



States Greffe: Scrutiny

Deputy Rowland Huelin  
Assistant Chief Minister

26<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Dear Assistant Chief Minister,

**Migration and Population Review Panel**

**Common Population Policy**

Thank you for your letter of 12<sup>th</sup> October in response to the Panel's queries in relation to the timing of debate on a Common Population Policy. As a result of your response the Panel has some further queries and significant concerns.

**Lodging and debate**

While the Panel fully appreciates the time constraints and the need for the fullest possible information to inform a Common Population Policy for Jersey, it is concerned that your letter proposes a debate in January 2022 without any formal recourse to the States Assembly. In November 2020 the States Assembly voted to accept an amendment brought by Deputy Jess Perchard to her proposition P.120/2020 – Migration and Population Data which tasked the Council of Ministers with developing a Common Population Policy by the end of December 2021.

The Panel accepts that the timetable proposed in your letter does fulfil that criteria but, given the expectation of the States Assembly of a debate on the population policy by the end of 2021, could you outline how you will address the States Assembly in relation to this delay and what information will be provided to States Members to explain the decision.

During the course of this year, and since the debate on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021 of P.137/2020 Migration Control Policy, the Panel has consistently queried the timetable and the information available to Government and, despite the challenges posed by the events of the past year, it would have expected that earlier consideration would have been given if the deadline of a 14<sup>th</sup> December debate could not be met.

In the light of the intended delayed lodging and debate dates proposed of 'the first week of December 2021' and 18 January 2021, respectively, the Panel also has significant concerns about the lack of opportunity this revised timetable will provide for robust scrutiny of the Common Population Policy.

The Panel appreciates that, should the policy be lodged on 1 December 2021, this meets the six-week minimum lodging period required under the Standing Orders of the States of Jersey. It does however fall over the Christmas holiday season when it can be anticipated that the availability of officers, Ministers and potential witnesses to provide timely information to the Panel and States

Members will be limited by leave, which further reduces the time available for effective scrutiny. In reality, the period for scrutiny will be shorter than six weeks.

While the Panel is reluctant to delay this debate any further, especially given the States Assembly's commitment to Islanders to have brought forward and agreed a population policy by the end of this year, it's members would urge the Assistant Chief Minister to delay the debate to 8 February 2022 and provide an assurance that the policy will be lodged no later than 1 December 2021.

It is the Panel's hope that the Assistant Chief Minister will appreciate, given the delays to the presentation of a policy for review over the course of 2021, that it is reasonable and right that adequate provision is now made for thorough scrutiny of one of the most anticipated and significant policy documents produced by this Government.

### **Consultation results and analysis**

In addition, the Panel note that 1,700 responses and over 5000 comments have been received following your recent consultation exercise and that an analysis of the data is underway. The Panel would request that it is given the earliest possible sight of the results of this analysis so that it may familiarise itself with any outcomes that have been found prior to any work that the Panel will carry out in reviewing the Common Population Policy when lodged.

### **Control of Housing and Work Law amendments**

The Panel would also request that an explanation be provided for the delay in bringing forward the amendments to the Control of Housing and Work (Jersey) Law 2012 which resulted from the States approval of P.137/2021.

At the Panel's Public Hearing with you held on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021, you stated that the amendments would be lodged in 'the autumn' ([Transcript - Migration and Population - Assistant Chief Minister - 23 June 2021 \(gov.je\)](#) p2), a delay from the original expectation that they would be lodged in June.

The Panel notes from your letter that it is now intended that they be lodged 'before the year end'.

The Panel would be grateful for a final lodging date to be confirmed as this will also have an impact of the work schedule for the Panel and its officers.

### **Communication**

In a number of forums, including your letter of 12 October 2021, during Public Hearings with this Panel and in States debates on the Migration Control Policy and P.77/2021 Draft States of Jersey (Amendment No. 10) Law 202-, the difficulties posed by the lack of robust data to inform a population policy have been acknowledged. The Panel fully understand that updated and new data must continue to inform the development of a new Common Population Policy and that, as you have set out, this will mean that the policy will need to be able to evolve.

However, the Panel would like to understand how the nature and scope of the proposed policy will be explained to all Islanders, including the business community and States Members, in order that they have full confidence that a new policy, which will effectively control the island's future population, will be delivered and that it will be done so as soon as practicable.

I look forward to hearing from you within five working days, on or before the close of business on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021.

Yours sincerely.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Senator Steve Pallett  
Chair, Migration and Population Review Panel

cc. Chief Minister, Senator John Le Fondré