



# Housing Department

A States of Guernsey Government Department

*Working together, to provide services that meet our community's needs*

## Business Plan 2015

Outlining the Housing Department's business priorities for 2015 and onwards

March 2015

## **2015 HOUSING DEPARTMENT BUSINESS PLAN**

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# 1) Foreword

## Welcome to the Housing Department's 2015 Business Plan

On behalf of the Housing board, I am pleased to present the Housing Department's 2015 Business Plan, the first of its kind for the Department. This document is aimed at providing an overview of the Department and its priorities for 2015 and onwards.

The work of the Housing Department is extremely varied, ranging from dealing with applications for housing licences and Right to Work documents, to ensuring that our tenants have access to a decent and affordable home and that our stock of 1,650 properties is managed in the most efficient way. Alongside these operational services, the Department is also responsible for the overall co-ordination of the States Corporate Housing Programme (CHP) and is involved in a range of projects and cross-departmental initiatives relating to the wider housing market.

A key milestone for the Housing Department during 2014 was the opening of the Guernsey Housing Association's two 'extra care' housing schemes - 'La Nouvelle Maritaine' and 'Le Grand Courtil' - on the sites of the Department's former residential care homes: Maison Maritaine and Longue Rue House. Aimed at Islanders who need care and support, the developments were part-funded by a capital grant from the Corporate Housing Programme. The Housing Department is proud that these flagship developments have transformed the way that care is delivered to tenants living in extra care housing, with a focus on helping them to remain living independently in their own homes whilst receiving on-site support. The Department looks forward to the opening of Phase 2 of these two schemes during 2015.

Key priorities for the Department for 2015 include continuing to contribute to the ongoing work, led by the Policy Council, to shape the new Population Management regime that will replace the Housing Control Law. The board is also particularly keen to urgently address the shortage of suitable available sites on which to develop affordable housing in order that it can continue to meet the needs of households on the waiting list for social rented housing and Partial Ownership accommodation. Together with the Office of Environmental Health, we will also be taking forward proposals to address the general condition of properties in the Island, with a particular focus on Houses in Multiple Occupation, which we hope to achieve through the introduction of a General Housing Law.

The Housing board and the Department's staff take its responsibility as custodians of public funds seriously and continually look for ways to work smarter and more efficiently. We are passionate about the work carried out by the Department and for ensuring that our customers receive excellent services.

