

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY DEPUTY M.R. HIGGINS OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 24TH MAY 2016**

Question

Further to the annual resident population estimates which were published by the Statistics Unit on 24th June 2015, can the Chief Minister advise why, given the States' policy of restricting population growth to 325 people per annum, the population has grown to the extent outlined, and provide the resident population estimates for the year ends 2013 (which is 'not available' in the report), 2014 (given that the report indicates that the value quoted is uncertain) and 2015?

Answer

The Statistics Unit provide updates of population and net migration as part of its schedule of official statistics. These can be found at:

<http://www.gov.je/GOVERNMENT/JERSEYWORLD/STATISTICSUNIT/Pages/default.aspx>.

The next release of population and net migration statistics is on the 22nd June, 2016.

While we should not speculate on the level of population and net migration that will be reported by the Statistics Unit, the recent Labour Market Survey released on the 29th April, 2016 reported record private sector employment growth of 1,550 during 2015, including prominent employment growth in the following areas:

- +420 in financial services
- +320 in construction
- +560 in private health, education and other services
- +170 in hospitality

As to the residential status of these new workers, the Labour Market Survey reported growth in "entitled" and "entitled to work" employment of +1,200, and in "registered" employment of +320. So, we are seeing strong growth in "local" employment, but we are also seeing some growth in newer migrants working. This matches other economic data which show that our economy is improving. It also matches the published 2015 application statistics for the Control of Housing and Work (Jersey) Law, which can be found at: <http://www.gov.je/Government/Pages/StatesReports.aspx?ReportID=1737>. These showed that of the 918 applications for permanent registered staff in 2015, just over half were refused, including 134 new appointments in hospitality and 106 in construction. Of those additional registered staff that were approved, they included:

- +94 in financial services
- +153 in construction
- +45 in private health, education and other services
- +40 in hospitality

These decisions were made to support businesses seeking staff, with those businesses having demonstrated an inability to recruit entitled or entitled to work staff, and being committed to working with the “back to work” scheme. It is the case that many businesses are struggling to recruit.

These are difficult decisions, but they are in line with strategies which support economic and productivity growth, and other aims such as increasing the supply of housing and building new infrastructure, and supporting businesses which deliver benefits to consumers, including wider benefits around health and well-being. This is important, recognising our society is ageing, with the additional cost pressures this brings, and the need to care for this ageing population. In doing this, we are seeking to target migration - which is why so many applications were refused. The Housing and Work Advisory Group will continue to do this, and will consider in depth the population and migration statistics when they are released on the 22nd June.

Alongside this ongoing work, the Council of Minister’s is also embarking on a wide community consultation to develop a new long term vision for Jersey, with this vision setting a future direction for how we enhance the quality of life for Islanders and the implications for population and immigration policy.