



STATES OF JERSEY

Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel Migration and Population Sub-Panel

Population Policy

WEDNESDAY, 6th MAY 2009

Panel:

Senator S. C. Ferguson (Chairman)
Deputy T. A. Vallois of St. Saviour
Deputy C.F. Labey of Grouville

Witness:

Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier

Present:

Mr. W. Millow (Scrutiny Officer)

Senator S.C. Ferguson (Chairman):

Welcome to this public hearing of the Corporate Services Migration and Population Sub-Panel. I wonder if you would say who you are what your position is for the purposes of the recording.

Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier:

Thank you, Chairman. I am Simon Crowcroft, Constable of St. Helier.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Thank you very much. I think you know Deputy Labey and Deputy Vallois. If you do not, you ought to. I am talking about the population policy. What is your view of the population policy as it has been put forward to us by the Ministers? You know, sort of 150 a year heads of household, et cetera.

The Connétable of St. Helier:

I am a bit suspicious of trying to put numbers on population. The question that comes to one is why a particular number, why 150 households? Why a total population ceiling of 100,000? It seems a bit arbitrary really, the choice of numbers.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

I think it was put to us as part of the ageing population "problem" and was apparently the number to keep the ratio of the tax base to non-working population.

The Connétable of St. Helier:

I can see the reason why they have come up with numbers but what I feel is that movements of people in and out of Jersey respond to a number of different forces and one of the things they do

not respond to in my view is numbers imposed by government. I am not sure we have the mechanisms in place to achieve the numbers that we settle on, both in terms of how people get into the Island, how they leave, what attracts people to Jersey, what attracts people to leave Jersey and go and live somewhere else. I think the whole thing is extremely fluid, extremely dynamic with an enormous number of different forces at play. So it is all very well for the government to come up with figures that it can use to justify its position but what I am suggesting is that the reality does not always bear much relation to the theory that we come up. We have, after all, been talking about a population ceiling for years, certainly for as long as I have been in the States which is 12 years. The ceiling is higher in this draft strategic plan than it was in previous strategic plans. Did the previous figure have any influence at all upon policy making? I would suggest that it did not.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Right, thank you. Tracey.

Deputy T.A. Vallois of St. Saviour:

What input, if any, has St. Helier had into the development of the policy?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

I am not aware of any, except insofar as all the elected representatives of the parish are invited to the briefings, the discussions, the planning sessions and so on. So I think St. Helier representatives, all 11 of us, have had as much opportunity to feed into the development of the strategic plan and, indeed, to the migration policy, as any other States Member so there is no question of us feeling left out, I think. What is very clear from strategic planning in Jersey in probably the last half dozen years is that St. Helier has become the focus of the accommodation question. It always was but it has now become explicit that St. Helier holds the key to accommodating increased numbers of people without prejudicing the rural environment.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

What is your feeling about that?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

I have always agreed with it. When I entered the States you commonly heard, and you still hear from some Deputies, the argument that St. Helier has had more than its fair share of the burden of population. Other parishes must now do their bit. I have never taken that view. I believe that the main town in an Island community, for lots of good reasons, is the place where accommodation should be focused. It is - to pick up the word in the draft plan - the only sustainable way of accommodating people in a sense of environmentally sustainable because people will be living close to their place of work, it would reduce their dependence on the motor car, it would reduce their need to travel. For the elderly living in town makes sense because they are therefore ... it is far easier for them to access cultural, social, leisure pursuits. For young people, it makes sense; again, it is close to the transport hub of the bus station. If you bring up children in St. Helier you hardly ever have to do any chauffeuring around because your children can use the bus service. So it makes a lot of sense for people to live in town. It is very good for town as well because it ... I have often said that people are life blood of a town and a town with too few people simply does not work, particularly at night, it becomes empty and threatening. The town needs more people in it to work better and the other obvious point is that by putting people in town you are protecting the countryside, not only for rural people and visitors but for the townies themselves to enjoy when they leave the town to seek leisure and exercise outside the town. So I am absolutely committed to making the town the focus for accommodation.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Yes, it seems that it might be necessary to have more than 2 or 3 storeys. Do you have any problems with that?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

