

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 18th FEBRUARY 2014**

Question

Will the Chief Minister explain why, despite his response to an oral question on population policy asked on 4th February 2014, his interim policy fails to address the 2013 housing projections which reveal the need to house an additional 550 households by 2016 over net nil migration with a total of an extra 1,610 units of accommodation needed?

Can the Chief Minister justify such an increase in short term demand for housing when the waiting list for social housing is already 700 plus?

Does the Chief Minister accept that this policy, described as a “policy of stability”, if continued, would create additional demand for housing amounting to some 7,000 units by 2035?

Does the Chief Minister recognize that his policy, if maintained, produces large increases in population for relatively small gains in dependency ratios over the short and medium terms?

Does he accept that replacing 500 “net registered” migrants in 2010 with 400 “net licensed” migrants in 2012 continues to fail to meet his stated targets for 325 total net inward migration?

Answer

The Interim Population Policy covers the years 2014 and 2015, and it will be for the next Assembly to set a future policy for population as part of its long term planning. We cannot set a future policy for population in the absence of a comprehensive planning process, as migration has a wide effect on our Island, for example, on our economy, our infrastructure, our environment.

However, we can anticipate the long term impact of an ageing society, based on the available statistics. Our over-65s population will nearly double by 2035 under any migration scenario, and if we have net nil migration over that period our working age population will decline by 8,000 (11%). This level of decline in our workforce will have a significant effect on our dependency ratio, and hence on our economy.

In the meantime:

- The Island Plan adopts a planning assumption that is consistent with the Interim Population Policy, and so accommodates projected changes in the number of households.
- As new migrants are not eligible for social housing, there will be no short term impact on the social housing waiting list during the life of the Interim Population Policy.

Recent trends show that net inward migration is falling, and is increasingly high value. This is in line with our strategic aim of limited migration and economic growth. Maintaining this trend as the economy recovers, and achieving the +325 outlined in the Interim Population, will be a challenge. However the new Control of Housing and Work Law provides a more efficient mechanism to control inward migration and we are determined to meet the expectations of Islanders.