**Deputy Dave Jones**

Minister

Deputy Michael Hadley, Deputy Minister

Deputy Paul Le Pelley

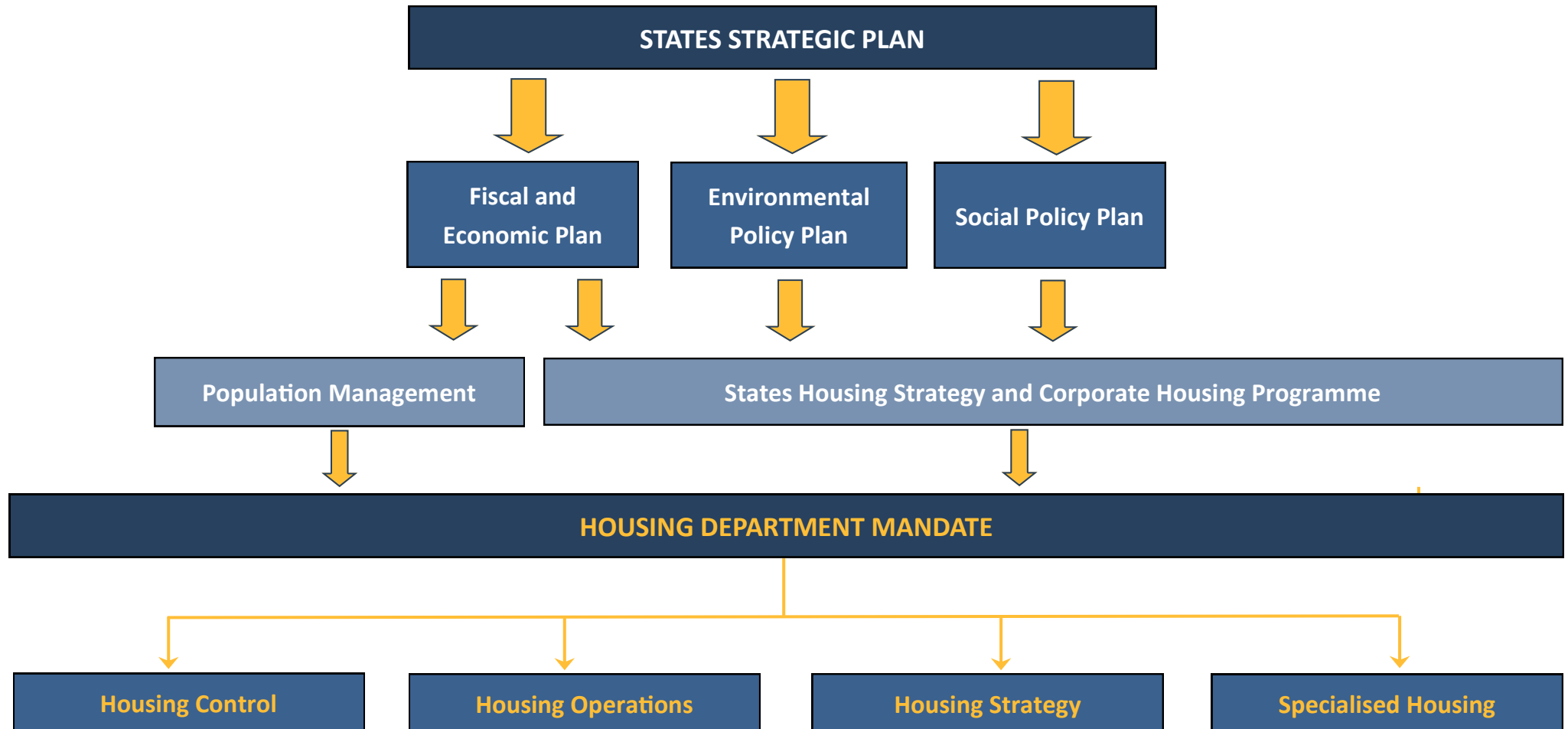
Deputy Barry Paint

Deputy Peter Sherbourne

Mr Dudley Jehan, Non-States Member

## 2) Strategic Framework

The mandate of the Housing Department is set by the States. The figure below shows how the work of the Housing Department links to the strategic direction of the States, as set by the States Strategic Plan.



The work of the four business areas of the Housing Department and the priorities for 2015 are outlined further on pages 6 to 9.

# 3) Our Values

The Housing Department is committed to:



## Customer Focus

- Treating our customers fairly, sensitively, and with respect
- Handling inquiries in a timely and professional manner
- Responding to complaints and taking action where necessary
- Communicating in a clear and concise way
- Being reliable and responsive
- Treating information in a confidential way
- Engaging with stakeholders



## Performance Management

- Regular reporting and statistics are produced in all areas of business:
- allocations and waiting list data;
  - property progress reports;
  - arrears information;
  - Housing Control statistics;
  - budgetary progress reports; and
  - complaints and compliments.
- Workflow management and service standards in Housing Control
- Key Performance Indicators (under development)
- Housing Corporate Information System



## Value for Money

- Being prudent in the use of resources by looking for ways to:
- maximise income;
  - minimise wastage;
  - improve operational efficiency; and
  - reduce revenue expenditure.
- Effectively managing risks and sensitivities
- Ensuring adequate control to mitigate against fraud
- Making the most efficient use of the States' housing stock by ensuring that social housing is allocated and occupied by those most in need

## 4) Housing Control



The Housing Control Section is responsible for controls on housing occupation through the administration of the Housing Control and Right to Work Laws.

