



Migration and Population Review Panel

Common Population Policy Review

Witnesses: The Chief Minister and Assistant Chief Minister

Monday, 24th January 2022

Panel:

Senator S.W. Pallett (Chair)

Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier

Deputy G.J. Truscott of St. Brelade

Witnesses:

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré, The Chief Minister

Deputy R.E. Huelin of St. Peter, Assistant Chief Minister

Ms. S. Duhamel, Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance

Ms. M. Clark, Senior Policy Officer (1)

Mr. N. Stocks, Senior Policy Officer (2)

[13:03]

Senator S.W. Pallett (Chair):

Good afternoon. This is a public hearing with the Chief Minister and Assistant Chief Minister in regards to the Common Population Policy. I am Chair of the Migration and Population Review Panel and we will be speaking to the Chief Minister and Assistant Chief Minister today about their policy. Just as a way of an introduction, normal hearing standards apply. This hearing is recorded and transcribed. If you wish to speak, can you use the chat function? Speak in order and try not to interrupt. Make sure you are on mute when not speaking and remember to come off when speaking. Make sure you have got clear visual. Speakers will be shown on video. As normal, if we run out of time for questions we will provide them in written form. All speakers will need to introduce

themselves in the usual way, and I will start from a panel perspective by saying I am Senator Steve Pallett. I chair the Migration and Population Review Panel.

Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier:

Deputy Steve Ahier, member of the panel.

Deputy G.J. Truscott of St. Brelade:

Good afternoon. Deputy Graham Truscott, member of the panel.

The Chief Minister:

Good afternoon. Senator John Le Fondré, Chief Minister.

Assistant Chief Minister:

Deputy Rowland Huelin, Assistant Chief Minister.

Senior Policy Officer (1):

Michelle Clark, Senior Policy Officer.

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Sue Duhamel, Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance.

Senior Policy Officer (2):

Good afternoon, Neil Stocks, Senior Policy Officer.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Good afternoon, everybody, and thanks for attending today. Chief Minister, during our previous public hearing we asked Deputy Huelin about the statement in his ministerial foreword to the policy that: "Getting population issues at the centre of government thinking is the only way we are going to resolve this knotty challenge." Please detail the commitments and actions in this policy which demonstrate that it has been at the centre of the Government's thinking.

The Chief Minister:

I think you have had a table, effectively, sent to you of all the various actions and things, which hopefully shows how, if you like, in depth and integrated it is and how many Ministers it cuts across. Certainly in terms of the work that has been done by Deputy Huelin in terms of engaging with individual Ministers, I would say it very clearly demonstrates that the work that has been done shows that it impacts across so many different ministries. I think the fact that now we have agreed that it

will be incorporated, effectively, into the Government Plan also demonstrates that as a general principle.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

You are absolutely right, in the actions for 2022, for example, it does clearly show that it cuts across a large number of your ministries. What work has taken place between those ministries to ensure that everybody is aware of their role moving forward?

The Chief Minister:

I will hand that to Rowland because obviously he has been dealing with the detail but he can give you an outline of the work that has been happening.

Assistant Chief Minister:

Good afternoon, all. As we discussed before, we had 2 Council of Ministers workshops, one in the spring and another one in the autumn about a month before lodging that, which were well attended and well contributed to. On top of that, we had one-on-one briefings with the officers and myself and all the Ministers to engage in a 2-way dialogue as to what we were asking from them and what they could bring to the table for us. So we feel pretty well in sync across the Council of Ministers on the goals and the aspirations of this particular policy.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Thank you. Chief Minister, how has your Council of Ministers sought to ensure that there is sufficient focus and also resource directed to bringing forward a coherent and comprehensive population policy?

The Chief Minister:

In terms of resource, I think it is probably the first time for a long time that we have put specific money in and engaged specific officers to work on this. Obviously it goes all the way back to the work that commenced in early 2019 under the Policy Development Board side of things. I am just looked at Sue and Neil who are nodding in vehement agreement, I think. So from that perspective this is, as I said, the first time for a long time that there has been dedicated resource and very specific focus on this and although we have had delays from COVID and all the rest of it, for me the output is very clear in terms of the principles that were adopted by the Assembly, I think it was March last year, and then obviously the documents that we have got in front of us for debate in 2 sittings.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Given the original statement that I made around the knotty challenge, that statement acknowledges the complexity of the problem. Can you explain what direction was given by the Council of Ministers on the level of resourcing that the development of a population policy would require?

