

STATES OF JERSEY



SOCIAL HOUSING IN JERSEY: INTRODUCTION OF A REGULATORY FRAMEWORK (P.120/2017) – THIRD AMENDMENT

**Lodged au Greffe on 8th February 2018
by the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel**

STATES GREFFE

SOCIAL HOUSING IN JERSEY: INTRODUCTION OF A REGULATORY
FRAMEWORK (P.120/2017) – THIRD AMENDMENT

PAGE 2, PARAGRAPH (b) –

In sub-paragraph (b)(ii), after the words “performance against those standards” insert the words “, with particular regard to the interaction with both Income Support and the States’ 90% rent policy”.

ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE SCRUTINY PANEL

Note: After this amendment, the proposition would read as follows –

- (a) to agree, in principle to the introduction of regulation in relation to social housing, as set out in the report accompanying this proposition;
- (b) to agree, in principle, that the proposed components of this regulatory framework should include –
 - (i) the establishment of a register of all housing providers;
 - (ii) the introduction of performance standards for all housing providers, and measures to monitor and assess performance against those standards, with particular regard to the interaction with both Income Support and the States’ 90% rent policy;
 - (iii) the establishment of a social housing regulator;
 - (iv) the introduction of statutory oversight and governance arrangements for the assessment and prioritisation of housing need through the Affordable Housing Gateway;
- (c) to charge the Minister for Housing to develop and bring forward, for approval, the necessary legislation to implement the proposals in paragraph (b) above within 2 years.

REPORT

The Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel has carried out a short review of ‘Social housing in Jersey: introduction of a regulatory framework’ ([P.120/2017](#)) and will be presenting its Comments to the Assembly prior to the debate on 20th February 2018. However, at this time, the Panel wishes to propose an amendment to the Proposition, which has been brought by the Minister for Housing, for the States Assembly to consider prior to the debate.

Since P.120/2017 was lodged, the Panel has met with the Minister and her officers from the Strategic Housing Unit on a number of occasions to discuss the proposals being put forward. During our latest meeting, which was held on 5th February 2018, it became clear to the Panel that a fundamental component of the proposed regulatory framework had not been included.

On page 8 of the report accompanying the Proposition, the Minister states that regulation would help to: *“protect investment in social housing, and the assets developed as a result of that investment. Where public investment has been made in social housing provision, or where a social housing provider is eligible for certain benefits as a result of its “not-for-profit” business activities, government requires ongoing assurance that investment is being used properly and provides value for money.”* One of the examples that is provided is the Income Support system in enabling rents of up to a maximum of 90% market equivalent.

The Panel acknowledges that the 90% rent policy has been included as an example of a potential service delivery standard, which could be introduced under the regulatory framework. However, we are of the opinion that the Proposition needs to be explicit in recognising the rent policy as one of the key components of the framework.

Firstly, we recognise that there may be potential issues between the charging of the “up to 90% rents policy” and the policy of the Minister for Housing to require social housing providers to create bespoke living accommodation for those most vulnerable in our community. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, we are of the opinion that the social and economic impact of the policy needs to be sufficiently monitored to ensure the protection of social housing tenants, especially given that one of the key aims of the Strategic Plan is to assist households to become financially independent. A consideration of the interaction of performance standards for social housing providers with Income Support and the 90% rent policy will help to determine whether there are any unintended consequences resulting from the States-agreed policy and, if there are, will allow the States Assembly to address these adequately.

Financial and manpower implications

There are no additional financial or manpower implications for the States arising from the proposed amendment.