

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 18th JULY 2006

Question

Would the Minister inform members –

- (a) of the figures in real and percentage terms for the distribution of ‘j’ category housing consents across the employment sectors he referred to in his answers to oral questions on 4th July 2006?
- (b) whether, as a result of the new ‘j’ category housing policy, an additional 600 non time-limited consents will be produced and, if so, whether this number is increased by dependants?
- (c) whether any non time-limited ‘j’ category consents are to be issued in respect of the estimated 500 new ‘j’-category jobs arising from the economic growth policy and, if so, what proportion of these consents will be non time-limited? and,
- (d) how the new ‘j’ category housing policy ‘will not affect population one bit’ as stated in his answers to oral questions on 4th July 2006?

Answer

- (a) The total number of ‘j’ category employees as at 31st December 2005, was 1,185. Of these, 740, or 62%, were in the private sector, (a figure obtained from the 31st December 2005 Manpower Survey), and 445, or 38%, in the public sector, (a figure extrapolated from the 2001 census figures). The Treasury and Resources Department have recently enhanced their six monthly public sector manpower returns so, in future, the public sector figure can be reported on an actual rather than extrapolated basis.

Of the 271 private sector ‘j’ applications processed and approved in 2005 –

- (i) 74, or 27%, were in the legal-financial sector;
 - (ii) 49, or 18%, in banking;
 - (iii) 36, or 13%, in services and transport;
 - (iv) 32, or 12%, were accountants; and
 - (v) the remainder, 80, or 30%, were in a variety of other areas.
- (b) This change does not create essential employment and, therefore, it will not lead to more essential ‘j’ employees. It will, of course, increase the proportion of unlimited consents from 10% to 60% approximately, and this does equate to 600 existing consents becoming unlimited. It does of course not increase the number of ‘j’ consents, but merely transfers them from time limited, which in all likelihood would have been replaced by other time limited ‘j’s’.

The average household size for a ‘j’ employee is 2.8, and therefore, it could be said that each ‘j’ employee has on average 1.8 ‘dependents’.

- (c) The Economic Growth Plan makes no reference to “500 new ‘j’-category jobs”. The Economic Growth Plan rather sets a target of no more than an average 1% growth per annum over the period of the plan in the working population, and which roughly equates to 500 jobs.

The agreed policy is to promote local employment, and all the evidence confirms that this objective is being achieved. New jobs are filled over-whelming with locally qualified individuals; in 2005, 83% of all employees were local, and of the additional jobs created, 96% were for locally qualified persons. Further, it

should be noted that non-local employment reduced by 70 positions in 2005.

Essential 'j' employees accounted for 2% of the working population as at 31st December 2005, and 14% of the growth in the working population in 2005.

- (d) As quoted in the report '(j)' Category Housing Consents: 'Contract Policy' – Report(R.54/2006 *re-issue*) “... *there is a continuous movement of employees in and out of the Island in response to the economic environment generally, so the granting of unlimited 'j' consent at the outset does not mean that all will stay and achieve local housing status*”.

Further, as noted in a written response to question No. 2945 tabled on 4th July 2006, “*One could go further and state that 'j' employees are highly mobile, career orientated individuals, who having been prepared to come to the Island for work, are equally prepared to leave..*”.

Any impact on the population would only occur from those members of the current cohort of 'j' consents who remain and would otherwise not have remained until retirement. It is expected that the net increase in 'j' consents who stay for more than 10 years and, therefore, gain their full entitlement at retirement will at most be minimal. Thus, if there is an impact on the population, it is expected to be very minimal.

Finally, it is important to remember that this change was motivated in many ways by a desire for greater equity; recognising the contribution these employees make to the Island, and the benefits of having a more stable society. As quoted in written response to question No. 2945 “*..so long as the staff member remains essentially employed, contributing significantly to the Island, and they perform this for as long as it takes to obtain residential qualifications, then that is reasonable and equitable and promotes the kind of social inclusion and stability in the Island's population which is desirable.*”