The Chief Minister:

I particularly agree with the fact it is a knotty problem. I think I have said it elsewhere as well on other matters but, frankly, as we all know, if it was easy it would have been done previously. So it is a challenge and we know - and I think Rowland at various times has held up his Venn diagram of the sectors and the overlaps that it generates - it impacts in very many places. In terms of resource, in essence it has really come from me in terms of the funding and getting the principles established but obviously with the support of the Council of Ministers. But, no, it has come from me at the very top.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Will the Government Plan, the one we have just agreed, cover the resourcing needed for all the actions in 2022?

The Chief Minister:

The short answer is yes.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Okay.

The Chief Minister:

I think if you want further detail on that, I will very happily hand over to Sue if you want some further information.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

No, I think we can probably pick that up via a question. I think we can do that offline. The panel heard at its last meeting that one full-time officer was appointed in May last year. Do you feel that for a policy that is the centre of Government thinking, this represents sufficient resource? The comment comes from the last meeting we had with the Assistant Chief Minister.

The Chief Minister:

I have got people opposite me, as it were, so obviously from your point of view you cannot see it on the screens. Can you still see me?

Senator S.W. Pallett:

No, we have lost you.

The Chief Minister:

That is interesting. Hang on a moment. Let us try that again. Try that again.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Yes, you are back.

The Chief Minister:

Okay, that is interesting. Certainly from my knowledge, the 3 officers that are here, Neil was appointed, I am going to say, in early 2019 roughly, Sue obviously came in ... I cannot remember when Sue came in but, broadly speaking, you both came in at the same time, in terms of on population but obviously Sue, as you will know, has been a very long and very experienced, very senior member of all sorts of policy development. Then obviously Michelle, I think, is the one that is being referred to who came in in May last year, I think. Perhaps Rowland if you want to just clarify.

Assistant Chief Minister:

Yes, thank you, Chief Minister. I think I recall saying that I have had excellent support going through the control of migrations work and the Housing Policy Board. Sorry, wrong one. There are so many boards running round the place. The Migration Controls Policy Development Board that was put together in 2019. My comment was a dedicated resource solely to help with writing up the work on the population policy arrived in May, whereas I have been very well supported in those people with other roles taking us towards a population policy. Sorry about that, it was a bit waffled.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

No, that certainly made that clearer. Chief Minister, the panel asked the Deputy Chief Minister at our hearing with him earlier this month what he had originally envisaged that a population policy would contain and how that vision compared to P.116/2021. A lot of water has gone under the bridge, admittedly, but we now ask you whether this policy measures up to the vision that you had for a population policy at the outset of your leadership of this Council of Ministers and if you are satisfied with the scope and content of the policy?

The Chief Minister:

I am absolutely satisfied with the scope and content. I think I did not come in with a predetermined idea. I think we needed to get to a point where we know we needed a much better position on population. I think the objective in the longer term, as we said, is about getting to a sustainable and balanced level but I think what has also become clear, which probably I did not appreciate at the time, is the fact that to get to that position, the position we are in at the present with data and systems

is not as good as we probably hoped. Therefore, that is why there is a significant amount of focus on getting the data and the controls in place to then be able to better manage things. So it is about getting the foundations right. But I am satisfied - in fact I am more than satisfied, I am very pleased - with the work that Rowland and the team he has been leading have got to and I think they should be congratulated. I think as a first phase, for me it is based on a lot of rigour and a lot of work and consultation and engagement with all sorts of cohorts within the community and I think that is incredibly important. There is always going to be further to go, by the way.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Inasmuch as you did not have a predetermined idea at the start of your term in office, were there any issues or concerns that you wanted to address when you first came to office in regards to population policy?

The Chief Minister:

Well, obviously we had an election commitment about putting something in place. I think it was also clear from some of the early days and work that had previously gone on that if matters continued in the way it had been shaping up, we would have a lot of pressure on Island resources.

[13:15]

Therefore, that is something that we need in the longer term to address but equally one is not going to be stupid about this in any shape or form. We know there are very some very intricate links between the community, the economy and the environment - that is Rowland's Venn diagram - and one has got to make sure that you get the balance right for all those 3 areas.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Thank you. I am going to hand over to Deputy Ahier for the next couple of questions.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Thank you, Chair. The policy states that action needs to be taken now. However, one of the themes that is emerging from the panel's conversations as part of this review is that respondents do not feel that any action is being taken in this policy. In the words of one witness, this is an ambition for a policy rather than a policy itself. As such, there is a feeling that there is no action being taken and nothing to comment upon. Do you think it meets the public's expectations for a population policy?

