# Deputy Mézec’s rental reform proposals spark debate over Jersey’s housing future



On Wednesday 23 April, Deputy Sam Mézec’s comprehensive rental reform proposals faced rigorous examination during a public panel event held by All Island Media, generating significant debate among landlords, housing campaigners, and community representatives. The event, titled “Housing… Crisis averted?”, addressed what has been described as the most significant overhaul of Jersey’s rental market in a decade.

Deputy Mézec’s proposed reforms include capping rent increases to the rate of inflation, measured by the Retail Prices Index (RPI), or 5% if inflation rises higher, alongside stricter regulations concerning rental contract types. These measures aim to introduce greater fairness and security for tenants, particularly young people who find purchasing homes increasingly unattainable.

However, the proposals were met with mixed reactions from panellists. Harry Trower, director of Broadlands, expressed concerns regarding the impact on the rental property supply. He noted that although Broadlands does not manage a "massive rentals book," they have observed a decline in properties under management, with numerous landlords seeking to sell their rental homes. Michael Van Neste echoed this sentiment, cautioning that while affordable, well-maintained housing is essential, the rental sector might “wither away” under the new rules. He added, “And whilst it is withering away, the standard of accommodation people rent will gradually go down with it… I’m hopeful that the States will modify this proposal or reject it altogether.”

The Jersey Landlords Association, represented by chairman Guy Morris, directly challenged Deputy Mézec over concerns that the reforms could result in landlords exiting the market, a phenomenon observed in the UK. Morris highlighted worries about the introduction of open-ended tenancy agreements and the proposed cap on rent increases, emphasising the potential for reduced availability of rental homes.

In response, Deputy Mézec characterised these worries as “scaremongering,” pointing to the landlord licensing scheme’s launch, where similar fears were raised but ultimately did not materialise. He underscored the current poor renting experience in Jersey compared to neighbouring regions and stressed that the reforms sought to provide tenants with greater security and fairness. “If we want to say to young people who are struggling enough to buy a home, ‘Forget that aspiration – it’s too expensive for you’ – then the least we can do is offer them security and fairness while they rent,” he said.

Contrasting with landlord concerns, Captain Alice Nunn, co-leader of the Jersey Salvation Army, argued that the proposals “do not go far enough” to safeguard tenants, particularly those most vulnerable. Captain Nunn emphasised the need for measures that empower tenants to report unsafe or substandard accommodation without fearing eviction. Despite the existing landlord licensing scheme’s requirements for minimum safety standards and the ability for tenants to report issues to Environmental Health, she remarked that many remain “too afraid to come forward.”

If enacted, the reforms would also limit the use of short-term fixed-term rental contracts, establish a new Rent Tribunal to handle disputes over unfair rent increases, and mandate longer notice periods from landlords before tenancy termination.

Currently, the Environment, Housing, and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel is reviewing the proposals. Islanders are invited to share their opinions by contacting the panel via email at scrutiny@gov.je. The Jersey Evening Post is reporting on the ongoing public consultation and the diversity of perspectives surrounding these proposed rental reforms.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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2. <https://www.gov.je/Government/Consultations/pages/residentialtenancylawreform.aspx> - This webpage details the Residential Tenancy Law Reform proposals published in April 2023, which aim to improve conditions for tenants and landlords in Jersey.
3. <https://statesassembly.je/publications/assembly-reports/2023/r-61-2023> - This report sets the direction for modernizing residential tenancy legislation in Jersey, focusing on enhancements to residential tenancies.
4. <https://www.gov.je/Government/Pages/StatesReports.aspx?reportid=5809> - This report discusses outcomes from the Residential Tenancy Law Reform consultation, reflecting on proposals for improving rent regulations and landlord responsibilities.
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6. <https://www.noahwire.com> - This is the source article discussing Deputy Mézec's rental reform proposals, public debate, and reactions from various stakeholders such as landlords and housing campaigners.
7. <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMitwFBVV95cUxPdFJjOGFTZEF1eHloX3RQVTF3MWlGWkJCSGplaUpNXzBCckhrd1RGdjJaalhMUzl5QWRWSm1YUHdSMVBVX2Q0NzhFQVU1R2JKTlAwSlJ6T3NHd2pXa3ZxcjZhVk5zTHZkNW1qc2xYTWpRdW1GeWRhZEhVTi0wb0ZtRXFqV3pzOEhUZ0czUFd3Tk9VVG5EdjQ0VVRaZFVFX25UaWYxUVgwb2lPOTBRRkZvX0ZqeXFGckU?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data