

JERSEY HOMEBUY

STATEMENT BY THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL

30 JUNE 2011

1. My attention has been drawn to various exchanges concerning Jersey Homebuy and, in particular, to a suggestion that the Planning Department is awaiting a report on the subject from me (and a separate report from the Public Accounts Committee).
2. It is not my normal practice to comment on such matters, but I have been urged to make this statement to explain the passage of events and how the matter now stands.
3. In January 2011, I prepared a confidential paper setting out the issues which as far as I was aware were of concern to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC). This draft paper was then circulated to members of the committee to check that it was accurate.
4. Copies of the paper were then (i.e. in February 2011) provided to the Chief Officers of the Planning and Housing Departments so that they were both aware of the issues that were of concern to the committee which it was intended should be covered by supplementary planning guidance to be issued by the Planning Department.
5. Subsequently, the Chief Officer of the Planning Department provided me with a copy of the draft guidance.
6. At the beginning of April 2011, I prepared a confidential paper for the PAC assessing the draft guidance against the issues which were of concern to the PAC. It was not my intention to publish that paper as I do not normally comment on [policy proposals.
7. I shared copies of a draft of that paper with the Chief Officers of the Planning and Housing Departments to check that my understanding of the draft guidance was correct. The Chief Officer of the Planning Department assured me that consideration would be given to revision of the draft guidance to deal with the weaknesses in the draft guidance which had been identified in my assessment of the draft.
8. The paper was then submitted to the PAC at its April meeting together with my advice that the Planning Department had indicated a desire to deal with any concerns and that re-drafted guidance would be forthcoming. I also suggested that, if the PAC were minded to issue a further report, it would be constructive to await the Department's further draft so that the Department's latest thinking could be taken into account.

9. To this date, no further draft of the planning guidance has been received so the matter has rested.

10. As should be clear, the Chief Officers of the Planning and Housing Departments have been informed on a timely basis of the PAC's concerns and of the weaknesses in the draft planning guidance. They have also been aware that further action would not be considered unless and until a further draft of the planning guidance becomes available.

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30 June 2011