

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 2nd JULY 2013**

Question

Does the Chief Minister accept that the figure of 500 for net immigration in 2012 (resulting in an overall growth in population of 900 creating a population of 99,000) demonstrates that the Council of Ministers has failed in its attempt to meet one of the 7 priorities of its Strategic Plan, to “manage population growth and migration”?

In particular, will he advise whether one of the key actions “to bring realistic targets for population and immigration limits to the Assembly by July 2013” will be met and, if not, why?

Does he agree that to continue inward migration at this rate would see population in the short-term (2020) rise to over 104,000 for only a 2% reduction in the dependency ratio and, if so, does he consider this an appropriate way forward and, if not, why not?

In the light of the lack of success of current and past measures to control migration, will he commit to reduce inward migration further in 2013 and 2014 to create employment for local candidates and, if so, state what specific fresh measures he will bring to this task via the Control of Housing and Work Regulations or otherwise, and if not, why not?

Answer

The Strategic Plan is clearly focused on limiting non locally qualified permissions in order to support local employment, while also supporting permissions for 1(1)(j) employees where that creates and safeguards local employment.

The latest statistics show that this has taken place, as illustrated below, with an increasing trend toward higher value immigration and a lower reliance on lesser skilled non locally qualified permissions:

	Net non-locally qualified employees and dependents (rounded)	Net j-category employees and dependents (rounded)	Total net immigration (rounded)
2010	500	100	700
2011	300	300	600
2012	100	400	500

This is part of an overall trend of reducing net immigration levels, as illustrated:

- 3 year average net immigration, 2006 – 2008 = + 1,200
- 3 year average net immigration, 2007 – 2009 = + 1,000
- 3 year average net immigration, 2010 – 2012 = + 600
- 2012 – net immigration = + 500

The Migration Advisory Group, working closely with the Social Security Department, are facilitating this change, promoting local employment wherever possible, while also recognising that inward migration often creates, for example, when linked to inward investment and the expansion of existing businesses, and that the increased use of local labour in many sectors will take time if we are not to damage our economy and overall employment prospects.

All these matters will be reported on in Autumn 2013 by way of an “Interim Population Policy”, with a longer term policy direction to be established by a “Long Term Plan” that will be produced in Spring 2014, following a period of extensive consultation.

The “Long Term Plan” will properly not just take population and immigration as issues in isolation, but foremost will consider the type of Island we want with reference to our environment, economy, and community, recognising that each component is essential to our quality of life, and that best practise elsewhere clearly demonstrates how effective strategic planning needs to work to long term horizons.

As to speculating or commenting on precise future population levels on the basis of one year, when trends are clearly changing, this is misleading. Furthermore, it is premature in advance of the outlined work.