

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

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 21st OCTOBER 2008

Question

Does the Chief Minister accept, in the light of recent population, immigration and job growth figures that one of the first tasks of a new Council of Ministers will be to bring to the Assembly a policy for controlling population and, if not, why not?

Answer

The latest figures on the performance of the economy show that in recent years the Island has been successful in achieving a difficult balance between strong economic growth (based on significant improvements in productivity), higher employment of local people and controlled inward migration. The economy grew by 7% in real terms in 2006 and 2007 with total GVA 6% higher than in the previous peak in 2000. This has been achieved whilst containing growth in the workforce over the five years to 2007 below the 1% target set by the States. As a result, total employment in the Island in June 2008 was only 2% (1,200 people) higher than ten years ago in June 1998.

In its 'Keeping Jersey Special' report, published in July 2008, the current Council of Ministers identified that meeting the challenge of the ageing population whilst maintaining the Island as a successful and wonderful place to live will require the right balance between social, economic and environmental policies.

Based on detailed analysis and consultation with the public, the report concluded that, whilst it is possible to combine the above policies to reach a sustainable path to meet the challenges ahead, this is unlikely to be achieved without some level of inward migration.

It is not for me to decide on the future actions of the next Council of Ministers. However, I am sure that new Council will look to address the central issues within the 'Keeping Jersey Special' report, including policy for population, as part of the development of its Strategic Plan which will be produced in the early part of 2009.