

Anonymous 4 – 17th May 2021

Dear panel member

Below are my thoughts on the subject; I realise that you aren't looking directly at immigration control, but in my opinion this is the island's biggest problem, which has failed to be properly addressed by our government since the 70s.

1. The immigration policy recently approved by the States needs to be implemented without delay and further excuses. Hospitality, retail and agriculture will always loudly voice their disagreement, but they will have to learn to live with it in order to stop the further ruination of our beautiful island. All of these industries are already largely subsidised by the taxpayer and because they pay such low wages, the taxpayer is also covering the cost of benefits to their employees; this has to stop.
2. The States need to agree a maximum number of immigrants a year over a ten year period and stick to it. This figure should not be more than 150. Anything more is unsustainable and does not benefit the island in the long-term due to the expense of providing more and more services and housing. Licenses should be issued predominantly to single candidates, who will not be bringing a large entourage of family with them. The States and industry need to fund skills training so that we have the skills on-island that we require.
3. There are too few 3 & 4 bedroom properties on the market for younger families. One of the reasons is that there are no decent, affordable smaller freehold properties for older people wishing to downsize. More freehold 2-bed properties with gardens need to be built for this sector by private developers, the States and the parishes. Each rural parish should be obligated to meet the requirement for retirement properties dependent on their population; they should be responsible for proposing suitable sites for such developments if they do not meet their quota.
4. In order to release the family homes mentioned in 3 above, properties designated for first-time buyers should also be available to those wishing to downsize. This could possibly be conditional on the downsizer having to sell to buyers who are themselves either first-time buyers or who are selling their first property (ie second-time buyers).
5. As the price of property has soared, the rate of stamp duty has become too high and is a reason why people aren't buying/downsizing. Incentives should therefore be available such as deferral of payment until the property is next sold and/or for those selling, only charging them the difference in stamp duty between what is due and what was paid in the property being sold, which option should be available for a period of, say, 3 years to give sellers time to find their new property.
6. Very few people want to live in a one-bed property, but that is predominantly what are being built. Minimum size standards should be enforced for all new builds so that no unit can be less than 50 sq m living area and should have to include a minimum of storage space.
7. Planning should not be able to dictate that properties can only have wooden window frames unless they wish to pay for them. When we are looking at becoming carbon neutral it is obscene to force people to live in freezing properties where the heat is seeping out through single glass wooden-framed windows and the cost of double-glazed wooden-framed windows is not a possibility for most people. Nor is the cost of maintaining them. It is also unenvironmentally-friendly to use wood when there are so many other long-lasting man made products available that require virtually no maintenance.

8. I am aware that Planning often refuse consent for large houses to be split into multiple family homes and such refusals are often based on trivialities. The benchmark for such refusals needs to be raised in view of the shortage of homes in the island.

9. The States should make as much money as possible from selling prime sites they own and use those funds to built affordable housing. They should not be building affordable homes on prime sites at the cost of the taxpayer.

10. There are many high-value properties owned by wealthy people that stand empty; many of these properties have been purchased purely as investments to be sold at great profit tax free in the future. In the meantime they stand empty. Legislation needs to be implemented to stop this such as a tax on habitable properties left vacant for more than 3 months. Also, laws should be enacted to compulsorily purchase properties that are left empty to dilapidate.

11. The States are guilty of leaving so many publicly owned properties empty and unused. This must stop and these sites need to be converted to rented properties wherever possible. These properties could be transferred to a States' owned private company that would be responsible for developing these properties and ensuring that they do not stand empty. We need more States' owned rental property that should remain in the public ownership for future generations. Not everyone can own their own property and this should not have to be the norm. Rental is the norm in many other countries and people's attitudes need to change. More good rental flats and houses should be provided by the States, some of which could be managed by our excellent housing trusts.

12. I am against planning consent being given for residential units in our Coastal National Park, which should be retained for EVERYONE's pleasure and for future generations. Too many luxury properties have been built on our coastline to the detriment of everyone except those wealthy individuals living there, who have a sense of entitlement.

13. I don't believe we should be building residential units in our green zones. The only exception would be some old dilapidated glasshouse sites that have not been used for decades and are an eyesore. However, if these were needed for agriculture, that would be preferable to housing.

Good luck!