The Section also plays an active role in the Policy Council's Review of Population Management.

Housing Control employs 19 members of staff; 16% of the total number of staff employed by the Department.

In 2014, Housing Control:

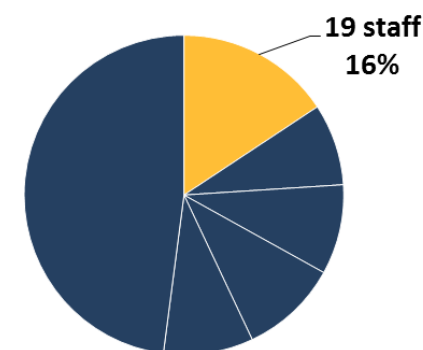
- Processed 11,188 applications for Housing Licences and Right to Work documents;
- Dealt with 3,296 letter/e-mail enquiries not directly linked to Housing Licence/Right to Work applications; and
- Answered 56,638 telephone calls.

A charge is made to cover the administration costs associated with processing employment-related Right to Work applications. In 2014, total income from charges was £765,000. No charge is made for applications to confirm a person's residential status, or for those making 'compassionate' housing licence applications, and so the balance of the Housing Control Section's operating costs are met from general revenue.

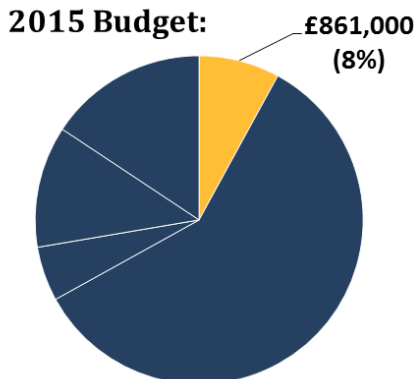
The different types of applications received by the Housing Control Section have different levels of complexity. This means that processing times vary from one type of application to another. However, common to all applications is a commitment to process 80% within the 1<sup>st</sup> service standard, 90% within the 2<sup>nd</sup> service standard, and 100% by the expiry of the 3<sup>rd</sup> service standard. Of the 11,188 applications processed during 2014:

- 86% were processed within the 1<sup>st</sup> service standard;
- 96% were processed within the 2<sup>nd</sup> service standard;
- 99% were processed within the 3<sup>rd</sup> service standard; and
- 1% (86 applications) were not processed within the agreed timeframes.

**Staffing:**



**2015 Budget:**



### Priority areas for 2015:

- Continue to engage with the business community to ensure that there is timely and effective dialogue about business needs in the context of the limitations of the Housing Control regime;
- Review licencing policy in respect of Health and Social Care professionals working for the Health and Social Services Department;
- Work closely with the Policy Council on the continued development of the Population Management regime including legislative and policy provisions, with regard to the Permit System and the operation of the Open Market Register; and
- Develop and progress work relating to the transitional arrangements between the Housing Control and Population Management regimes.

## 5) Housing Operations



The Housing Department administers 1,650 units of affordable housing, which are available to rent by those meet the eligibility criteria.

Housing Operations include all aspects of property management, tenancy management and allocations.

The Property Management Section employs 10 members of staff with responsibility for all planned and routine maintenance of the Department's properties, together with planning long-term programmes of modernisation and refurbishment.

The Tenancy Management Section employs 11 members of staff who deal with the day-to-day enquiries from our customers; manage the process of allocating States' housing; processing rent rebates; and working with tenants to ensure that they do not get into arrears.

