

S.P. 12/26



St Helena
Government

ST HELENA LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
SELECT COMMITTEE 2
6 MONTH PROGRESS REPORT ON RECOMMENDATIONS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
SOCIAL HOUSING, DECEMBER 2025

Laid upon the Table 19 March 2026



Economic Development Portfolio

The Chair
Select Committee2
The Castle
Jamestown

21 November 2025

RE: Update on recommendations

Dear Chair of Select Committee 2,

I am writing to provide an update on the recommendations from the Select Committee 2 review on the *Provision of Social Housing*, which concluded last year.

While progress has not been as swift as originally planned, improvements have been made in several areas, including administration, customer relations, and data collection to support future policy development. Delays have primarily resulted from capacity constraints and challenges in prioritising technical support and maintenance works to the Property Service.

Key Updates:

Communications Strategy

A Communications Strategy is being developed, centred on understanding tenants' communication needs, considering preferred methods, the timing and the nature of communications and how tenants prefer to interact with the housing service. This also includes exploring the use of social media which is emerging as a preferred communication channel within a certain demographic, quarterly newsletters, and customer satisfaction surveys of the services we provide. A Tenant Handbook has also been produced, outlining tenant responsibilities in a customer-focused way, and is intended for release shortly.

Accuracy of Customer Information

Tenant information has been updated following the last tenancy audit to ensure records are accurate, with audits now planned on an annual basis, providing further opportunity for tenant engagement. We continue to monitor housing need, including care needs, adaptations, access for the aging demographic primarily in flats and arrangements for alternative forms of housing.

To support improved data management, we explored housing management software for tracking tenant and property information and concerns, maintenance, and engagement. However, available systems were not cost-effective for the scale of our service, and we are now using GIS services to link some of this information and are assessing local solutions that will enable more effective reporting and tracking of maintenance, which is identified as a tenant concern.

Construction of Social Housing

The Construction of four new social housing units remains a high priority. Although the business case and funding are in place, progress has been delayed due to the lack of professional support. We are working to secure remote technical engineering services to provide contract specifications for modern construction methods, that we hope to have access to by January of next year, failing which; we may need to revise the approach to construction.

The release of further land for comprehensive residential development, as well as the construction of new social housing, will depend on evidence of current and future housing need. This work is being informed by analysis of existing data and projected population trends, alongside a review of current social housing policies. The findings will shape the new Housing Policy and Strategy, guiding decisions on the number, type, and tenure of new homes required.

An accompanying Estates Management Policy, as recommended will assess the sustainability, future use, and development of land in line with these housing needs and the island's broader strategic and land use objectives.

Electrical Safety Certificates

Completion of electrical safety certificates has been delayed. Although funding was allocated and there was interest from the private sector in completing these works, internal support for developing specifications and overseeing the contract, that was agreed and earmarked as a priority with Building Maintenance earlier in the year, is no longer available. We are now proceeding with a procurement process for the private sector to develop the required contract specifications so that these works to be implemented.

Policy and Strategy

Many of the Select Committee's recommendations including those relating to housing provision, rents, maintenance, tenancy agreements, and homelessness will be considered in the Housing Policy. This approach will allow these issues to be addressed comprehensively within a new strategic framework, rather than redirecting resources at this time to address the identified gaps as a short-term solution.

We have continued to build the evidence base supporting the Select Committee recommendations and have identified other key issues and challenges and intend on releasing a Housing Needs Survey shortly to strengthen our data needs. The Head of Strategic Policy now

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has capacity to begin the formal review that will inform the full range of policy options for Housing, which we aim to complete by April 2026.

In addition to this we have renewed our bid in the MTEF process this year to fund both the Estates and Housing Policy work. This is timely, given the ongoing revision of the Land Development Control Plan and the need for cohesive land-use and land management policies.

Housing Improvements

Despite the challenges, there has been significant progress in improving housing standards this year. All homes at RE Yard have now been converted into fully self-contained units with kitchens, bathrooms, and toilet facilities brought under a single roof, while retaining a two-bedroom capacity. There is only one property now remaining in Jamestown where tenants must go outside to access toilet facilities, an issue stemming from historic adaptive reuse for housing, which we will aim to address as far as possible given building constraints, in the new financial year.

In addition to this a further seven homes have been improved for this year, and we have secured £400k from capital funding for urgent plumbing and sewer upgrades, installation of fire doors, window replacements and external improvements to five blocks of flat in Jamestown, that is currently being rolled out. A request has been made for further funding of £100K to improve three more properties, including a long term three bed void, that is now pending steering committee approval.

Although progress has extended beyond our intended timeframes, we remain fully committed to improving the quality of social housing and to implementing the Committee's recommendations.

Yours sincerely,



Nikita Crowie

Head of Property

Property Services, Economic Development Portfolio

**Cc: Minister Thrower, Minister for Economic Development and Environment, Natural Resources and Planning,
Damian Burns, Director, Economic Development Portfolio**



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Date: 16th December 2025

Ms Nikita Crowie
Head of Property
Property Services
Economic Development Portfolio

Dear Ms Crowie,

Thank you for your letter dated 21 November 2025, which provided an update regarding the recommendations from the Select Committee 2 Report on the *Provision of Social Housing*.

