

# STATES OF JERSEY

## Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel Population and Migration Review

**FRIDAY, 16th MARCH 2012**

**Panel:**

Senator S.C. Ferguson (Chairman)  
Deputy R.J. Rondel of St. Helier  
Deputy S. Power of St. Brelade  
Connétable D.J. Murphy of Grouville

**Witnesses:**

The Minister for Housing  
Director of the Population Office

**Also present:**

Dr. P. Boden (Panel Adviser)  
Ms. S. McKee (Scrutiny Officer)  
Mr. W. Millow (Scrutiny Officer)

[16:00]

**Senator S.C. Ferguson (Chairman):**

Good afternoon. Welcome to the hearing of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel on the population and migration proposals. If I could draw everyone's attention to the code of behaviour for members of the public which is displayed on the wall, and in particular to the following: all electronic devices should be switched to silent, the taking of visual images or audio recordings will not be permitted from the public. It will be permitted for the transcription. If you wish to eat or drink please leave the room and I would also ask that members of the public should not interfere in the proceedings and please leave quietly as soon as the hearing is finished. Any members or witnesses may wish to make themselves available for press interviews afterwards but any communication should take place outside the building and for the sake of the witnesses, may I confirm that you have read and understood the witness statement that is front of you. For the purposes of the ladies who do the transcription, I wonder if you could say who you are and what your position is.

**The Minister for Housing:**

Andrew Green, and I am the Minister for Housing.

**Director of the Population Office:**

Paul Bradbury, Director Corporate Policy.

**Deputy S. Power of St. Brelade:**

Sean Power, Deputy for St. Brelade.

**Deputy R.J. Rondel of St. Helier:**

Richard Rondel, St. Helier 3 and 4 Districts.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

Senator Sarah Ferguson, Chairman.

**Ms. S. McKee:**

Sammy McKee, Scrutiny Officer.

**Mr. W. Millow:**

William Millow, Scrutiny Officer.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

So, how is the political responsibility for the Population Office going to be split? At the moment you have responsibility for it. How will it be after the new law comes in?

**The Minister for Housing:**

After the new law comes in it will be the Chief Minister who will have responsibility for it. Now, whether he will delegate that or not, I do not know, but I think it is quite likely and I will be one of his advisors on the new panel.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

So, at the moment do you have a role in managing the overall population level?

**The Minister for Housing:**

Yes. I think my principal responsibility is to ensure that there is not undue demand on housing, so when we go to the Migration Advisory Group and applications come in front of us I have the final say, if you like, on housing matters and I get advice from the Minister for Economic Development, Assistant Minister for Social Security and Senator Paul Routier who chairs the Migration Advisory Group. Then when we are looking at the current regulation undertaking this role then the role reverses; it is the Minister for Economic Development that has the final say but he is advised by the other members of the team. That is the current arrangement.

**Deputy R.J. Rondel:**

Sorry, just to clarify, could you just explain how that will be different? I did not quite understand, under the new housing law.

**The Minister for Housing:**

Yes, because you could have an application under the regulation of undertakings for a number of, shall we say, currently unqualified posts. Those posts would have no direct input into qualified housing sector, so it would be the Minister for Economic Development that would decide that, but he would take advice from the other members of the panel.

**Deputy R.J. Rondel:**

Are you saying that will be different with the new housing law?

**The Minister for Housing:**

Yes, it is because under the new housing law I can advise the Chief Minister, shall we say, at the moment. I would imagine he would delegate it to one of his Assistant Chief Ministers, but under the new rules I can advise but I do not have the final say on housing matters as I do now.

**Deputy R.J. Rondel:**

Right. That is the point I just wanted to clarify.

**The Minister for Housing:**

Which is why I tried to bring an amendment last time.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

So, with the new system, and when you move to your role as Director of Social Policy, will the Population Office responsibilities go with you?

**Director of the Population Office:**

Yes, they will. The Population Office will report to me.

**Deputy S. Power:**

A general question really. I think we have probably rehearsed this a few times, Minister and Director. The management of overall population levels is at the moment the responsibility of 3 Ministers. You are indicating that the control of the Population Office will go to the Chief Minister's Office. I am just wondering how one can rationalise or justify going to the Chief Minister's Office when the Chief Minister does have a say in economic development. He is part of the team that is involved in being an economic driver to the Island.