No, I do not. I do not think tall buildings, as long as they are sited in the ideal places, are a problem. The key thing about living in town is to have buildings that are big enough for yourselves and your families. Too often developers go for the minimum room size instead of going for generous room sizes. The houses that have been built in the 19th century had ceilings about the height of this room we are sitting in, certainly on the ground floor, the reception areas. I do not know of any houses that have been built recently which have this kind of generous ceiling height. Houses used to have hallways, studies, libraries, playroom, utility rooms, all that internal space is important if you are going to live in town, if you are going to have less outdoor space; particularly if you are not going to have garden you need plenty of indoor space. You need good balconies, roof gardens where possible. Then outside the home you need a town that you can move around, you need wide pavements, you need good pedestrian routes, good cycle routes, good public transport and you need lots of green space. You need lots of public parks. If you look at the experience of people living in London with very large green spaces to use, one does not sort of normally hear London people complaining they do not have a garden. Many of them but a lot of them go and use the public parks and there is a problem in St. Helier in that we simply do not have enough ... I am not just talking about the town park, we do not have enough open spaces full stop and the parish is pursuing a policy of ... I am trying to pursue a policy through the parish of creating more parks, both big and small.

Deputy C.F. Labey of Grouville:

You used the words "sustainable" a few times. How would you describe a sustainable population, or define, sorry?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

Well, sustainable is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future, or words to that effect. I think it is the key word in talking about population and it is the reason why I think it is very difficult to fix an absolute number because I think Jersey, for example, could certainly support 100,000 people. We are not far off that now. Jersey could probably support more than 100,000 if they were living sustainably. A simple example is that there are some Island communities like, I think, Bermuda where there was a restriction on the number of cars that you can have per household. People often turn to traffic as the first problem that comes from increasing the population but if the population were restricted to one car per household you would have fewer cars on the road than you have at the moment. So if people live sustainably, if we have energy policies which reduce per household the amount of energy that we are using, you could have more people on the Island with less of an environmental impact.

The Deputy of Grouville:

What about being self-sustainable? We were told last week that if all the farmland was farmed we might just have enough to feed ourselves. What are your views on that?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

In terms of food production I know that ... I am not an expert on food production but it is clearly a good aspiration to increase our ability to feed ourselves as an Island and I think currently, partly because of the credit crunch and rising food costs this has increased interest in allotments, for example. People are starting to want to grow their own more. So I think that is ... I would certainly support that. St. Helier is trying to find areas for allotments around the town. I doubt as an Island we can be self-sufficient but that does not mean that one should not try to be; one should not aim at these targets.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

I think the gentleman who said it estimated there should be 25,000, or roughly two-thirds, of the working population out on the land, which seemed a little way out in some respects. I do not know, what do you think?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

I think people are going to choose to make a living in the way that their talents are best used and the way they get a maximum return for their education and the training and so on. I think certainly there should be opportunities for people who want to go back to the land but our major industry is financial services and that certainly, for the foreseeable future, is going to continue to be the case. I do believe that we have got to do more than talk about supporting tourism. I think that the second leg of the stool of our economy definitely needs more work done, more action and less talk.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Yes. A couple of aspects of the proposed policy. I suppose to begin with, what do you believe would be the implications for St. Helier of adopting the Council's policy?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

I think it is broadly in line. As I say, I do not know that the numbers are particularly useful. They give us a guide, I suppose. We can measure our progress against them. They are, if you like, benchmarks. But in the sense that town is likely to take more people, as I have said already, I think that is sensible, particularly in terms of the bullet points about the effect on the environment and so on. It certainly makes sense.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Yes, but yesterday in the briefing they were talking about - what was it - over 6,000 housing units.

