

STATES OF JERSEY



MIGRATION AND POPULATION POLICY: REVIEW (P.104/2011) – COMMENTS

Presented to the States on 4th July 2011
by the Council of Ministers

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

Our population and immigration targets will be met over the target periods.

- The 2006 – 2011 Strategic Plan established that working population growth should not exceed 1% per annum. According to the Deputy of St. Mary, growth for this period has been 1.06%. In the present economic conditions, we expect this average to move closer to 1% by the end of 2011.
- The 2009 – 2014 Strategic Plan established that net migration should not exceed more than 150 heads of household which equates to 325 people each year. We are tied to achieving this target. This target, however, is in line with historic migration patterns to the Island, where net migration has averaged 340 people each year since 2001.

Therefore, the Council of Ministers believes there is no need to commission a review into migration or our present population policies.

Indeed, the current Strategic Plan requires our targets be “reviewed and reset” in July 2012. This will be done.

In the meantime, given the extensive consultation which has been carried out in relation to population and migration, it is difficult to see why our carefully developed policies, agreed by the States, should change without warning or consultation. These policies affect Islanders as well as business and government. Furthermore, a review which took place now would not benefit from the census results which will provide the most up-to-date information.

A sudden shift to a zero population growth policy would also mean that businesses would be restricted in recruiting specialist and skilled workers from outside the Island, to steer activities which would provide new and more efficient opportunities for some of those currently seeking work.

This will lower tax receipts, especially as many migrants are higher earners, when we need to support an ageing society and control the tax burden on Islanders. It also abruptly sends out the wrong message that Jersey is ‘closed for businesses’ at a time when local businesses need our support and we are trying to grow our economy.

In summary, these matters are best considered in 2012, as has always been planned, when the census data is available and with time to consider all the issues.