**The Minister for Housing:**

Well, just remember it was your proposition and I supported your proposition to try and leave it with Housing, but to be perfectly honest it is a difficult one because I believe that the biggest conflict was the fact that the public sector, mainly the Chief Minister's Office, was the biggest user of Js at the time and that is really why I wanted that independence. I think for the other stuff the job will be done just as well, whoever is doing it, but it was that independence on the Js for the public sector that I wanted to try and maintain. I am not suggesting for any minute that the current Chief Minister would not be robust or would not look at it in the same way as I did, but the evidence was in the past. Sean, you got a grip of it, I think, but the evidence was in the past. It was not properly scrutinised and held to account, should I say.

**Deputy S. Power:**

I think the perception being, and perception can be a dangerous thing, but if the Chief Minister is going on trips with his Minister for Economic Development to the Middle East or the Far East, in terms of economic expansion, are endorsing economic

activity, it seems to me that it causes problems in terms of political responsibility and political control.

**The Minister for Housing:**

There is always going to be a conflict somewhere, is there not? This is why we will have the Control of Housing and Work Advisory Group, which will consist of the Minister for Economic Development, will consist of the Minister for Housing and Social Security, who will advise the Chief Minister and I do suspect strongly that he will probably delegate it, but I do not know that for definite.

**Deputy S. Power:**

So, it would be a Migration Advisory Group mark 2.

**The Minister for Housing:**

Yes, only it is called the Control of Housing and Work Advisory Group.

**Deputy S. Power:**

All right. I think we have covered where you are. We really should go on to ...

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

The census.

**Deputy S. Power:**

Yes. I cannot even read my own writing. The latest census results, Minister, given that you are responsible to a greater extent for the provision of social housing, and I hope at some time I hear “affordable housing”, what was your reaction to the census figures, and how do you think it is going to affect your department’s ability to supply increased social housing needs levels?

**The Minister for Housing:**

To be perfectly honest I was not surprised at all at any of the findings really, because of the work that is going on within the Department because of the report that resulted in the Green Paper that Christine Whitehead wrote. It was no surprise to find that in the unqualified sector, for example, we have more overcrowding than we have in the

social sector. There is some overcrowding in the social sector, but we have more there. It was no surprise to find that there were, within the private sector ... if there are areas I do not cover please come back, but in the private sector there was no surprise to find that there was a significant under-occupation. That is about older folk who, either for sentimental reasons want to stay in the 3 or 4-bedroom house that they brought with their husband and their husband is no longer with them, or for financial reasons cannot sell the house and downsize because in many cases when you downsize you end up spending as much as you would get for the slightly rundown house and there is no point in going through all that grief. I think we need to look at affordable homes for older folk to downsize as well which is a piece of work that we need to be looking at. So, there were not very many surprises. Was it a surprise to me that there were 3,300 empty homes? Not particularly because the percentage is the same level as the percentage in 2001 survey, of which two-thirds were not empty; they were homes that people were either in hospital or away on long-term holiday. They were not available during the census. We do not have that detail of information yet for this census but I cannot think that it would be any different. Of course we have a number of developments just completed that are up for sale at the moment. So, it was not a surprise, but I think it is a myth to think that there are 3,000 odd homes that we could suddenly take possession of and solve the housing problem which some people seem to think that we could do. Most of those homes are occupied.

**Deputy R.J. Rondel:**

That is a concern. As soon as it was pulled up by the media and other people, a lot of people's perception was that they were empty and idle and available for other people to move into. That is not the case?

**The Minister for Housing:**

We will wait until the Statistics Office come back with more detail but if it reflects the detail that was provided in 2001 then we will find that two-thirds of those are empty because the occupants are on holiday, or in hospital, or whatever. So they are not available, and as I say, there were a number of developments just completed around the waterfront, for example, and those would show as empty homes but they are on the market.

**Deputy S. Power:**

Can I come in, Minister. It is clear from the second census bulletin that the spike in the immigration rates to the Island are from within those countries that came into the E.U. (European Union) 2004-2005, principally Poland, Romania and Bulgaria, and that is where we have seen the increase in population here. If you factor in that dynamic with the spike in the birth rate, which has increased over the last few years, how do you see your department coping with an increase in social housing along the levels of the increase in immigration that we have seen? That is the first part. Then, do you think the net immigration into the Island will increase at the same rate in the next 3 to 4 years? In other words, at the rates that we have seen on that second census bulletin.