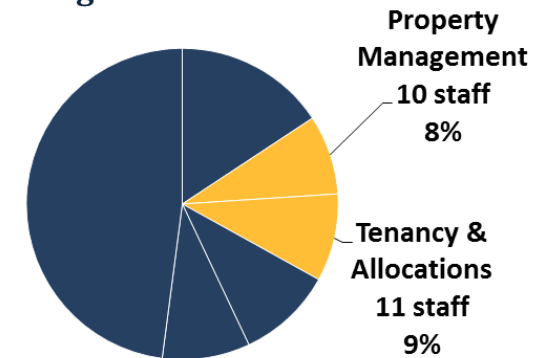
During 2014:

- The Property Management Section carried out 5,896 property inspections;
- 116 properties became void; the majority of which required full renovation (74) or upgrading (31);

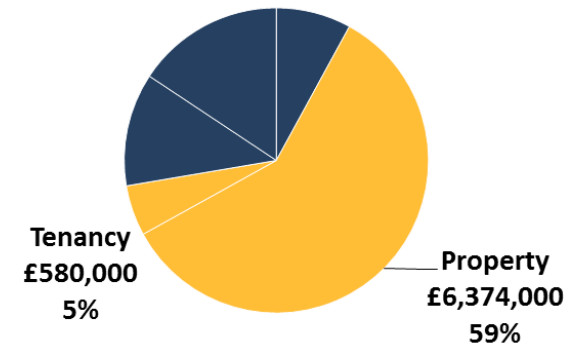
There continues to be a high demand for social rented and partial ownership housing, with the Department having an outstanding waiting list at the end of 2014 of 478 households. This highlights the importance of identifying suitable sites for housing development, as outlined in the 'Housing Strategy' section of this Business Plan (page 8).

A significant part of the Housing Department's total budget, £6,374,000, is spent on Property Management. A further £580,000 is spent in Tenancy and Allocations.

**Staffing:**



**2015 Budget:**



### Priority areas for 2015:

- Review the Department's approach to managing rent arrears and take steps to reduce current levels;
- Review the social housing eligibility criteria, income thresholds and allocation policies to incorporate extra care housing and supported housing, and create a joint waiting list with the GHA;
- Continue to implement the modernisation programme in respect of the Department's housing stock; and
- Introduce KPIs and service standards for all housing management functions.

## 6) Housing Strategy



The Housing Strategy Team carries out a range of projects in support of the States Corporate Housing Programme.

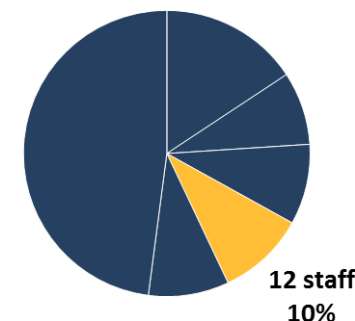
The Team also provides executive support to the Housing board and Senior Management Team and administrative, financial and I.T. support across the Department.

The Housing Strategy Team is involved with carrying out a variety of projects to support the work of the Department and the Corporate Housing Programme. A number of staff are also employed to provide administrative and executive support across the Department and to the Housing board, and to manage the Department's financial and I.T. functions.

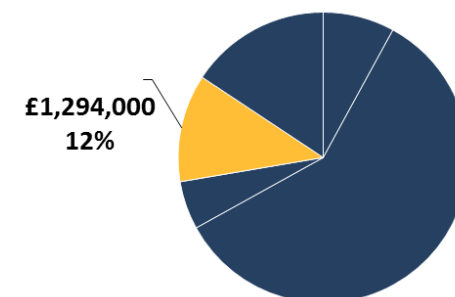
Particular challenges at present relate to the availability of suitable land upon which to provide affordable housing. In this respect, the Strategy Team has worked closely with the Environment Department on the forthcoming Island Development Plan and is investigating planning covenants as a suitable mechanism for securing an element of affordable housing on privately owned sites. The revised Island Development Plan was published in February 2015. A Report is also due to go to the States in 2015 which relates to the strategic housing target and the introduction of separate annual targets for the provision of affordable housing.

The Strategy Team is currently involved in a number of cross-departmental initiatives, including working with the Social Security Department on the wide review of welfare benefits and with Health and Social Services to continue to develop and refine the services delivered within the extra care schemes at La Nouvelle Maraitaine and Le Grand Courtil (see Housing with Support, page 9).

