is sufficient justification to do so. In the current circumstances, it is not considered that this justification exists, and therefore the development will be expected to deliver first-time buyer and social rented properties.

The Minister for Planning and Environment is therefore happy to accept both parts of this proposition.

Statement under Standing Order 37A [Presentation of comment relating to a proposition]

This comment was approved by the Minister for Planning and Environment during the morning of Friday 2nd December 2011 but, owing to an administrative error at his Department, was not received by the States Greffe until after noon that day.