**The Minister for Housing:**

Do I think that they will? The truth is, I do not know. Do I want them to? No, I do not. The truth is, I do not know. What I do know is of the persons who gained their qualifications in the 16 months prior to the housing qualifications in 2010, 14 people out of 1,097 were those sort of people that you are describing. So, it is not a huge problem. That said though, in time obviously these people will want different types of housing. At the moment many of them are happy to live in smaller accommodation, but if they get married or have families then that will change but it is not a particular problem at the moment. What we do have a problem with is, as the Whitehead Report pointed out, we have the lowest level of social housing that she has ever investigated, throughout Europe anyway, and very clearly saying that government is not fulfilling its role in supporting those that need it by not ensuring there is sufficient social housing available. Now, one could argue that perhaps the rent component, social security of the private sector, helps with that but it only goes so far to help with it. We know we need to increase the level of provision of social housing in Jersey. It does not all have to be done by the State. Some can be done by housing trusts or it can be done by a combination of both.

[16:15]

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

How much of a demand for social housing is due to the fact that we have had unprecedented immigration that nobody seemed to know about?

**The Minister for Housing:**

I do not know the status of the people coming forward, other than they are residentially qualified.

**Director of the Population Office:**

Do you want me to ~~just~~ answer that? We have looked at the details of the people who are qualifying. Obviously to qualify now they would have to have arrived in 2002, so we see very few Polish nationals presently qualifying. They will eventually, but as the Minister said, all the stats show 14 out of over 1,000 people went in States rentals over 16 months; immediately prior to the reduction was 10 years. So, the incidents of people qualifying and going into social housing is very low and the migrants over the last 10 years have not qualified, or are only just qualifying, so the impact on social housing is very limited.

**Deputy S. Power:**

What about the ones qualifying in 2015, 2016, and 2017, outside the terms of this Strategic Plan that is being planned now? I mean, we are going to see those people that came into Jersey in 2005, 2006 and 2007 and are still here, even though the economy has downturned, we are going to be picking them up in 2015, 2016, and 2017. That is the question to the Minister for Housing. How are you going to deal with what I suspect, and I may be completely wrong, will be an uplift and surge in demand for your housing?

**The Minister for Housing:**

We know that we need to increase the provision of social housing for people that will be qualified and are qualified. We know that now. That is part of the work that the Housing Transformation Programme is doing. There are 4 facets to that and I am sure you do not want me to spend hours explaining them, but one of them is about putting ourselves in a position where we can increase the number of social homes. As I alluded to before it does not mean that the States have to provide all those social homes. We have a very good working relationship with the housing trusts. Part of



the transformation programme is to be able to regulate those trusts and by regulation it is not just about the standard of the accommodation, the tenancy agreements, and all those good management things that you would expect to see, regulation will also allow the regulator through the Strategic Housing Unit, to direct where surplus funds that the housing trusts are sitting on may be used. They may be used to provide more homes. They may be used to clear some of the debt which we have a liability as States to cover. It may be used for a combination of both. If you were to ask me where the homes are coming from, some will come from social houses built by the States on States-owned land and some will come from housing trusts, building on perhaps States-owned land or other land that they already have available to them.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

Will we not have to change the trust deeds to take any money from the housing trusts?"

**The Minister for Housing:**

No, we will not, because as I understand it that agreement already exists but has never been used. If they have been lent money by us. There is one trust ...

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

They are not lent money by us though.

**The Minister for Housing:**

Well, we have secured money for them.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

We guarantee.

**The Minister for Housing:**

As I understand it we have that right now but it has never been used.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

That was not my understanding when I read the trust deed.

**The Minister for Housing:**

There is one trust where that does not apply.

**Deputy S. Power:**

One final question, Chairman. In terms of the census results, 80 per cent of social housing is within the provision of the States Housing Department. You have 4,600 houses and flats, they have 1,000 plus 2 or 3 smaller ones. So you are the biggest provider. By far and away you are up around 80 per cent. In terms of a possible wave of demand that may come outside the provisions of this Strategic Plan, if it is going to happen it is going to happen in 2015, 2016 and 2017, because that is when those people will qualify, and that is the issue that your Housing Transformation Programme will have to face now. So, the question is, what are your officers factoring in now, in terms of the Director of the Population Office, in trying to meet that demand because it is not far away?