**Staffing:**



**2015 Budget:**



### Priority areas for 2015:

- Acquire land and secure funding to enable the GHA to work towards meeting the target of creating an average of 171 affordable dwellings per year;
- Investigate jointly with the Treasury & Resources Department the feasibility of introducing one or more first time buyers assistance schemes, the two departments to report their findings to the States by June 2015;
- Pursue the transfer of responsibility for the management of: (i) States' staff (key worker) accommodation; and (ii) service user accommodation; to the Housing Department; and
- Introduce a General Housing Law with the principal aim of enabling the Office of Environmental Health and Pollution Regulation to introduce and police minimum standards in respect of Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs); and as part of this exercise investigate the feasibility of using the Law to facilitate the introduction of associated legislation pertaining to plain English leases, deposit protection, a register of landlords etc.



## 7) Specialised Housing



Specialised Housing refers to the provision of domiciliary care at La Nouvelle Maraitaine and Le Grand Courtil 'extra care' schemes and the provision of support to assist tenants at Courtil Jacques and Metevier House to remain living independently.

Specialised Housing refers to the work carried out by the Housing Department in partnership with the Health and Social Services Department and Guernsey Housing Association (GHA) to provide specialist forms of housing with varying degrees of care and support provided to tenants who require assistance to remain living independently.

In 2014, the GHA completed Phase 1 of the extra care housing projects built on the sites of the Housing Department's former residential care homes: Maison Maritaine and Longue Rue House.

'La Nouvelle Maraitaine' in the Vale currently provides 39 1-bed and 15 2-bed flats and Le Grand Courtil in St. Martin provides 43 1-bed and 20 2-bed flats. At both sites, care and support is provided to tenants by a team of domiciliary care staff employed by the Housing Department. The Health and Social Services Department runs a specialist day centre for users with dementia and also runs a commercial catering operation on both of these sites. 11 units across these sites have been sold under the Partial Ownership Scheme.

In early 2014, the States gave its approval for a second phase of development on both sites, which will deliver a further 45 units of accommodation across both sites.

Support services are also provided to Housing Department's tenants living at Courtil Jacques, and it is also intended to extend the reach of support to the GHA's tenants living at near-by Metevier House, which is a sheltered housing development aimed at Islanders who require some support to live independently.

The extra care projects have helped to reconfigure service delivery across departments and have already been demonstrated to have a positive impact on the lives of tenants, helping them to continue living independently.

### Staffing:

Public Sector  
Employees  
58 staff  
(48%)

Established  
Staff  
11 staff (9%)

### 2015 Budget:

£1,695,000  
(16%)

### Priority areas for 2015:

- Oversee the Phase 2 extra care housing developments at La Nouvelle Maraitaine and Le Grand Courtil;
- Introduce a Governance Framework in respect of the extra care housing Domiciliary Care Service; and
- Work with other departments to develop and implement a Supported Living and Ageing Well Strategy (SLAWS).

## 8) States Corporate Housing Programme

The States Corporate Housing Programme (CHP) was approved by the States in 2003 as a practical framework for implementing the States Housing Strategy through coordinated action by States' departments, non-governmental organisations, voluntary groups and the private sector.

The CHP is split into six action areas, which cut across departmental mandates and which focus attention onto the delivery of distinct areas. Each Action Area has at least one 'lead department', responsible for ensuring that progress is made. However, the Housing Department is responsible for the overall coordination of the CHP; for managing the priorities within it; and helping other departments to achieve their action areas.

The work of the CHP is intrinsically linked to the States Strategic Plan, with a number of core values and social policy objectives being delivered through the Programme. The principal social policy objective that can be achieved through the CHP is to *'Improve housing availability, quality and affordability'*. Appendix 1 (pages 12 and 13) further explores how the work of the Department supports the overall objectives of the States.

