

STATES OF JERSEY



STATES STRATEGIC PLAN 2005 TO 2010 (P.81/2004): THIRD AMENDMENT (P.81/2004 Amd.(3)) – COMMENTS

**Presented to the States on 22nd June 2004
by the Policy and Resources Committee**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

Deputy Southern is proposing that the proposed cap on the increase in the Island's working population should be reduced from 1% to 0.25%. Thus the maximum permitted annual increase would be 125 rather than 500.

There appears to be a fundamental misunderstanding that the plan is proposing 1% per annum increase in migration and population. It is not. The emphasis is on working population. The working population will change as young people enter work, unemployed people return to work, disabled people are enabled to work, older people decide to remain in work, or other people choose to enter work. The overriding aim is full employment for local people.

The plan sets very clear tests for inward migration. It should be allowed only where it either supports economic growth and increases taxation, or where skilled people are necessary to support industries that would employ local people. Numbers of low-wage immigrant workers should be kept to a minimum. This latter requirement is intended to ensure that by minimising numbers of low-paid immigrants, opportunities are created to redirect the workforce without increasing overall population.

Deputy Southern's proposal is a fundamental change to one of the very basic elements of the plan. The plan makes it clear that –

“The aim is to manage the population changes over the next 5 years in order to promote economic growth and creation of jobs for local people. The strategy would be to ensure that growth in inward migration is only supported where it creates wealth to fund the Island's public services or to support industries which employ local people.”

If this element of the plan is changed then there are many consequent elements which are unlikely to be delivered. These are –

- economic growth;
- greater employment opportunities for local people;
- more opportunities for young people;
- diversification and development of rural enterprise;
- further increases in personal taxation;
- long-term funding to maintain and improve public services;
- long-term ability to respond to increases in the ageing population;
- infrastructure investment;
- sufficient funding for pensions in the longer term;
- effective land use policies;
- improved, reliable external transport links.

The Plan proposes an increase in the working population i.e. an additional 500 people in work. This does not equate to an equivalent increase in population, nor inward migration.

Emphasis will be on making more effective use of the current population e.g., by –

- reducing unemployment;
- improving training opportunities to develop skills;
- improving opportunities for young people through diversification;
- encouraging graduates back to the Island;

- enabling people to work beyond 65 if they so wish;
- supporting parents to return to work if they so wish;
- supporting disabled people into work;
- minimising reliance on low-paid migrant workers;
- improving training opportunities;
- improving efficiency and productivity.

The housing numbers therefore are not proposed to accommodate an “additional 500 high-earning immigrant workers” per annum.

The States have yet to decide on migration policy. Members will recall that the Policy and Resources Committee recently published a consultation document (R.C.15/2004). A report and proposition on this subject will be brought to the States by the Committee later this year. This will propose a way to manage migration in order to achieve more effective controls which safeguard not only economic growth, but also the environment and the interests of local people.

The consequential effect of the proposed amendment would seriously compromise the delivery of other important areas of the Strategic Plan, and the Policy and Resources Committee therefore opposes Deputy Southern’s amendment.