**The Minister for Housing:**

Our business plan factors in for the States, or what will be the Housing Association, I hope, the States owned Housing Association, at the moment with the business plan we have factored in in excess of 2,000 new homes. Whether we build 2,000 new homes will depend on the demand, but we needed to make sure that we could do it if we had to. Now, that is without the trust providing any homes as well. There is lots of work going on at the moment. The one thing about the Housing Transformation Programme, it will allow the Housing Association, the wholly-owned States Housing Association, to be absolutely more agile, more nimble, and be able to borrow against £1 billion worth of assets that it currently has because the only limiting factor in the past has been the availability of land, which we have resolved because we are going to use some States-owned land and there are a number of sites that you know about. I have just secured what might have been classed as a ransom strip between the old police headquarters and Summerland. So that whole site will be available once the police headquarters moves. Part of that deal was I have taken possession of Le Squendez(?) where we are going to build 35 houses. All going well we will start on site there in October, so there is lots going on. The thing is we will be able to be much more agile than the States Department would have been to meet those demands, as you know, because you started the work.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

Just as a little postscript on the census, did any of the census findings really surprise you?

**The Minister for Housing:**

If I was to be honest, I thought the population would have been higher. I was the only one that was surprised it was below the 100,000.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

There was not any one particular part of it though?

**The Minister for Housing:**

No, not really. There is some very useful stuff there though, confirming one's intuitions around under-occupation and owner-occupied and overcrowding in the unqualified sector. It was not a surprise but it was useful to see it confirmed because it enables one to target where work needs to take place.

**Deputy R.J. Rondel:**

If you feel it was not a surprise, do you think the States failed in the fact that they have such a high waiting list for delivery of homes and jobs?

**The Minister for Housing:**

We must get the waiting list into context. The last time I looked it was 580 or so families, but of those there are quite a number that were wanting to enter the affordable housing gateway to buy, there are some that would like to swap accommodation, but of the priority there are 90 and that is still 90 individual families that are going through difficulty. There are 90 families that need to be housed as quickly as possible.

**Deputy R.J. Rondel:**

There are also a lot out there who are just itching to find a home that is affordable, of first time buyer status.

**The Minister for Housing:**

That is an interesting comment because the other thing of course that is missing, I am telling you I have 90 or so urgent need families but we are very restrictive on the criteria to get on to the waiting list and I am quite uncomfortable around the fact that unless they have special needs, and then they come into Category 6 ...

(telephone ringing)

**Deputy R.J. Rondel:**

Sorry.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

That is £25. I am issuing fines to go into the scrutiny charity.

**The Minister for Housing:**

I am so pleased I remembered to put mine on silent.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

I did tell you at the beginning.

**The Minister for Housing:**

Under 25s, unless they have special needs are not accommodated, unless they have a baby and that, to my mind, sends out entirely the wrong message. I am not saying that ... people who plan to have babies and so on, fine, but I think it is a wrong message. What about couples who are struggling to make ends meet but we do not currently look at them until they are 50 or 55. I am a little bit uncomfortable about that but there is no point in widening the criteria to extend the waiting list when you cannot meet the demand. We have to sort all that out first. I have already had an informal discussion with The Prince's Trust because they do work over here around employment and I know in the U.K. (United Kingdom) they also do work around housing under 25, so I do want to talk to them at some time. Again, I have already had, as I say, an informal discussion but one has to be careful because you can build up an expectation you cannot meet but it is something I am a little bit uncomfortable about, to be honest.

**Deputy R.J. Rondel:**

Could you just give us an update on what the situation is with the new housing law and when that will be implemented?

**The Minister for Housing:**

If you do not mind I will hand over to Paul on that one because he can give you the precise update. I could give you an approximate but Paul will be able to tell you a bit more.

**Director of the Population Office:**

When we took the law to the States in July last year we said we would have it in within 12 months, so our aim is July this year.

**Deputy R.J. Rondel:**

July this year. What is the situation at the moment? Where is it?

