

STATES OF JERSEY



MIGRATION AND POPULATION DATA

Lodged au Greffe on 23rd September 2020
by Deputy J.H. Perchard of St. Saviour

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

- (a) that any forthcoming Migration Policy should present sustainability data showing the infrastructural, educational, health-related, environmental and social requirements of the proposed population size across the period to 2070 and include an explicit prediction of the population size for 2030, 2040, 2050, 2060 and 2070 based on its proposed rate of tolerable population growth;
- (b) that this sustainability data should incorporate all required major infrastructure projects (in 10-year intervals) arising from the forecast rate of population growth, including but not limited to: the number of new primary and secondary schools, hospital facilities and staff accommodation, affordable homes for first-time buyers and for elderly residents, social housing, the required road maintenance and construction, and the provision of utilities;
- (c) that this data should also include, for every 10-year interval across the period to 2070, any anticipated additional funding required for Income Support, pensions, Long-Term Care and all other contributory benefits;
- (d) that, ahead of the debate on any forthcoming Migration Policy, the public shall be consulted on its views regarding a sustainable population size across a 50-year period; a representative and proportional sample of the Island's population must be included, that being a sample whose gender balance, residential statuses, ages, ethnicities, and other key characteristics reflect that of the Island's overall population;
- (e) that any forthcoming Migration Policy should demonstrate reasonable and thorough consideration has been given to a net-zero inward migration policy and provide a clear rationale (with supporting data) for why such a policy has not been proposed, should that be the case; and
- (f) to request the Council of Ministers to take the necessary steps to implement paragraphs (a) to (e) when developing a forthcoming Migration Policy for debate by the States Assembly.

DEPUTY J.H. PERCHARD OF ST. SAVIOUR

REPORT

This report outlines the rationale for each part of the proposition. As members will know, there have been countless debates, reports, reviews and discussions about Jersey's population size and these have spanned decades. This proposition, in a general sense, serves to focus the next attempt to implement a successful Migration Policy on providing data, detail, rigour and academic approaches to a policy that we have not, over the last century, been able to successfully deliver.

Part (a)

The data required of part (a) is likely to be included in the Migration Policy but part (a) requires it to be explicitly presented in a fashion that allows the reader with ease and speed to compare the decennial costs of the population growth forecast by the Government.

Part (b)

Often, the infrastructural requirements of population growth are not explicitly detailed or predicted. This error would be a woeful one to repeat in the forthcoming Migration Policy as demonstrated time and again through previous attempts of Jersey Governments to regulate growth. A lack of detail on the number and size of new buildings that would be required is essential if we are to have an informed and intelligent debate about the sustainability of the policy.

Part (c)

Many unexpected decisions have had to be made this year in response to the pandemic, but some of these will have far reaching consequences. Not only will the finances lost need to be recovered to support the current population, but with a rate of growth of approximately 1100 people a year, we need to find more money from within the current population to support the future larger population during recovery. Even if growth is truly controlled – which is yet to have been achieved by previous Governments – there will still be more people to support than ever before, at a time when many islanders are in need. Therefore, it is essential that accurate projections are made regarding the cost of supporting an increased population during a recovery period and in the longer-term given any growth forecast.

Part (d)

The community voice must be captured within any debate on population growth because it is the people of Jersey who will be affected by the infrastructural costs, greater utilities demands, number of school spaces, green spaces, the state of the Social Security fund, tax rates; all of these elements are directly impacted by population growth. Uncontrolled growth is especially worrisome; as we continue to overshoot our current growth target, we move further away from knowing how long we have left until we need more schools, a new hospital, and so on. The people who will be most affected, in this case, the greater public, must have their voices heard.

Part (e)

When asked in a public hearing, the Chief Minister said he would not want the population size to ever reach 200,000. The current rate of growth, if left, would result in that figure being reached within the lifetime of our youngest generation.

If you slow growth enough, we may not reach 200,000 people over the next 50, 60 or 70 years, but it will eventually happen: slow growth will result in overall growth.

For this reason, it is essential that the Government demonstrate that consideration has been given to a net-nil, productivity-high policy and to explain, with supporting evidence, why growth is being pursued, if this is indeed what the forthcoming policy allows.

Part (f) - as read.

Financial and manpower implications

There are no direct financial and manpower implications arising from parts (a) - (c) although Statistics Officer time will be required to undertake any additional statistical modelling that has not already been carried out in the development of the forthcoming policy. A public consultation arising from (d) is estimated to cost in the region of £3-£5,000.