Deputy T.A. Vallois:

They were talking about 6,125 units to be built over the next 25 years. That amounts to approximately 200 on average, 245 units a year. With regards to what you are saying, I would imagine it is quite difficult to balance an appropriate amount of accommodation and green open space in St. Helier. How much do you think they would be able to accommodate in St. Helier and would that have significant effect on the parish?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

I think we have got to look at St. Helier first, although of course there are other brown field sites around that could be developed. It certainly would produce much more of a thriving community. We have a thriving community at the moment but certainly if you walk around town at the weekends and in the evenings, apart from people accessing the night time economy, there is not much ... you do not see many families, for example, out for a walk in the precinct at night. Back in the Victorian period ... I mean the figures you mention are interesting because, as you probably know, between 1820 and 1850 the population of the Island doubled from about 25,000 to 50,000 people. Almost all of that accommodation went into St. Helier, with a little bit into St. Saviour. It produced an enormous cultural zenith really of Jersey which it perhaps has not got back to in terms of number of theatres, number of concert halls. Jersey became one of the popular places for ex-Army people on half pay to reside after the Napoleonic wars. It was like Bath and Weymouth, it was basically one of the best places, particularly because of the climate, to come and live. So, there is no reason why that principle cannot be repeated in the 21st century. The kind of living will be different. We will not be building Georgian houses, many of which now been turned into flats, but the kind of development we could be pursuing on the waterfront are decent sized apartments, open space, is still possible, as long as one is willing to build higher apartments. St. Helier recently had a proposal accepted for, I think, a 12 or 13 storey Hopkins design in the Westmount Quarry. It will provide a lot of units. It is right to People's Park, People's Park is right next to the beach. That is the kind of accommodation that St. Helier can offer. Of

course people who live there are going to have everything on their doorstep. Whereas if you build these kind of units elsewhere in the Island you add to traffic, it is not nearly as sustainable.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Yes, I suppose part of the business, you know, sort of liveliness of the Victorian communities was if somebody had a shop the family tended to live about the shop. Would you see that as part of your general development of St. Helier?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

It is often talked about. I suspect that there is far less space above shops than people think. I think a lot of it is used by the shops themselves for storage or accounts or whatever, and there are other problems to do with access. You know, people getting to their units. There are new rules in place which probably make it harder to put people above the shop, just in terms of room sizes, health and safety problems and all that sort of thing. It is interesting that the population of St. Helier is currently less than it was in 1850, or thereabouts, 1870, I think, the population when over 30,000 in St. Helier.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

What is it at the moment?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

In the last census it was 28,100. Now, obviously people lived in far worse conditions. A lot of people lived in terrible conditions in the Victorian period and one would not want to go back to that but with modern building techniques, I am pretty optimistic about the ability of St. Helier to accommodate the majority of the new units that the Island needs. Interestingly there has been a lot of talk recently among my fellow Constables about the need to have regeneration of rural communities. Some of the villages are suffering because there is not affordable housing for parishioners. So there is going to be certainly ... there will be a desire from the rural parishes, in their village centres, to build more houses for their parishioners, and that is going to continue. But I will always fight such proposals as came to the States last year under the guise of providing lifelong homes and so on where we gaily rezoned such prime green spaces as the field in Trinity near the church, which I thought I was a dreadful decision because not only does it deprive St. Helier residents of the countryside that they wish to visit but in terms of Jersey's almost unique ability to protect its green spaces, it is just another piece gone. If we go down that road, it will not be long before we look like Guernsey and we have ribbon development on all of our major roads.

The Deputy of Grouville:

How is it envisaged that the Constables will provide for their parishioners? We are talking about, call it discrimination, if you like, could be regarded as positive discrimination, but how will the Constables form a criteria to say they are parishioners? What defines the parishioner?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

I do not know, I would have a lot of trouble with that, in the sense that most people in Jersey are born in St. Helier anyway. That is really a question to put to the Constables of St. Martin, Trinity and elsewhere, how they intend to allocate units. I think what it does highlight, though, is that, again, it is a personal aspiration of mine but I always believe that people should choose to live in St. Helier. The fact that we have not got there is simply evidenced by looking at the price of property. But if the day comes when it costs more to live in town than to live in St. Brelade, for example - for an equivalent house - then I think that particular corner will have been turned. But we are certainly not there yet. There are all sorts of reasons why that is the case.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

If you talk about ... you reckon there is about 30,000 in the town, well that was at the last census, what do you feel it is now?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