**Director of the Population Office:**

A very good question. There are quite a number of strands of work that is going on. I would characterise them broadly as I.T. (Information Technology) in terms of developing a new system and that includes cleansing data from a range of departments to produce our population register. **A challenging timetable.** ~~ledger to the timetable,~~ . **W**we need to finish off the subordinate legislation, including the consequential and transitional amendments, regulations and orders, they are advanced, and legal: We are still awaiting Privy Council approval. So all those strands have to advance.

**Deputy R.J. Rondel:**

So, July could be a bit optimistic?

**Director of the Population Office:**

We are very confident about 2012. July is at risk but that is clearly our objective still. My concern around this is there are constituents out there who need to know, in particular businesses, lawyers, agents. My view is they need at least 3 months' notice

so we are reviewing the timetable and I think an announcement ... we will either keep July or move it slightly, is relatively imminent. I am not sure which way that announcement is going to go.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

So, you are busy cleansing the data. You are going to use established data bases to populate the database?

**Director of the Population Office:**

Yes.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

When will you be able to rely on the population register?

**Director of the Population Office:**

Well, it is absolutely crucial that under the new law the returns from businesses will be a list of their employees whereas now it is just a sub-total by category. So, when we get those returns from employers at the very end of the year, 31st December, we can then match that and reconcile it to all the data we have compiled and it is at that point we expect it to be complete and accurate. So, 31st December 2012.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

So at 31st December we can use it as a sort of reconciliation with all the work that Duncan Gibaut has done on the census? Can we hold you to that?

**Director of the Population Office:**

I think so, yes. The Statistics Unit have traditionally produced a population update by June/July based upon the manpower figures out in April. What they are going to do is they are going to carry on with their population update process using better assumptions from the centres and then they will compare and contrast that against our figures. So I would expect we would have some figures around the same sort of time i.e. April, I would say, but 31st of December 2012, point in time.

**Deputy S. Power:**

My question was leading on from Privy Council approval, the control of work and housing, and you have explained in some detail how you think you will work with the existing databases you have. In the mechanics of the issuing of a name and address register card, how many do you think you will be able to issue for those that will be registered as distinct from those that will be entitled or licensed. In other words, is the Department going to face any wall of people who are confused and uncertain as to how they get their card? How do you propose to disperse those cards? You have just outlined an extremely tight timescale of 6 months.

**Director of the Population Office:**

We are bearing in mind the communication as well, so it is not only our ability to deliver it by July, it is our ability to explain to people so they are ready by July. The Social Security Department already register newcomers to Jersey and issues a social security card. The proposal is that that process will remain, so people will still go to Social Security, get their card, but it will just be a combined card. So, from a new arrival's point of view they will still go to the same point.

[16:30]

**Deputy S. Power:**

So that process does not change?

**Director of the Population Office:**

That process will be built upon but on the basis that most new arrivals are registered i.e. they do not have a residential status they would just get a registered card. So, it is not much of an add-on to the existing process. Existing residents do not need to go and get a card until they change jobs or transact.

**Deputy S. Power:**

What about landlords? What about my favourite subject, the sector that will provide accommodation to those who are registered to work and live in Jersey, a sector that at the moment is not registered. We have little Mrs. Nemonia(?) somewhere in St. Ouens, St. Peter or St. Brelade who has one room rented out the whole time. We need to bring them in. How do we do that one?

**The Minister for Housing:**

I do not think we intend, do we? We will for work but not for accommodation.

**Director of the Population Office:**

We will have a name and address register for residents in Jersey and there is an obligation on all landlords to make notification to us of new tenants. So, the Minister is right, from day one we are not going to ask everybody to send in a return; we are going to get that data from existing sources and then as we go forward anybody who takes in a new lodger will have to tell us.

**Deputy S. Power:**

So it will be a gradual database that will have to be built up of those unseen accommodations that are not on your radar at the moment.

**Director of the Population Office:**

We will build the database from existing sources. We will then enhance it, if you like, as people come in and interact with us. In building the database though we are not just going to say: "Well, we have all the States sources; that must be complete." We will do some checking exercises as well.

**Deputy S. Power:**

One final question. This is implications for Treasury and income tax in that there are presumably some people out there renting rooms who are not declaring ...