The Chief Minister:

I think there is a variety of issues in that question. Number one is obviously individual actions, as laid out I think in the correspondence to you, will need to be taken at the individual ministerial level.

But certainly, if I use the feedback that you have had from Jersey Business, I think there is a recognition that this is a long-term policy and, therefore, getting the data right is incredibly important. I am just quoting. It says: "The policy sets out the need for relevant data systems, skills development and expert and advisory panels." The usual story, I think, depending on which cohort you engage with and how much attention they necessarily pay to the engagement that has been going on, you will get differing answers. However, as I said, it feels to me from some of the engagement and correspondence you have had that there is a recognition that we seem to be going in the right direction.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

One of the views expressed to the panel is that the policy does not face up to the reality of the issues on the ground. How would you respond to this view?

The Chief Minister:

I think it would be helpful to understand - I have not seen that response - in terms of what they are referring to as issues on the ground, because that can mean a lot of things to a lot of people. We do believe in certain instances ... if you deal with, and it is referred to in Jersey Business's response, that where I think particularly hospitality and construction had some issues, I think we have flexed some matters to try and mitigate some of the short-term tensions they are facing. If we are looking at housing, I think the issue there is we have been and are taking actions but there is not a short-term fix for that. So I think one needs just to flesh out that comment a little bit further.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

I think it was generally referring to the population issue in itself.

The Chief Minister:

That is why I think we need to understand a little bit further because for some people, for some cohorts they will be concerned about having too much control, i.e. that they need access to labour in some shape or form, whereas in other cohorts they will be very much saying: "Well, you should close the doors tomorrow and have nil net" and obviously there are consequences from both approaches.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Since the policy was lodged, what communication has been done to explain the rationale to the public?

The Chief Minister:

The general plan there - but I think I will hand over to Rowland to give some of the detail - is obviously with 2 debates coming through and there will be publicity and commentary that comes from that, is then building up. There is a communications plan being developed, which will then build on those and over a number of months will seek to do that and get that further engagement and communication. Obviously there has been quite a significant level of engagement all the way through since 2019 with various stakeholders at various times and of all age groups, but I think Rowland and Sue perhaps could comment further.

Assistant Chief Minister:

Thank you for giving us this opportunity because this is a form of communication and engagement and hopefully many people are listening to this. We have got many, many ideas for the communication going forward. You will find there will be the standard media interviews, Radio Jersey interviews, which I think I have given a couple of. We did a podcast, which is a glorified way of saying we spent an hour with 5 journalists, taking the time to explain the population policy to them in detail. They invested great time in understanding it and I think the media came out very positively about it because of that investment in time. So we picked up on that theme and I want to continue doing a lot more so-called podcasts. A podcast is just inviting groups of people into a room and recording it and having that 2-way dialogue. We can pick sections of our society to contribute from business to the young to our retired to charities, et cetera, but I think that is a very positive way of getting informed messages out there, because that is the key. I am planning on using the Ask the Ministers infrastructure in order to do dedicated work on that. When we are allowed to, if there is still a desire, there is nothing wrong, even in today's technological world, in getting out and going around the parishes, so I would suggest that will probably be more in the autumn. This is a very long-term policy to go forward. It is going to evolve, as I have said, and therefore just to rush out and do everything now may be a good idea, it gets the message out, but I think a structured, delivered message with multiple media, multiple forums over a period of time is the way to get the message. The message, as we know, is it is our policy, it is the Island's policy, and that will be the theme of this communication.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Thank you. I will just pass to the Chair who has a question.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Just a very quick question. Chief Minister, you mentioned both debates. We are obviously going to have a debate on the population policy and we have also got amendments to the Control of Housing and Work Law to be debated before too long. Do you believe that there is a degree of confusion and misunderstanding, certainly within the public and even within business itself, about the definition and the difference between both these policies and what they are setting out to do?

The Chief Minister:

Well, I cannot tell you if people are confused or not but one is the policy and one is the execution, if you like, or the first phase of the execution of the policy. But I think in terms of sometimes there may be confusion over terms, whether between migration and immigration, but I would hope overall people will understand the objective. I think the message is getting through that we have to get the data and the systems right and have the ability to manage population and that means getting controls in place. My impression is from those who are engaged I think that message has been understood.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Thank you, Chief Minister. Do you believe that the goal to reduce net inward migration is achievable and desirable?

