

2024.06.25

3.15 Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée of the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development regarding retention and recruitment issues (OQ.132/2024)

Further to the *Barriers to Business* report, will the Minister advise how he plans to tackle the retention and recruitment issues detailed therein?

Deputy K.F. Morel (The Minister for Sustainable Economic Development):

I thank the Deputy for her question. Last month I published the response to the *Barriers to Business* report, it was entitled *Enabling Business*, and it provided an update against the 38 recommendations made by Jersey Business. Specifically with regards the barrier of the availability of skills and people, which is a genuine and severe barrier in Jersey, work is underway to launch a Skills Development Scheme in 2024, which will include the ability to attract more people with “entitled to work” status into careers in Jersey while also offering new training and apprenticeship pathways. Work is also underway to provide support for employers and employees as we transition into a living wage, including support and work permits. We are also reviewing housing controls within the Control of Housing and Work Law. This work is already underway and planning guidance on minimum residential space standards was updated last year. As the Assembly realises, I read through that list, much of this work is under the auspices of other Ministers and so the work I undertake there is to engage with those Ministers and their teams to help them work through these programmes to ensure that we have an Island that is attractive to people for work and attractive to people to stay here in the long term.

3.15.1 Deputy B.B. de S.DV.M. Porée:

Following on the theme of support for small businesses, has any consideration been given to support small businesses during the proposed up-and-coming bank holiday to commemorate the King’s visit to the Island?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

An interesting supplemental point.

The Bailiff:

I am afraid I do not think reference to the upcoming King’s visit falls within the ambit of the original question, Deputy. Are you able to reframe the question in some way? No further supplementary? Very well. In which case that brings ...

[11:15]

Deputy M. Tadier:

Is the time up or ... I had my light on.

The Bailiff:

I beg your pardon, Deputy Tadier. No, the time is not up and I should have called upon you.

3.15.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

I do not know the latest figures but a recent estimate suggested that there might have been up to 4,000 people living in Jersey of working age who do not yet have their 5 years qualifications but they are living here already, they are working here already in some jobs, they just cannot work in all jobs. Does the Minister think that that is an untapped resource where some of those

skills which they maybe cannot use fully could be applied into the local economy for the Island's benefit without necessarily needing to look for yet more workers to come in to do jobs which these people might be able to do?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The question effectively asks for my opinion on this. I personally would like to see a more flexible system where people can move across jobs but I also appreciate that when it comes to immigration into the Island we are also under the auspices of the United Kingdom, and there are controls and regulations which work together and sometimes work against each other. I could not say hand on heart whether I think it is achievable that we could have a more flexible system or not but it is one that I personally prefer to see.

3.15.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

Does the Minister agree that the 5-year rule ... in fact, if we talk about immigration these people are already here, so it is not an immigration mechanism; it has not stopped people coming to the Island, it simply says which type of jobs they are allowed to work in, that this is a form of red tape, it is a barrier to business, it is also a barrier to those workers. Does the Minister not agree that that is a barrier which could easily be removed within our powers and within Jersey's ambitions to do that and therefore to take down some obvious barriers that do already exist?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I am not sure I do agree that it is easy to do that but I will certainly engage with the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs to understand how easy or not that is.

The Bailiff:

Very well, that brings that section of questions with notice to an end.