



**JERSEY**  
Chamber of Commerce

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**Common Population Policy Review  
For the attentipon of the Migration and Population Review Panel**

Common Population Policy – Jersey Chamber of Commerce

Chamber members are disappointed with this policy, the lack of decision making from the Government and it having taken “4 years to kick the can down the road” from the last proposed Migration and Population Policy published by the previous Government in 2018. The policy clearly states that ‘despite the challenges, we must act now.’ That action, in the eyes of Chamber members, is to do nothing and leave it for future Governments to deal with.

The policy lacks new initiatives or anything significantly different from that offered by the Migration and Population Review Board in 2020. Whilst it establishes there is an issue, it says little about what will realistically assist in solving it, therefore it presents much more as an ambition rather than a proposition. It is not clear how future Council of Ministers will be tied to this policy if it were to be adopted, which may become a challenge if this policy is not aligned to political party aspirations. There is a lack of clarity about how a reduction of reliance on net migration, or a target of net nil migration, would be achieved, how it would work and the impacts it would have on different sectors of the economy. The figures that do exist suggest that the migration allowed would only support growth in the public sector.

Unlike other Government policies, this proposed policy avoids any targets, citing not enough available data. This is particularly frustrating as the need for improved data is not new. Projections used for other major projects, such as the Island Plan and the new hospital, are also noticeably absent. The business community need a degree of certainty to be able to plan and know that spending time and money on the development of their people will be a worthwhile investment in the longer term. This policy does not give businesses confidence that they will get that clarity.

Businesses in different sectors are concerned about being restricted by reduced inward migration. A lack of skills on the island, a decline in the number of islanders willing to work in particular sectors, and restrictions caused by Brexit have forced business to look at markets further afield to meet their requirements. Chamber, with Government assistance, are spearheading relationships with the Caribbean to alleviate this pressure, and Chamber is working successfully with colleges in France to secure qualified labour for Jersey companies. Others in Jersey are working with colleges in Kenya and Rwanda to help fill the gaps.

The proposed policy to reduce inward migration further will exacerbate the situation. If limits are introduced, there is a possibility that Government will be 'picking winners and losers' with sectors of the economy, allowing some to grow whilst others will lack the viability to continue.

Currently there are more vacancies than people actively seeking work. Chamber estimate 2,000+ vacancies exist with no one on island to fill them. When we talk about reducing migration, we therefore mean stopping businesses expanding. Wage inflation is already rife and under this policy it is set to continue.

Overall, in the short term, the lack of current action means that the Common Population Policy has no immediate impact on the economy. If, according to the policy, we will not have appropriate data on which to make decisions until 2025, this suggests that the new Government elected in June 2022 will not be equipped to take any action during their term of office either and the can will be kicked down the road for the 2026-2030 Government. The over-arching ambition within the proposal to not be reliant on inward migration must have greater clarity on what that means for the major drivers of our economy. The danger of this policy being unclear and indecisive is that it has the potential to encourage businesses to look to jurisdictions where they can find employees to do business and that will be a disaster for Jersey.

Yours sincerely,

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