The last census said 28,100, one imagines, because of all the building, that it must have gone up from the last census but the fact is the States decided not to have the census but to delay the one ... I brought a proposition to the States to try to get them to have a regular census and they voted against it so we are going to have to wait a bit longer to find out the numbers. Although, I mean, there are other ways, of course, of looking at the numbers in the parish. But it has clearly gone up from where it was, simply if one looks at the number of units. There is a lot of units at the moment, windfall properties, coming in St. Helier through sheds and so on and garages and ... all around the northern part of St. Helier you can see it happening. Even though there are still great sways of undeveloped parts of town, a lot of small sites are now coming forward.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Yes, you have not thought of working it out by ... it was Deputy Labey's idea, you have not thought of working it out roughly by the amount of rubbish that you collect.

The Connétable of St. Helier:

Not really, certainly we have a fairly accurate handle on numbers in terms of our rates assessors because every property in St. Helier that is rateable is picked up as soon as it becomes rateable, so I think our rates assessors could probably provide you with some fairly accurate information about that. I do not know that rubbish levels indicate very much because a lot of St. Helier's rubbish is brought in by people outside the parish who dump it in the euro bins helpfully provided for them for that purpose.

The Deputy of Grouville:

So it would have to be an Island-wide measure?

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Yes, it sounds like it. From your experience obviously it does not work as a reasonable measure.

Deputy T.A. Vallois:

Just out of curiosity, just going back on to the whole ... you saying about the traffic properly being the first measure of an increasing population but there is a lot of other things that would be factored into that as well such as crime, health, education, obviously that is going to have a big impact on the Island. What are your views on that side of the population policy?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

Those are 2 of the key things ... education and health are 2 of the key things, no amount of sustainable living removes the need for a good health service or a good education service. So it seems to me that those are the very real pressures that will cap our population. It is how many people the schools can look after and how many people can be looked after by the health service. I think the other things you mentioned, crime, for example, these are not ... there is not direct link between numbers and behaviour because quite a lot has got to do with how people are educated how laws are enforced and so on. So I do accept ... I am not saying there is no need to have a population ceiling, I suppose what I am saying is the ceiling to the population in Jersey will be set by the number of people that we are able to educate and keep healthy.

Deputy T.A. Vallois:

I know the numbers are literally ... they seem to be a guideline at the moment, but it does state that they would be reviewed and reset every 3 years. Does that make you feel a little bit more comfortable with the fact that that would be in place?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

Again, I am not sure of the mechanism. You can change your numbers but it is has got a lot to do with the amount of employment that is on the Island. If the Island has go full employment, if we do not have any system of work permits then people will be coming with their families to take up

employment. As long as they can find somewhere to live they will get work here and the population will go up. So it is only when the impact is felt on the schools and the hospitals that one will then look and say: "Right, we cannot cope any more with it, we now have to take steps to stop this happening." That is why I say it is dynamic. It seems to me there are very few communities, when they got lots and lots of jobs to fill, that are going to turn people away at the port and say: "You cannot come and work here."

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

You mean like the old days when they used to meet them off the boat and if you had not got a job and any money they used to just put you back on the boat. With the credit crunch ... how did St. Helier cope in the last recession? Did you lose population? Would you expect to lose population if the recession drags on?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

Yes, I think if firms close that is what happens and that is what has happened historically, going back centuries when the Island has been doing well, people have come here from all sorts of different parts, obviously for a long time people came from France. People have been attracted here by the availability of work, albeit with difficult accommodation problems. When times get tough then people will start to look abroad for opportunities and certainly in the past people have gone over in large numbers. Around the time I was talking about, mid-Victorian time, was a time when a lot of people went over to America, Canada and Australia because this was the new world of exciting opportunities and so on. I am not saying the same thing will happen this time because those countries now, of course, have their own pressures on.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Yes, but I mean we had a sort of downturn in 2000-2003, did the parish notice any sort of significant drop in population over that period? I know you were not Connétable but ...

The Connétable of St. Helier:

Yes, that was after the ... If it was after the last census then that probably would not have been picked up yet. The census was in 2001.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Yes. You do not get a feeling for it?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

Not as far as I am aware, no. No. Possibly back in the 1980s and 1990s there was but I was not involved in politics then so ...

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

You were not old enough.