**The Minister for Housing:**

That is right but this will allow us to exchange names and addresses, basic data, and do comparisons between the information that Social Security have and the information that income tax have and the information that we have. So if someone is working then we will pick them up if we do not have a name and address for them, and the other way around, if they have a name and address for them they will pick them up and find out where they are working.

**Deputy S. Power:**



Over a period of time you will.

**The Minister for Housing:**

Yes.

**Director of the Population Office:**

Even if somebody goes under the radar, so to speak, on income tax, social security for our purposes, we will also have data sources from, for example, driving license, for example, the schools, G.P.s (General Practitioners). I am not saying there are many of such people but they might not be paying contributions but they might be accessing services, so we will catch them that way.

**Deputy S. Power:**

Is it your proposal then that your office will cross-reference all this data?

**Director of the Population Office:**

Yes, that is what we are doing, yes.

**Deputy R.J. Rondel:**

Just to clarify, if the new housing law does not come in in July, it could possibly be October. Is that what you are saying?

**Director of the Population Office:**

I think we need to make a public announcement soon. I think we are on course for July and therefore if it is not July it will not be far behind i.e. weeks or a couple of months.

**Deputy R.J. Rondel:**

Thank you for that. The Strategic Plan debate. The population policy agreed by the States in 2009 allowed for inward migration of an average of 150 households per year on a 5-year rolling average and set an overall limit of the Island's population of 100,000 people. In light of the latest census results, is a new population target going to be set in the Strategic Plan debate this year?

**The Minister for Housing:**

The answer to that question is, I do not yet know. It is work in progress, to be honest with you.

**Deputy R.J. Rondel:**

Are the Ministers discussing a new population level?

**The Minister for Housing:**

We have discussed a new population level. We do not yet have agreement whether there should be one, or whether there should actually be a reduction. There is no agreement at the moment.

**Deputy R.J. Rondel:**

Would you agree that perhaps it is impossible to control the level at 100,000 just by having ordinary nets, births ...?

**The Minister for Housing:**

It is a challenge. I do agree it is a challenge.

**Deputy R.J. Rondel:**

Would you not agree it is impossible?

**The Minister for Housing:**

No, I would not agree it was impossible, but I would agree it is a challenge.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

If I said that our adviser who does a lot of work in this area advised against putting a target total, what would your comment be?

**The Minister for Housing:**

Well, that is quite interesting because if you have a target total it could become exactly that, a target, whereas if you have a general presumption that we are going to control inward migration but not aim for a specific figure I think it gives much more flexibility and also prevents that thing where: "Oh, well, it is under £100,000 it does

not matter” if you know what I am trying to say. So, yes, I can understand exactly where he is coming from.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

As a member of the Council of Ministers, what do you feel you have contributed to the development of the new population policy?

**The Minister for Housing:**

That is an interesting one. I have to say that I tend to focus most of my activity around the housing and the social housing and of course that is affected by the number of people in the Island. There is a consensus among the Council of Ministers that we do have to control it and I think there is a consensus that possibly we would not have a target, but we are certainly not saying zero growth either. What have I contributed? I think I have added my bit around social housing particularly.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

In light of the latest census figures, how reliable do you feel was the information used by Oxera to inform decisions on the current population policy?

**The Minister for Housing:**

I do not have a clue, to be perfectly honest.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

You have not seen the Oxera information?

**The Minister for Housing:**

No, I have not.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

Fair enough.

**Deputy S. Power:**

We have talked about attempts to control immigration. We have a Control of Housing and Work Law coming down the pipe and so on. Given what we have

briefly referred to earlier on, the population of net migration, net inward immigration, continuing at the levels that we seem to see it at the moment, combining that with a spike in the birth rate, what do you think we could do to control that inward wave of immigration?

**The Minister for Housing:**

I think this is where perhaps a new law will assist us because at the moment if an organisation or company has a licence for so many unqualified, as they are currently called, employees and they have that licence for 3 years. One of the things that we could be doing, and will be doing, under the new Control of Housing and Work Law, we can review that according to the economic situation and that would apply to the housing situation as well. So we could be reducing the number of unqualified staff if it is appropriate to do that and that would have an effect on the number of people coming into Jersey but what we need to be very careful of, because we do not want to send out the message to the people that generate the wealth in the Island that Jersey is closed, so it is a very, very fine balancing act.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

We had comments this morning, or earlier today, that businesses in the Island are coming up for their 3-year renewal and are having a reduction in their non-licensed members of staff and there did not seem to be any possibility of appeal and so on.

