



JERSEY
Chamber of Commerce

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Senator Steve Pallet
Migration and Population Review Panel
Scrutiny Office
Morier House
St Helier
JE1 1DD

16th February 2021

Dear Senator Pallet,

The Jersey Chamber of Commerce is the largest business organisation in the Channel Islands and the second oldest Chamber of Commerce in the world. It represents over 600 businesses in Jersey, who employ more than half of the working population of the island.

There has been recognition that clearer controls on managing the population of Jersey, that give flexibility to adjust according to the needs of the island labour markets across many sectors is a desirable goal and one that Chamber acknowledged as a lay member of the Migration Policy Development Board (MPDB).

Several members of Chamber have expressed concern at the timing of the introduction additional restrictions as proposed within P.137/2020 Migration Control Policy, which at the point of MPDB meetings had unknown outcomes with regard to the labour market effects from Brexit and subsequently impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Brexit itself has brought the requirement for the Future Border and Immigration System Work Permit, which will itself prove more challenging and costly to attract the skills and workforces required for many sectors in Jersey from outside of the Common Travel Area (CTA).

The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted many sectors that will also be most implicated by the changes proposed in P.137/2020, layering another set of controls on a potential labour market from within the CTA. The closure of several sectors for much of the past year will undoubtedly make any resumption and recovery all the more difficult if, as the Chief Minister writes in the Ministerial Foreword for P.137/2020: *“Our focus in 2021 will be on developing the migration control proposals set out in this document. Existing and new controls will be rigorously applied during this time to prevent a new influx of migrant workers as job opportunities start to become available again.”* This in itself appears counter-intuitive to restrict the recovery of sectors of the Jersey economy by placing further limitations on the opportunities to recruit skills needed, having supported them through the Covid lockdowns with over £110m in co-funding and a further £11m in fixed-cost support.

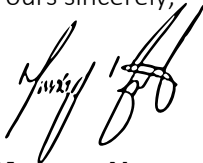
It would, in our opinion be unsuitable and a precarious strategy to have two limiting restrictions running at the point of a required speedy recovery. It will raise costs, limit the available workforce and runs the risk of an upward inflationary spiral in wage costs as any shortage and poaching of staff will do.

Any introduction of restrictions must be seen as a suite of measures to not adversely put businesses in Jersey at risk of failure because of the inability to recruit. A key request of Government in the Terms of Reference was for the Migration Policy Development Board to find ways to lessen the reliance on inward migration. By setting this, the report does make recommendations based within those ToR's.

Finally, it must be recognised that without firstly identifying the skills gaps, investing in meaningful skills and training, and understanding that any lessening of inward migration will adversely affect businesses. A broader holistic approach must be taken to investigate the impacts and alternatives of funding the future needs of an aging population, once the stability, clarity and comprehension of the full impacts of both Brexit and Covid are understood.

For and on behalf of the Jersey Chamber of Commerce.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Murray Norton', written over a white background.

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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