The Chief Minister:

Ultimately about achievable, that will be very much around if the controls that we are proposing and the data management systems are in place then, yes, I think it is absolutely achievable. The then question will be for further Councils of Ministers and future Assemblies to determine what they consider to be desirable at the time. I think there is certainly a point where having better controls and achieving ... I will use the words "greater productivity" but it is not necessarily just financial. In other words, making sure that we do either the same or more with less people is surely desirable because we are an Island with finite space. But there are, I think, various ways, particularly with technology, that that can be achievable. Rowland, do you want to add something?

Assistant Chief Minister:

May I? You have waited 20 minutes before sticking that up. It is all achievable as long as we maintain the harmony between our community, our economy and our environment. Everything has to be driven towards maintaining that. As we have discussed, it can be achievable providing we significantly increase the productivity of the, shall we say, economic providers into our economy as opposed to those that provide for our society. It is achievable as long as we stick to the vision and the harmony and the balance that we need for the Island to function in a way that people want it to function.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Thank you. Chief Minister, does reaching a stable population position in the future mean achieving net zero migration?

The Chief Minister:

I think in the longer term, yes, but that is a long-term goal. I was thinking about it the other day. I think the analogy I would use is if I am sailing out of St. Helier harbour to go to St. Aubin, my long-term goal is to get to St. Aubin harbour but my course will change according to what the wind does and how the wind shifts. So your objective is always to get to that point but I am sure there will be challenges, there will be reasons to have temporary course changes, whatever, as you go across that route.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Thank you very much. I will now pass over to Deputy Truscott.

Deputy G.J. Truscott:

Thank you. Chief Minister, do you accept that the Common Population Policy lacks a firm commitment to abide by the policy to reduce net inward migration given that future governments can choose whether or not to apply it?

The Chief Minister:

I think the short answer, I am afraid, is probably not, because whatever policy you put in in this government, any future government can change, and that is always going to be the case.

Deputy G.J. Truscott:

Yes, I agree and one of the recurring comments made by those who the panel has talked to is that the proximity of the June election to the lodging of this proposition means that the policy may disappear at the end of this term of office. Do you accept that the late timing of this policy means that commitments to action are not possible?

The Chief Minister:

Sorry, I lost the last 10 seconds of your question. Do I accept ...

Deputy G.J. Truscott:

Do you accept that the late timing of this policy means that commitments to action are not possible?

The Chief Minister:

To be honest, probably not and the reason I say that is because the Assembly has now agreed - and I think from memory, because I have not got it in front of me, it was the amendment to the States of Jersey Law 2005 - that it has to be part of the Government Plan and that is a matter of law, and that was quite deliberate. That is again why we talked about putting the foundations in place to make sure it gets the right focus of attention going forward. So the only way that a future Council of Ministers can ignore and not put something in the Government Plan - and ultimately then it is a

matter for the Assembly to hold that Council of Ministers to account - is by changing the law back to remove that requirement. But as of now there is a legal requirement for the Government Plan, so it is an annual document, to include the population policy and, as I said, that has been agreed by the Assembly.

Deputy G.J. Truscott:

Chief Minister, are you satisfied that this population policy is a fitting legacy for this Council of Ministers?

The Chief Minister:

It is obviously not the only legacy and I would rather suggest that there are an awful lot of things that we have done since we started in 2018, not least that of bringing the Island to date, I hope as well as can be expected, through an even less frequent than a once in a generation pandemic. Some events happened but probably that is the biggest crisis that has hit the Island since the Occupation. But in terms of do I think it is one of those things that I could point at and say: "We have done that and we have done it in a way that I think with resource behind it so, therefore, putting some substance and some effort behind it", yes, I think it is one of the legacies of this Council of Ministers.

Deputy G.J. Truscott:

Thank you, Chief Minister. I will hand you over to the Chair.

[13:30]

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Thank you, Deputy. In your view, does your Council of Ministers Common Population Policy make sufficient commitment and take the right actions to address both the short-term difficulties faced - I can think of some particularly, for example, at the moment with the recruitment of staff - and provide a longer-term vision for the future level of Jersey's population?

