



ANDIUM
HOMES

Connetable M. K. Jackson
Chairman
Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel
States Greffe
Morier House
St Helier
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Date 26 September 2019

Dear Connetable

Government Plan Review – Request for written submission

Thank you for your letter of 16th September 2019, providing Andium Homes with an opportunity to comment on the Government Plan which your Panel is currently reviewing.

Andium Homes was incorporated in July 2014 with the key remit of bringing the existing housing stock up to the Decent Homes Standard within 10 years and increasing the supply of new homes. We have just passed our 5th Anniversary of incorporation and we will already achieve 100% Decent Homes Standard across the housing stock by the end of this year, five years early. Having already delivered 227 new homes since incorporation, we are currently on site delivering a further 760 new homes.

Our team is heavily involved in the development of a Homelessness Strategy and we welcome the extended Keyworker accommodation scheme. Indeed, 87 homes have already been offered to Keyworkers with an additional 90 coming soon at Hue Court once the refurbishment is complete. We therefore welcome the ongoing focus in the Government Plan in relation to these two areas. The delivery of new additional affordable homes for keyworkers will likely require the transfer of existing Government owned sites. There are though no actions relating to the transfer of these sites in the plan.

We welcome the £10 million investment to support home ownership schemes, albeit it is not clear what these schemes might be. The Governments "Deposit Loan Scheme" which was piloted in 2013 was only obtainable for existing stock, which in our view did nothing for affordability. We strongly believe that any investment in housing must be directed into the supply of new homes. The Andium Homebuy Scheme works well to make home ownership a reality for those on lower incomes and requires no funding – more sites are required if we are to meet the ever-increasing demand for First time Buyers – currently 1479 applicants on the Affordable Housing Gateway. Andium Homes receives no Government funding but makes an annual return to the Treasury, £30 million in 2019, to fund other services (the return of £30 million covers the £17 million cost of the Income Support housing component for Andium tenants and provides an additional £13 million). £10 million is not sufficient investment to address the housing issues facing the Island today.

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We await the Housing Ministers response to the "Review of Access to Social Housing" which was published in June 2019. There are several recommendations which Andium Homes is keen to understand further.

We fully support the establishment of a "Housing Options Service". Whilst the separation of the Affordable Housing Gateway from Andium Homes has worked well in some areas, the review has clearly identified room for improvements, requiring a more client focused approach. This ties in well with the Homelessness Strategy work and providing a "one stop shop" for housing queries seems entirely sensible. However, it is not clear what the resource implications are of this for Andium Homes. 2 x FTE were transferred with the Gateway when it was separated out from Andium Homes.

We also note the proposal to introduce a social housing regulator to protect the rights and interests of social housing tenants and welcome the inclusion of the Housing Trusts within the regulator's jurisdiction. Andium Homes supports the principles of openness, transparency and accountability. In this regard, one need not look further than the approach we took to the introduction of the Freedom of Information Law; Andium Homes agreed to be subject to that Law where other similar organisations have preferred not to. However, clarity is also required on resources for the social housing regulation proposal, given the suggestion that some of the projects could be "self-funding".

We shared our views on regulation as part of the P120/2017 "Social Housing in Jersey: introduction of a regulatory framework" proposition and maintain those views.

In reality, if any costs were to fall to Andium Homes, they could only be funded in one of the following ways: -

- Higher rent charges
- Less investment in maintenance of properties
- Reduction in other services
- A reduced annual return to the Government of Jersey (currently £30 million p.a.)

As we start to review our Strategic Business Plan and the new challenges we might consider, what is missing from the Government Plan is the necessary detail in CSP4 to help us understand what that new focus might be or any clear policy direction for us at this time.

In this respect we continue to work closely with the Minister for Children and Housing and the Housing Policy Development Board as they develop new policies relating to affordable housing and look forward to the publication of their report in Spring next year.

Yours sincerely



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