The Deputy of Grouville:

So going back to the credit crunch and the downturn in the economy, would you say it is relevant to have a population policy at this time?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

Yes, I think it will be because it is going to affect principally the job market and that may well take the pressure off in terms of finding accommodation, because if people decide not to stay here, who are mobile in terms of their jobs, who can afford to move on ... there is anecdotal evidence, certainly a couple of years ago, every other person I met was going to live in New Zealand. There was quite a lot of people talking about emigrating. I have not heard so many immigration stories recently but, yes, the credit crunch will have a number of effects and, one, people who can will think about selling up here and they will be able to buy more for their ... if they do own their property, they will be able to buy more property somewhere else than they can have here so I

think that will happen. In other effects, hopefully we will see house prices come down, which will be quite a good thing. I heard recently of a number of recently built houses in St. Helier that the agent cannot sell, allegedly because they were given permission without parking. My view is that at the right price those will sell. But the agent is probably trying to get an unrealistic price for a house without parking in town. With all the flats that have been built in town, it is bound to have an effect of depressing prices, which is very good for people who are trying to get on the housing ladder.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

What do you reckon the sort of population density is in town?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

Those figures are available but certainly Planning for Homes and the planners have that kind of ... I do not carry those figures around with me.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Deputy Wimberley wondered about that and also he wondered whether you had a useful way of defining and working with the urban area, and what would you define as the urban area?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

I think the urban area ... I think Constables tend to think about the bit that they are looking after. The urban area in Jersey is obviously more than St. Helier, it includes a lot of St. Saviour, along the southern coast, St. Brelade, St. Lawrence, St. Clement and so on. The urban area, I would suggest, has already been allowed to spread too far and that is why I think that while there are still whole tracts of unused land that is perfectly capable of being built on ... you only have to look around the area of the Odeon, it is a wasteland around there. But it is very ...

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

I thought we were putting a town park there.

The Connétable of St. Helier:

I do not mean the town park itself but there is a lot of stuff around there, a lot of sites that could be built on to the west of Bath Street. It is very difficult to justify any further spread of the urban area when there is space ... still space within town to build on.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Would you have reckoned that your urban area was sort of, say, the area bounded by the ring road or where would you take it to?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

I tend to think of it - the town proper, I suppose - as the area bounded by the escarpment in which St. Helier sits and that does include a bit of St. Saviour. But it obviously goes back ... goes further up the valley as it goes along the coastal plain to First Tower and Havre des Pas, and so on so, no, I think Constables basically think about their parish boundaries, that is ... Although when we sit as a Comité we try and have a more consistent unified approach.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Yes. The other thing which I suppose is not technically ... well, I suppose it is population, Ann Court and car parks. As I was coming in an architect I met suggested that we could reconsider what we did with Ann Court and that Snow Hill would make a multi-storey car park. I do not know ... which would accomplish some of the aims of the general regeneration of town. I just wondered what your ideas were.

The Connétable of St. Helier:

Yes, Snow Hill would make an excellent car park, it is very well connected to the Green Street roundabout. It is right in town so you park there and you are practically in the market, you are in the part of town that needs customers so I know there are restrictions because of the cavern, in terms of the ground floor has to have quite a large, quite a large height for access to the cavern but ... No, I think the Snow Hill car park multi-storey in the cavern would make a great deal of sense. Initially I supported the multi-storey on the Ann Street development because I understood it was the only way to deliver the town park. Since there it has becoming quite clear that there are other ways to deliver the parking for the town park. Indeed one of the most attractive ideas I have heard about Ann Court is that it should be another park. That we should have a park at Ann Court as well as a park on Gas Place. The more parks the better in my view. If town is to become more densely populated, green space and open space is going to be much more required.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Yes. You are not going to encourage guerrilla gardeners? These people who sort of whizz around and plant bulbs in roundabouts and so on in urban areas in London.

