

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BY DEPUTY G.C.L.  
BAUDAINS OF ST. CLEMENT**

**ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 1st JULY 2008**

**Question**

Would the Minister advise of the current procedures, if any, in place to encourage external construction firms to local contractors and labour, as opposed to temporarily importing foreign labour and what checks, if any, exist to ensure compliance with those procedures?

**Answer**

It is important to sustain a cost effective and competitive local construction company, and also to maintain a range of job and training opportunities for locally qualified persons.

In practice, this means that a Regulation of Undertakings licence will only be issued to a local contractor where they have demonstrated efforts to identify and train locally qualified persons, and to non local contractors provided that evidence exists that local contractors have had opportunity to tender on a level playing field basis, or that the work is so specialist in nature that the work cannot be undertaken by local firms.

Where non local firms are awarded licences, they are strongly encouraged to work with and engage local sub-contractors. To achieve this outcome, the support of the Economic Development Department's Jersey Enterprise team of business advisors is available to both the external contractors and local sub-contractors.

It is vitally important to maintain competition in the construction sector. A competitive construction market has positive implications for costs throughout the Jersey economy, and influences overall competitiveness of the Island compared to other jurisdictions. These policies are under ongoing review to ensure that we comprehend changes in the sector and the commercial environment.

Alongside this, the emphasis of policy development and decision making has been very much focused on encouraging and supporting an increasingly trained workforce in the construction sector. This is being achieved, amongst other things, through the establishment of the Skills Executive, and attaching, as appropriate, conditions to short term Regulation of Undertakings licences around the engagement and support of local apprentices – with those licences being renewable subject to satisfactory assessments of progress.

This level playing field approach to competition, with support for the training and development of locally qualified staff, is seen as the correct response to industry issues at the present time, in particular while labour market capacity is limited – with locally qualified employment in the sector in December 2007 standing at a high of 4,610, compared to 4,350 in December 2005.