### Funding of the CHP

The funding mechanism for the CHP was revised with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014, with all of the Department's social housing rental income now being diverted from the CHP Fund into General Revenue. There are no further capital sums being routinely paid into the CHP Fund. The CHP Fund is used to fund the following areas of capital expenditure:

- **To invest in the refurbishment, general upgrading and modernisation of the Housing Department's stock of social housing properties;**
- **To provide capital grants to housing associations to fund the provision of new social housing; and**
- **To acquire land for social housing development.**

In approving the 2015 budget report, the States agreed to the transfer of £20million from the CHP Fund to the States Capital Reserve in order to supplement the funding currently available for the 2014-2017 States Capital Investment Portfolio. The effect of this transfer is to reduce the total balance of the Fund to £38million at the start of 2015.

It is the intention that, once the Fund is exhausted, the CHP will form part of the States Capital Prioritisation process, with an appropriate level of funding allocated from the Capital Reserve. As a result of the transfer of £20million from the Fund, the CHP will require additional funding much earlier than previously anticipated in order to meet its development plans and fulfil the objectives of the States' Housing Strategy.

By the end of 2015, funding from the CHP will have helped to subsidise the provision of 750 units of accommodation through the GHA: a mix of housing available for social rent, partial ownership, 'extra care' housing and housing with support.

## 9) Managing risk

The Housing Department maintains a full risk register, which identifies and categorises departmental risks and identifies actions that have been put in place to mitigate and reduce these risks.

The highest level risks and mitigating actions have been identified in the following areas:

- Ensuring effective funding and prioritisation of resources for planned and reactive maintenance and repairs of the social housing stock;
- Ensuring timely completion of the extra care housing building projects, to ensure excellent commissioning arrangements can be established so that tenants can experience a seamless move-in and transition period;
- Having robust policies and audit trails in place and access to high level legal advice, as appropriate, for the handling of Housing Control applications;
- Establishing and reviewing adequate controls to ensure robust management of financial resources, including decision-making processes and mitigation against fraud;
- Ensuring the effective recruitment and retention of staff, through robust recruitment and selection processes, and ongoing performance management, in order to aid good customer service, and appropriate advice to customers; and
- Having robust regulation and governance arrangements in place in respect of the extra care housing Domiciliary Care Service.

## 10) Further Information



### **'Le Nouvelle Maraitaine', Vale**

A development by the Guernsey Housing Association, working in partnership with the Housing and Health and Social Services Departments, to provide extra care housing for Islanders requiring care and support to live independently.

The scheme was part-funded by a capital grant from the States Corporate Housing Programme.

**If you have any comments or questions about this Business Plan, please contact the Housing Department:**

#### **Housing Department**

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# Appendix 1: Supporting States Objectives

The table below outlines how the work of the Department is in support of the States Objectives outlined in the States Strategic Plan and associated policy plans. Section 2 provides a diagrammatic representation of the strategic framework.