The Connétable of St. Helier:

I suppose it does indicate a degree of frustration with the authorities. It is a frustration I share at times. I have had a Roads Committee meeting today in which just one small junction where cars wraparound through town, T.T.S. (Transport and Technical Services) has said we cannot have a crossing there, which is all a bit déjà vu because the last time T.T.S. said we could not have a crossing was for the important walking route to the library by the Been Around the World cafe and I had to go to the States with a private Member's bill to achieve it. I think that, while I am optimistic about the ability of town to take increased population, the problem town has is that the strategic decision makers in terms of transport are not in the parish, they are at South Hill and the transport planners, what their main is is to keep the traffic flowing, my main aim is to make town a more liveable community. Unfortunately the 2 aims do not often see eye-to-eye.

The Deputy of Grouville:

I know this is going slightly off the track of migration and population, but as we are talking about more pleasant places to live in a built up area the urban areas ... you talk about having green areas in town and better facilities, but what about the urban areas on the outskirts of town. The sort of Georgetown, I know that is not necessarily in your parish but the First Tower, Five Oaks type areas. How would we improve them in your opinion? Or how could we?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

I think they have got the same requirements for being accessible. People have got to be able to move around their urban areas easily and safely. In some ways it is probably more difficult to move around ... say if you like at First Tower it is probably more difficult for your kiddies to go and visit their friends and go to the park than if you live in the town centre because the traffic problems, the traffic barriers to save movement and children cycling, children walking to school and so on, the barriers are almost more difficult at First Tower, Five Oaks, Georgetown than they are in the town centre where you are getting some degree of traffic calming. So there are enormous challenges and First Tower, of course, has a marvellous park and it has access to the sea once you get across the barrier of the road. But Georgetown - I am trying to think where people ... there are some recreation areas there but ... I have not done a study of Georgetown but I suppose if I was the Constable of St. Saviour I would be looking at Georgetown and thinking: "What more can I do to make this a liveable community in terms of people accessing open space" and so on or the seaside and so on.

The Deputy of Grouville:

And be more aesthetically pleasing, I think.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Yes, and you mentioned Bermuda and the sort of principle of one car per household and everybody else is on those putt-putts. But Bermuda is a semi-topical island and I am not sure that more people on those little putt-putts are ... what else do you call them? They go putt, putt, putt, putt.

The Deputy of Grouville:

I know what you mean, Sarah.

The Connétable of St. Helier:

We have seen quite a lot of them over here already.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Yes, I just wonder ... it is a lovely idea but would you get as many of the population on those alternative forms of transport?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

I do not think ... you know, Jersey is a very cyclable community. Once you get down off the hill you live up, if you live in the countryside, once you get down from the escarpment, it is all flat. So we should do much more than we are doing to promote cycling. If we are talking specifically about migration, the impact on the roads, we are going to simply have to abandon our permissiveness in terms of saying to a family: "You can have as many cars as you want" because you are getting families that have 5 cars. Not just keeping 5 cars but using 5 cars. That, of course, has a real impact when you are trying to make a community safer in terms of the sheer ... it does not matter whether they are electric vehicles or petrol, we are trying to make a community safer for cyclists and pedestrians and you cannot have ... I believe, in a small community you cannot have a policy which allows you to have unrestricted use of motor vehicles because the 2 just will not work together. You could do when you had a population of 50,000, 75,000 but if you have a population of 100,000 and all families are going to have 5 cars then it is not going to work. So I think some tough decisions will be called for in ... not just in St. Helier but in other communities where, like in First Tower, people want to walk to school. You cannot get people walking to school with the kind of traffic volumes, traffic speeds that we have in Jersey; narrow pavements, no cycle facilities.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Also the problem of public transport.

The Connétable of St. Helier:

Absolutely. Yes. Which is why one of the key things we need to formulate any kind of policy here is a transport policy from T.T.S., which we have been waiting for for several years.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

A bit like New Directions. Tracey.

Deputy T.A. Vallois:

Just to go back on to the actual population policy itself, I am quite intrigued at how they have come to their numbers as well, formulated the idea. What are your views on them using Imagine 2035?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

I confess I did not go to it, so I should not really criticise it because I did not go to it. But any of the forums that the public, and indeed States Members, are invited to go to, it is good that we have them, these opportunities to put your views across, but it is totally unscientific. So that is why I do not see these figures as being scientific figures. They are aspirational figures, they give us something to measure our progress against but it could 100, it could 98, it could 137, who

knows. As I say, it will depend on whether their job is here, whether there are houses that people can afford to live in. It may depend on whether there are new opportunities opening up in other parts of the world that people are starting to think about.

