

**STATEMENT TO BE MADE BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES
COMMITTEE ON 1st FEBRUARY 2005**

Censuses play a very important role in providing a detailed snapshot of Jersey's community. However, often in the past we have relied on them because other official statistics were not available. Happily, and I trust members will agree, the position has changed and through the recent work of the Statistics Unit we have much fuller and more timely information on which to base our decisions.

That is why the Policy and Resources Committee has agreed a proposal from the Head of Statistics that the next Census of Jersey should be held in 2011 and not 2006 as originally planned. A move to 10 year censuses would ensure that we are in line with most other developed countries who will be having a census in 2011; and of course moving to 10 yearly censuses does not mean we lose any data, the results of the 2001 and subsequent censuses will still be available to all.

I am making his Committee paper, ('The next Jersey Census' dated 12th January 2005), available to you all but I will quickly run through some of the key points we considered in coming to this decision.

To begin with I would like to reassure members that we will continue to have an accurate measure of our population, which has in the past often been the key driver for undertaking frequent Censuses. During 2004 the Statistics Unit developed a methodology to provide an annual estimate of the population, now published in June of each year. So whilst ten yearly censuses will still provide an actual count of the population, we no longer need to rely solely on them to enable us to accurately calculate it.

Running a census is a major operation, so we must be sure that it is needed and is the best use of resources. If the Statistics Unit were to run a 2006 census it would mean they could not continue to expand the social and economic data necessary to inform debate and facilitate policy making. Specifically a 2006 census would also divert resources away from the task of running the Household Expenditure Survey, which is currently underway, and which is essential to ensure that the RPI remains accurate.

High quality economic and social data are vital for the Island and that is why the Committee has agreed to redirect some of the funding originally set aside for the Census to help develop statistics. Over the next five years the States will save around £500,000 by postponing the census. £200,000 of this saving will be invested into ensuring we have the appropriate statistical base for the important decisions we face. This is good for everyone, an enhanced service at a lower cost (better, simpler, cheaper).

In drawing up his proposals, the Head of Statistics sought agreement from other Departments that they were comfortable with his proposal. They were, and the Committee is happy to fully endorse the proposal and to continue to support the work of the States of Jersey's Statistics Unit.