**The Minister for Housing:**

Well, that is not true. They can come at any time to the Migration Advisory Group and appear in person and place an appeal, but where those have been removed very often they have remained stagnant and unused and on the books for a very long time, but not actually used but if they felt we were being a bit draconian, or a bit unreasonable they have the right to appear in front of the panel and regularly, not so much on the unqualified staff, but regularly we see managers and owners of companies, particularly around Js when we have refused those. They come back sometimes and they make a case and give more information than they gave us in their written submission and sometimes we turn that over, we reverse it and agree with it. Sometimes we do not. Where we have taken those unqualified jobs away very often they have sat on the books unused for years and years and years but they want to keep

them there just in case. Well, we want to be more in control than that, but they do have the right of an appeal. It may not be a formal appeal but I do not think we have ever refused as a group to see anybody that has asked to come and bring a case to us on any matter like that. I do not think that is a fair comment.

**Deputy S. Power:**

The 2012 housing needs survey is being undertaken at the moment by the Statistics Office. The 2007 one, which was produced in April 2008, indicated largely a housing demand curve which does not really bear any relation to what has happened in the last 4 years; in other words the spike in the net inward migration to the Island and the spike in the birth rate. To what extent do you think the 2012 housing needs survey will change in the light of this census result, and do you think it should reflect an increasing demand that will be prevalent in social housing?

**The Minister for Housing:**

I think it will reflect an increase but it would not be a surprise. There are 2 areas of demand; an increase for social housing but that is no surprise because we know we do not have sufficient already, and I think there are some people there, given the right opportunity for affordable homes would slip out of the social housing sector into the affordable homes sector, into their own home ownership, because we have a very low percentage of home ownerships; I cannot remember the figure now, but compared to the U.K. (United Kingdom) we are considerably lower but that is about affordability so we need to bring in schemes to make it more affordable. Now, whether that it is Home Buy Mark 3, or 2, or whether that is some other form of shared equity, or whether we can lower the costs of building to make them more affordable; it is probably a mixture of all those, I do not know, but I think the needs survey will show that more people want to be owner-occupiers but in order to buy that 3-bedroom house with a little garden, you would have to be earning a joint income currently in excess of £80,000 and have a decent deposit to stand a chance of buying a home at the moment. That is out of the reach of most of us. It is out of the reach of me if I was starting again at that age, so that is work that will have to be done, and you alluded to that when we were talking about affordable homes before.

**Deputy S. Power:**

The census results are indicative of population trends within the Island. We know that the Population Office carefully monitors high net worth individuals in the K sector, regularly produces breaks on the essentially qualified sector, so the sector that is not really easy to control is what we refer to now as the unqualified sector, or what will be referred to as the registered sector, so the problem for you in the future, Minister for Housing, is the provision of social accommodation in that sector plus affordable housing and this census produces extraordinary challenges for any man or woman who is in the provision of housing.

**The Minister for Housing:**

You are absolutely right but of course one of the factors we have to help control that is the number of what would become registered or unqualified posts that we give out but as I alluded to before, it is a very careful balancing act because the last thing you need to do is to send out a message that Jersey is closed. We cannot afford to do that and that is why every application is looked at on its merits; when people apply for unqualified posts, when people apply for Js, every one is looked at on its merits and what we are beginning to do is to put some conditions in there sometimes and also ensuring that the conditions are complied with. For example, if a level of income tax is promised, and I am talking separate to 11Ks, then we would expect to have confirmation that level of income tax is achieved within a reasonable time and if not that there are plans to address that and if not, why not. So, we are much more robust than we used to be.

**Deputy R.J. Rondel:**

I was going to ask about your policy on J-Cats and what it is and whether J-Cats are actually being lowered year on year or increased.

**The Minister for Housing:**

It has remained stagnant, without looking at the figures, for the last year. J-Cats awarded last year was very similar to the year before.

**Deputy R.J. Rondel:**

You said you put provisos in some of them, is there any way of putting in provisos to a business that has to bring somebody in, that they could train somebody local?