Deputy T.A. Vallois:

The situation with the ageing population that is getting mentioned all the time; whenever this comes up, it is always the first thing that is mentioned. What are your views on that? Do you see it as a problem or just something that ... a hurdle that we are going to have to get over and I would imagine we have had to before. It is like everything seems to be cyclical and I imagine this is the same scenario.

The Connétable of St. Helier:

Yes, it would be. I made note before I came today that if you have not already there was conference at the Hotel de France a couple of weeks ago run by the A.P.F. (Assemblée des parlementaires de la Francophonie) and the subject was the ageing population but in French. A lot of papers were presented by experts from across Europe and a lot of discussions were held. It would be well worth getting Anne Harris, who looks after the A.P.F., to pass on to you some of the papers. They were not all in French, some translation was done. So we are not the only people grappling with the ageing population. One of the sort of headline findings that came out of the conference was that increasing the population will not itself solve the problem, it merely defers the problem because you then have to face the problem when the people you have imported have all got older. So, yes, we have got to find other ways of dealing with it other than just increasing the population. The solutions are all well known. People working later, working longer and so on. That is where, again, I think St. Helier has a lot to offer because as people get older if they do live in town centres or urban centres, they are going to find it easier to access services.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Everything is within walking distance or mobility scooter distance.

The Deputy of Grouville:

Do you have a view on a lot of our local population leaving? Because it is easy to give the figures that we have got a net nil migration or whatever the current figure happens to be in any one year, but that does not identify a lot of local people leaving the Island, being replaced with non locals. I wonder if you have any views on this.

The Connétable of St. Helier:

Yes, I think that is a very good point because the population is churning, is it not? It is ... we are not really aware of that process, except we do know from the last census that Jersey born people are about 50 per cent of the population. I am not Jersey born so I am perhaps not the obvious person to ask, but it does seem to me that it depends what Jersey offers local people, not only in employment terms but in other areas as well to get them to stay here. The main problem, as we know, the main reason why people leave is because of the lack of further education on the Island and I have been championing for some years now the cause of developing our current further education offer into a university because I think that would help retain some young people who currently go away to study. Obviously we could not offer a complete ... we could not offer all the faculties that you will get at one of the bigger universities but we can certainly start. That would have the added advantage, I think, of attracting to Jersey not just people who come here because they want to be in the financial services industry but people who come here because they want to contribute to the intellectual capital of the Island. So you would have (a) students coming to Jersey to study instead of going to wherever else: France or the U.K. (United Kingdom) mainland. I think people would come here to teach. I often use the example of Charlottetown in Prince Edward Island which has a population ... the Island has a population of 120,000 but it has had a university for about, I think, 75 years. So it was smaller than us when it had its university. A lot of local students, a lot of local people stay there to go to university and then, of course, they are less

likely to go away for the productive part of their careers. It also has the benefit of bringing in teachers with their families who then, of course, contribute to the cultural life of the Island. So ...

The Deputy of Grouville:

It has been suggested that we should discriminate for local people.

The Connétable of St. Helier:

What, Jersey born people or ...?

The Deputy of Grouville:

Well, local people however that is defined, which is another issue.

The Connétable of St. Helier:

I make no bones about the fact I am not Jersey born and I did not go to school here. Jersey needs people who are committed to the Island who love Jersey for what the Island offers and who are prepared to contribute to improving it. I do not really think it matters whether they are born here or not. Of course it is important we value our heritage, our culture, our history, all that kind of ... but that does not have to be ... you do not have to be a Jersey born person to promote Jersey's culture or Jersey's heritage.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

All right, is there anything else you would like to say to us?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

No, we seem to have ranged widely but it is ...

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Have we covered everything you would like to get into the public arena?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

Yes, I think so. Yes. Thank you.

Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Super, thank you very much indeed.

The Connétable of St. Helier:

Thank you very much.

Deputy T.A. Vallois:

Thank you.

The Deputy of Grouville:

Thank you.