

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **More social rented housing is needed, says JHT Chairman**

CONCERN has been expressed that the provision of social rented housing in the Island has stalled pending the outcome of an independent enquiry.

In his annual report, the Chairman of the Jersey Homes Trust, Michael Van Neste, says that no new developments are taking place and, as far as he knows, none are planned.

Whilst praising the Housing and Planning Ministers for attempting to expand home ownership through the Jersey Homebuy Scheme, Mr Van Neste says that until there is sufficient affordable housing in Jersey the Island will continue to fall short of its official objective of eliminating poverty. He says: "Although on a statistical level this may never be fully achieved, there continues to be legitimate concern for families that are discriminated against as a result of the current shortages of affordable housing and the application of the Housing Law necessitated by such shortages.

"Furthermore, there will continue to be families unable to buy a home and in need of accommodation, however successful the Homebuy scheme."

Mr Van Neste also points to the UK where the current recession has prompted investment into social housing development aimed at benefitting the construction industry and the general economy. "Is there a lesson there for Jersey?" he questions.

Mr Van Neste goes on to say he has little doubt that the independent enquiry will confirm the need for further development of social rented homes, particularly in the light of the current difficulty being experienced by individuals to obtain mortgage finance due to the economic downturn. "I am confident also that the role of housing trusts and associations in delivering and managing schemes will be confirmed as a preferred option," he adds.

Ends

### Note to Editors:

1. Enclosed: 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Report (draft) of the Jersey Homes Trust.
2. For further information please contact Michael Van Neste on 01534 750200