[16:45]

**The Minister for Housing:**

Yes, and we do that and we might only give a Jcat for 3 years, for example, on condition that they train somebody and they are replaced then by that trained person. When you are looking at the unqualified, some of the things that we have done more recently when people have come forward for a number of qualified and a number of what would be registered and local people, I get muddled up with all the names, it is very easy sometimes to take the unqualified people because that is a much easier market to find and have the vacancies sitting on the qualified side, and we are saying sometimes on occasions where we thought it appropriate: “Yes, you can have your licence but you can only employ one unqualified for every one qualified that you employ” to encourage them to take people off the waiting list and we have done that. Or: “You need to take X amount of apprentices.” We do not expect them to do that on day one if they are starting a new business but we need to see evidence that they are taking apprentices. So, we are trying to use a whole raft of things. I would have to say that generally the employers are really supportive of it and agree to it willingly.

**Deputy R.J. Rondel:**

Are there any follow-up checks done on that as to if they do employ a local that he is not made redundant and they keep the J-Cats on?

**The Minister for Housing:**

Not robustly. Obviously when the returns come back we can get a balance and we will have much more control over that with the new law that is coming in.

**Deputy S. Power:**

I have one last question before we move on to what we think is the final section here. That is the Island Plan debate last year, Minister, there were a number of concerns about the provision of housing, specifically H1 and H3 and that seems to me to be even more focused now with the results of this census. To what extent have you made progress with your colleague, the Minister for Planning and Environment?

Have you sat down and discussed the results of this census with him and what you need to do in the next 3 to 5 years?

**The Minister for Housing:**

The quick answer to that is no. I keep asking if we are going to get sight of a draft policy; there was a working party of which my Assistant Minister was on. That has not met for some time either.

**Deputy S. Power:**

This is the social housing policy group, the H1, H3 group?

**The Minister for Housing:**

Yes. That has not met for some time either. So I am waiting to hear, to be honest with you.

**Deputy S. Power:**

Because one of the planks of the Strategic Plan is to adequately house the population so I would have thought your discussions with the Minister for Planning and Environment were absolutely key to that.

**The Minister for Housing:**

Yes, you are right.

**Deputy S. Power:**

So it has not happened?

**The Minister for Housing:**

It has not happened, no.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

Can I just reiterate, to make sure I have it straight in my mind, the population register, and I am sorry to keep coming back to it but it is something that is bothering me. When will it become an accurate, usable tool to measure the size of the population?



**Director of the Population Office:**

On key points 31st December 2012.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

So, by 31st December 2012?

**Director of the Population Office:**

Yes.

**The Minister for Housing:**

You will be able to rely on it then, on the main points.

**Director of the Population Office:**

Sorry, I will try and clarify that again.

**Deputy R.J. Rondel:**

Qualify it I think.

**Director of the Population Office:**

Clarify. The return points from business; they have to return their employees as at 31st December 2012. There is then some analysis to say: "What was the population at 31st December 2012?" We do not just press a button on 3rd January and say that is it. We get the returns in, we analyse them, and then we come up with a figure for the population at 31st December 2012.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

Yes, but when are you pressing the button? You are saying you have to do some reconciliation and the figure will be revealed in May or June.

**Director of the Population Office:**

I mean, take an example, two-thirds of employers return their manpower return on time i.e. a third do not return it on time. We need those returns to come into us, then to be input, until we are confident we have the accurate register. So I would be expecting us to have the data analysed and the substantial majority of the returns in,

98 per cent of them, and be able to publish a figure by the end of April for the population as at 31st December 2012.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

So that will be the accurate size of the population in April.

**Director of the Population Office:**

Yes, and I would also expect the Statistics Unit to make comment on that, if you like, with reference to their own assumptions and their own model and their own data sources.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

Super, thank you. Yes, I think I am there now. Sean, anything else?

**Deputy S. Power:**

No, I think it has been fairly comprehensive, Chairman.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

Richard?

**Deputy R.J. Rondel:**

No, that is it. Thank you very much.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

Thank you very indeed. Unless there is anything you would like to tell us before you depart.

**The Minister for Housing:**

No, I will be pleased to go home to my fish and chips, thank you.

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

Thank you very much, gentlemen.

[16:50]