The Committee is grateful for your update and commitment to implementing these recommendations; however it would like to seek more information on the following:

Communications Strategy

The Committee notes that 'progress has not been as swift as originally planned' and understands the reasons for this. It would, however, be grateful if you could provide anticipated timelines for completing the Communications Strategy and confirm the expected release date of the Tenant Handbook. Could you also share examples of how you have explored the use of social media and provide a copy of a quarterly newsletter, please?

Accuracy of Customer Information

The Committee is pleased to note that you have started to monitor housing needs and have addressed some arrangements that were made previously for alternative forms of housing that are no longer appropriate. Could you provide further information on precisely what action is being taken regarding 'assessing local solutions that will enable more effective reporting and tracking of maintenance'.

Construction of Social Housing

It is deeply concerning that your feedback indicates considerable delay to the commencement of construction of any new units. Please clarify precisely what professional support is lacking that is contributing to this delay and what urgent action is being taken to address this issue. Additionally, in revising the construction approach have you considered compliance with Building Regulations. Could you also indicate when is it anticipated that the new Housing Policy and Strategy will be completed?

Electrical Safety Certificates

For what reason is internal support no longer available, and how far are you with the procurement process to engage private sector electricians to undertake the required inspections?

Policy and Strategy

The Committee accepts that a comprehensive approach will be taken regarding the Housing Policy however wishes to emphasise the need for urgent action in certain areas, where short-term solutions are essential. Could you also share any other key issues and challenges that are impeding progress, and provide an indicative date for the release of the Housing Needs Survey?

The Committee is pleased that you have submitted a bid in the MTEF process this year 'to fund both the Estates and Housing Policy work'. Could you provide further details on how you intend to utilise this additional funding?

Housing Improvements

The Committee commends the Portfolio on the improvements already undertaken this year, in particular work on upgrading the homes at the RE Yard, which has long been awaited. Despite constraints and delays encountered, the Committee acknowledges that some progress has been achieved. However could you provide clarity regarding the nature of the 'building constraints' and how you intend to address them.

The Committee wishes to express its sincere appreciation for the efforts and dedication demonstrated in starting to progress the recommendations outlined in the SC2 report. We look forward to continued collaboration and the next six-month update.

Yours sincerely,



Anita Legg
Secretary
Select Committee 2

cc: Head of Public Service
Minister for Economic Development & Environment Natural Resources and Planning
Chief Minister

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<p>Provision of Social Housing and its Efficient and Effective Use</p>	<p>1.1 The provision of additional housing units must be aligned consistently with the yet to be developed, updated Housing Strategy, with clearly defined roles and processes within the workflow.</p>	<p>See Recommendation 2.1</p>	<p>In progress</p>	<p>Alignment with new Housing Policy/Strategy underway; evidence base being built and Estates Management Policy planned to guide land release.</p>
	<p>1.2 Immediate action is taken to fast-track construction of additional social housing units at Bottom Woods and Half Tree Hollow Comprehensive Development Areas.</p>	<p>Immediate</p>	<p>In progress</p>	<p>Business case & funding in place for 4 units; progress delayed due to lack of professional support; remote engineering services expected Jan 2026 (or approach may be revised).</p>
	<p>1.3 The efficiencies and cost effectiveness of conversions as opposed to new builds must always be considered when making decisions regarding provision of additional units to meet housing needs.</p>	<p>On going</p>	<p>In progress</p>	<p>Conversions actively used to improve standards (e.g., RE Yard units converted to self-contained).</p>
	<p>1.4 Urgent action should be taken to assess the reliability and accuracy of current housing data, and to identify gaps that require addressing. This work must be used to inform the development of the new Housing Strategy.</p>	<p>By 31st March 2025</p>	<p>In progress</p>	<p>Tenant info updated via last audit; annual audits planned; GIS adopted to link housing data; local solutions assessed for maintenance tracking.</p>
	<p>1.5 It is imperative that housing data is regularly updated.</p>	<p>On going</p>	<p>In progress</p>	<p>Regular updates planned through annual audits, customer surveys, and monitoring of housing needs.</p>
	<p>1.6 SHG should reassess and define the level of priority that is given to the provision of social housing, in relation to the other services it provides, as it plays a key role in achievement of the Ministerial Vision and Strategic Plan, including the aspiration that nobody is left behind.</p>	<p>By end of January 2025</p>	<p>In progress</p>	<p>Priority reassessment embedded within broader Housing Policy review aligned to Ministerial Vision; formal review commencing with target completion by Apr 2026.</p>
	<p>1.7 The moratorium on sale of housing units should not apply to those assessed to be beyond economical repair, which must be disposed of promptly to avoid further deterioration.</p>	<p>By July 2025</p>		
	<p>1.8 Consideration should be given to ring fencing interest or returns gained by the Housing Service Trading Account so that it accrues to that account only.</p>	<p>By 31st March 2025</p>		

