

2020.06.30

5 Deputy K.G. Pamplin of St. Saviour of the Chief Minister regarding the Government's policy in population and migration: (OQ.168/2020)

Following the latest report by Statistics Jersey of the Island's projected population figures, will the Chief Minister bring forward the Government's policy on population and migration as a matter of urgency?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré (The Chief Minister):

As I am sure the Deputy understands, work on the new migration policy has been on hold since March 2020 while resources were diverted to COVID-19 policy and legislation. As I informed Members on 27th May, which was in response to a question from Deputy Truscott, it is my intention to bring the migration policy debate before the end of the year. I have instructed officers to recommence the work. Allowing for the summer recess and the required scrutiny process I anticipate that the debate will take place in November and the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel have been informed of this.

4.5.1 Deputy K.G. Pamplin:

I thank the Chief Minister. The more we can get the message out to the public the better of what is going on with this very important debate that we will have, not that all debates are important obviously. But can the Chief Minister give us, from the information and the way he sees things now, what the impact will have on this piece of work of the pandemic in terms of migration numbers and obviously the situation we will be debating in the next couple of days? Can he give us any insight at this stage of the impact of COVID-19 on that piece of work and the Island's population as a whole?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

If I have got it correctly there are 2 questions there. One is the impact and the work and one is the impact on Island population. Obviously the work has been delayed, as I indicated. It is very much still focusing on controls and so therefore pre-COVID was about slowing the rate of increase significantly. That still, at this stage, remains the intention. In terms of the impact on the population of the Island, it is a bit difficult to anticipate this where we are in the whole COVID-19 crisis. It appears to be the case a number of people have left the Island and it will therefore depend on the recovery element of what happens over the next few months and into next year as to what happens to the population and migration side. What I will say is that irrespective of short-term impacts of COVID-19, it is very clear that the migration policy absolutely needs to be updated and the controls reinforced. That remains for me a priority and, as I said, it is the intention that we have recommenced the work, that that can now start progressing over the course of the summer and that it will then go to obviously Scrutiny, States Members and then it will be lodged in time for a debate. I anticipate that to be in November.