

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 24TH FEBRUARY 2009**

Question

Will the Minister set out for members the new criteria he is using to assess applications for J-category licences showing clearly how they differ from the old?

Will he assess for members the impact he expects from his new measures on the economy and employment?

Will he explain to members the extent to which the changes are a return to limited 3-year licences?

Will he give members a breakdown of J-category licence applications and refusals by quarter and by sector over the past 2 years alongside current data for this year to date to illustrate the impact of his actions?

Will the Minister inform members when he expects a Migration policy giving clear criteria for future licensing to be lodged in the Assembly?

Answer

The j category policy is published as part of the:

“General Statement of Policy (2008) in relation to Regulation of Undertakings and Developments (Jersey) Law and Housing Law in relation to “j” category consents”.

This document is available at: www.gov.je/ChiefMinister/PopulationOffice.

This policy was published in July 2008, and sought to introduce greater transparency, including increased clarity as to how existing employees would be treated and time limits applied. This policy has NOT subsequently changed, indeed, the Housing Minister’s recent comments were merely re-iterating the established policy, of which the relevant extract is as follows:

*“The “j” provision is a recruitment tool, designed to assist employers with recruitment where no satisfactory local person is available. It is not a retention tool, nor an entitlement for having gained a certain professional position. As such, **existing employees will not be granted “j” consent except where some small discretion is exercised...**”*

This policy exists to manage demand on the local housing stock, while also supporting business in its recruitment for essential positions, and indeed, as a long established and published policy, is generally quite clear to most businesses. As to the question of time limits, the policy is again clear, and remains applicable:

- *All posts which meet the “j” category consent criteria, where the employer is well established, and which require extensive knowledge and experience, will be granted an unlimited “j” category consent on commencement.*
- *All posts which meet the “j” category consent criteria, and are required for a specific purpose or time limited period, or where the employer is a new start up, be granted a time limited “j” category consent.*

This is a tough but pragmatic stance, seeking a sustainable balance between the needs of business and the need to protect the local housing stock. Furthermore, while this policy will be updated to grant employers more discretion as part of the Migration Policy - subject to States debate in 2009 – the fundamental principles will remain, in that access to property in Jersey will continue to be carefully managed, being linked to either employment or a lengthy

period of residence.

The relevant “j” statistics for approvals, refusals, time limits, and a comparable sectoral breakdown, for 2007 and 2008, are as follows:

| | 2007 | 2008 |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Approvals with time limit | 198 | 192 |
| Approvals without time limit | 300 | 331 |
| Approvals | 498 | 523 |
| Refusals | 61 | 58 |

| | June 2007 | June 2008 |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| Agriculture and Fisheries | 0 | 0 |
| Manufacturing | 20 | 20 |
| Construction and Quarrying | 30 | 30 |
| Electricity, Gas and Water | 0 | 0 |
| Wholesale and Retail Trades | 50 | 60 |
| Hotels ,Bars, Restaurants | 20 | 30 |
| Transport, Storage, and Communications | 30 | 40 |
| Computer and related activities | 20 | 10 |
| Financial and Legal Activities | 620 | 710 |
| Miscellaneous Business Activities | 40 | 40 |
| Education, Health and other services (private sector) | 120 | 140 |
| Total private sector “j” employees | 950 | 1,090 |
| Total private sector employees | 48,380 | 49,900 |