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Housing Strategy	<p>2.1 Priority must be given to the urgent development, approval and implementation of an up to date Housing Strategy and of an Estate Management Strategy.</p>	By July 2025	In progress	<p>Formal review capacity now available; aim to complete Housing Policy & Strategy by Apr 2026; MTEF bid renewed to fund Estates & Housing policy work.</p>
	<p>2.2 An “Accommodation for Life” policy should be introduced that reflects the intention of the current “Home for Life” policy, but provides greater flexibility to enable changes to be made that reflect alterations in the circumstances of tenants.</p>	By July 2025	In progress	<p>Accommodation-for-Life intent to be addressed within new Housing Policy for greater flexibility.</p>
	<p>2.3.1 Annual Reports must be compiled and issued relating to both the Housing Strategy and the Estate Management Strategy, and their implementation. These Strategies should be reviewed and revised in line with the findings of the Annual Reports.</p>	July – Annually		
	<p>2.3.2 Eligibility criteria and rental brackets should be examined and amended where necessary to ensure these are consistent and aligned with the overall intent and purpose underpinning provision of social housing.</p>	By 31st March 2025		
	<p>2.3.3 St Helena Government should establish and implement a clear, proactive and structured approach to the monitoring of rental payments and recovery of rent arrears.</p>	By 31st March 2025		
	<p>2.4 Rents, should more closely reflect affordability, and consideration should be given to introduction of a sliding scale instead of two tiers. Those tenants whose financial situation places them at the highest end should pay rents more closely aligned with those charged by the private sector.</p>	By 31st March 2025	In progress	<p>Affordability-based sliding rent scale under consideration in the Housing Policy.</p>
	<p>2.5 Consideration should be given to establishing a trading account in respect of the provision of social housing in order to manage all related income and expenditure more efficiently and effectively.</p>	By 31st March 2025	No Started	<p>Trading account consideration not referenced in letter; pending policy decisions.</p>
Repairs and Maintenance Strategy	<p>3.1 A revised and updated Repairs and Maintenance strategy should be drawn up and implemented as a priority.</p>	By July 2025	In progress	<p>Significant upgrades underway (plumbing/sewer, fire doors, windows, external works); procurement progressing for electrical safety certificates.</p>
	<p>3.2 All social housing units should be inspected regularly by a team of maintenance professionals.</p>	On going	No Started	<p>Regular inspection regime not referenced in letter.</p>
	<p>3.3 Urgent work must be undertaken to establish the true cost of ownership of each housing unit.</p>	By 31st March 2025	No Started	<p>True cost of ownership work not referenced in letter.</p>

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		By August 2025	No Started	Cross-cutting maintenance task force not referenced in letter.
	3.4 A cross-cutting task force should be established to take a holistic view of how best to break the current vicious circle relating to maintenance, and formulate associated recommendations.			
	3.5 An annual works programme should be developed in collaboration with all key stakeholders that clearly prioritises repair and maintenance needs of social housing units.	By December 2025	In progress	Annual works programme effectively initiated via funded upgrades (£400k) and pending £100k request.
Minimum Standards	4.1.1 There should be a clear consensus achieved across SHG, in collaboration with other relevant agencies, regarding what are the minimum standards for social housing units and how best to provide these in the most cost effective manner. When determining these standards, priority should be given primarily to safety, then cost effectiveness to occupants, then cost of ownership to SHG.	By May 2025		
	4.1.2 Minimum standards must be strictly adhered to and all properties must meet these standards. Priority for upgrading should be given to occupied units which do not meet the minimum safety standards.	By December 2025		
	4.2.1 An agreed definition of homelessness should be established across SHG.	By end January 2025		
	4.2.2 A dedicated homelessness plan should be finalised and implemented. An associated budget should also be prepared.	By 31st March 2021		
Customer Relations	5.1 New tenancy agreements must be drawn up as a matter of urgency. These must reflect the social housing policy intent and may require specific provisions for differing types of units.	By March 2025	In progress	New tenancy agreements to be developed under Housing Policy; Tenant Handbook produced and for release shortly.
	5.2 All tenancy agreements must be regularly reviewed in order to meet modern best practice and changes in law, regulation and policy.	Annually	No Started	Regular review cycle to follow once new agreements are in place.
	5.3 A proactive and comprehensive Customer Relations Strategy must be developed and implemented.	By July 2025	In progress	Communications Strategy in development (preferred channels, timing, social media, quarterly newsletters, satisfaction surveys).
	5.4.1 A method of capturing useful social housing and tenant data should be included within the tenancy agreement and the Customer Relations Strategy.	By July 2025		
	5.4.2 Data collected from these sources must be regularly collated and updated.	On going		

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RAG – Timeline : Yellow – deadline has passed

Recommendations: Red – not started

Amber – in progress

Green – completed

This document serves as a visual tracker made from the letter provided by the Head of Property on the 21st November 2025 at 4:00 pm.