States Objectives	Departmental action to achieve objective
<b>SOCIAL POLICY—General Objectives:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Better housing availability, quality and affordability</b></li> </ul>	<p>This is the principal social policy objective that is achieved through a range of initiatives in the CHP. The CHP aims to improve the affordability, availability and quality of accommodation in all tenures.</p> <p>The Housing Department has focused on improving the quality of its own social housing stock and through the Guernsey Housing Association (GHA) is providing high quality accommodation for social rent and partial ownership. All new homes include a range of measures to improve their energy efficiency, such as solar panels for heating and hot water and a heat recovery system, thereby reducing tenants’ fuel bills.</p> <p>The Housing Department works with the Guernsey Private Residential Landlords Association to facilitate a healthy and buoyant private rental sector. The Department is also working with the Office of Environmental Health to consider ways of improving the quality of the accommodation available for rent in the Island. This is likely to include a compulsory registration scheme for houses in multiple occupation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>An inclusive and caring society which supports community, families and individuals</b></li> </ul>	<p>The provision of affordable social housing promotes an inclusive and caring society. The Rent Rebate Scheme allows tenants to retain a disposable income that enables them to participate in society.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Less poverty and good standards of social welfare</b></li> </ul>	<p>The Department is committed to providing high quality tenancy and property management services to social housing tenants in order to foster communities that are well-maintained, pleasant and safe to live in.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>A healthy society with safeguards for vulnerable people</b></li> </ul>	<p>The Policy Council, together with the Housing, Health and Social Services Departments (HSSD), Treasury and Resources and the Social Security Departments, are working together to develop a Strategy for Supported Living and Ageing Well (SLAWS), which is a key workstream in Action Area E of the CHP.</p> <p>Ahead of this, the GHA is already providing accommodation that is built to ‘Lifetime Homes’ standards, which enables Islanders with a need for such accommodation to continue to live independently in their own home.</p> <p>The Housing Department is promoting the development of ‘specialised’ forms of housing to meet the needs of Islanders with a requirement for a supported living environment. For example, the Housing Department has worked closely with the GHA and HSSD on the redevelopment of the Longue Rue House and Maison Maritaine residential care homes to provide extra care housing with a range of communal facilities at ‘La Nouvelle Maraitaine’ and ‘Le Grand Courtil’.</p>



# Appendix 1: Supporting States Objectives—continued

States Objectives	Departmental action to achieve objective
<b>SOCIAL POLICY—General Objectives:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Health and social care services to focus on prevention, health improvement, protection and independence</b></li> </ul>	<p>The extra care projects also support the delivery of health and social care services which focus on independence. The provision of a range of ancillary services help to extend the reach of the benefits of the schemes to the wider community. For example, a 20 placement specialist Day Centre at ‘La Nouvelle Maraitaine’ will support informal carers in their roles by offering some respite.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Stronger partnership working with the third sector (voluntary and community) sector</b></li> </ul>	<p>The Housing Department has a strong working relationship with the GHA, which provides social rental and partial ownership housing on behalf of the States. GHA projects are funded by a combination of private borrowing, together with direct grant funding from the States CHP Fund.</p> <p>The facilities to be provided at the proposed extra care housing schemes also offer an opportunity for the States to develop stronger partnership working with the third sector.</p> <p>Housing and HSSD also provide funding to Action for Children to enable it to provide a range of housing and social support services to teenagers and young adults at risk of homelessness, unemployment and social exclusion.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Energy conservation and cleaner fuels</b></li> </ul>	<p>As referenced on page 13, the Housing Department has encouraged the GHA to invest in sustainable eco-technologies in its new developments to benefit the environment and to reduce ongoing fuel bills for tenants. The GHA now routinely incorporates solar panels for heating and hot water into its new developments and has also tried and tested other technologies, such as a mechanical heat recovery system, which has also proven to work well. All new homes are also extremely well-insulated. In some instances, this has led to a 50% reduction in tenants’ fuel bills.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Housing Department has invested monies from the CHP Fund to install cavity and loft insulation in a significant number of properties to improve its own social housing stock.</p>

**In addition to the above, the administration of the Housing Control Law is the principal means by which the States Population Policy is implemented.**

As part of the development of an Island Resource Plan on Population Management, the Housing Department is a key contributor to the work of the Policy Council in reviewing how best to manage Guernsey's population. A report entitled ‘Managing the size and makeup of the Island’s population’ was considered and approved by the States in June 2013, and a second report was debated in July 2014.

The first Report outlined a detailed framework for managing Guernsey’s Population, and the second Report set out how children will gain residency rights in the future. Further Reports will be prepared during 2015. The decisions of the States in respect of these Reports have significant implications for the Department’s Housing Control Section, not only in terms of dealing with an anticipated increase in workload as people seek to clarify their status under the Housing Control Law ahead of the introduction of the new system, but also, at a senior level, in assisting the Policy Council to development proposals for the detailed operation of the new system, including the establishment of the Population Office.