The Chief Minister:

I think the short answer on that has got to be yes. As I said, it comes down to this point - it is my sailing trip across St. Aubin's Bay from St. Helier to St. Aubin - your long-term goal has been set but there will be challenges along the way. We know that but at least we are now in the process of starting out on that route. Changing analogies but a lot of this work that started last year, will continue this year and further going forward, is about getting those foundations right and that goes back to Rowland's favourite terms of data and technology and obviously controls. That has got to be those first areas because if you do not get those right then any policy that is produced just will not have the substance behind it to be effective.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Do not get me wrong, I understand you want to get to St. Aubin at some point, but in terms of right now, what hope do you give business in Jersey, the economy in Jersey, that they are going to be able to find the staff that they need and deal with the issues that are currently there? How is that dealt with within this policy?

The Chief Minister:

I think in terms of giving confidence to business, I will point back at the comments - I am just trying to find them - from Jersey Business. I am sure it is in there, a submission where I think there was a recognition that we have done some short-term measures in terms of helping hospitality and construction. In fact, they do make the point in their submission: "A regular and ongoing presentation of this data along with census information should enable Ministers to react appropriately to any unintended impacts to the business community and Islanders, while making rounded insights available to business and other affected parties." My take from that is that at least one voice from there is saying that the approach to date has been constructive and appropriate, would be the way I would phrase it.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

But without a longer-term population policy, how does this give businesses confidence that they can attract staff, build business, be able to invest in their businesses when they do not know what the longer-term aims are?

The Chief Minister:

I think in terms of attracting staff there is reference in the policy about it covers all that side of the Island identity, about making people coming to the Island welcome and dealing with some of the anomalies that obviously exist. But equally I would hope that by having an understanding around the controls but also displaying some flexibility as and when required that at least gives them some clarity as to what the systems will be. My expectation and the reason I phrase it "I would imagine" is because as you go through the various terms of the Council of Ministers, as I have said, things can change. But I would not anticipate any Council of Ministers taking kneejerk reactions on things like population controls, for example, if they were basically doing calm and considered decision-making because the whole thing around population, it is a long-term goal that you are trying to get to. There will be some short-term issues that you will have to address, but I think people need to remain focused on that long-term objective.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Of the actions, and there are many, which are included for future Councils of Ministers, even within this term itself, which of these would you hope to bring forward in this term of office? Are there any priorities in your action list?

The Chief Minister:

Can I send that across to Rowland because obviously he has been a lot more focused on the detail behind it?

Assistant Chief Minister:

The actions are the ones to deliver ... I have forgotten the number now, but it is the primary legislation following up on P.137 that is absolutely essential to make sure we get that in place and to set the platform for the secondary legislation, which puts the 9 month, 4 years and 10 years detail behind it. The constant drive to improve our technology, I have spent a lot of time making sure that the systems were delivered to support the Control of Housing and Work Law and the combined employer returns are going to be delivered on time. I was hoping again we will be delivering ... I will let the Chief Minister deliver our progress on a property register because that is not my responsibility today; hopefully it will be very soon. I will say the starting of the delivery of the messaging. Do not forget, as I said before, what is really important is it is our population policy. If we as a Government just chuck out a population policy that does not engage and bring the Island together to play their part in the population policy, it is unlikely to be successful. I do not know what words I used last time but it was pretty similar to that. So that constant drive to engage and realise it is our policy, and ensure that people see the red flags that are coming down swinging and make sure that red flags downstream, when addressed early, become positive opportunities for the future. Red flags that are ignored become potential crises. Those are the actions that are going forward in the near term.

The Chief Minister:

I was just going to add there is money in the plan, for example, under the health and social recovery fund, which will if approvals are given in the next few weeks, very few weeks, again assist and enable improvement of data systems to commence in a particular area. As Rowland has said, we are expecting imminent ... I am expecting a ministerial decision to come back to me imminently for signing, which will be phase one of the property register side. I do have to follow up on this next piece but obviously I am very keen to see the terms of reference for the technology fund to come back to the Assembly, ideally before the election so that we can give certainty on that as well. So that is just picking 3 things out. Obviously, we have put funding in place as well, bearing in mind the stilted start it had, if that is the right expression, in 2019 for the living costs and household income survey. Because we did start that. It was an early commitment of mine. I was very keen to get it done but essentially the data-gathering exercise got wrecked, basically, as a result of COVID. So, in essence, while we might glean some high-level information out of that, that survey is restarting.

That is basically an update of the 2015, I think, data and that will be important for the next Council of Ministers. So there are some things that we are putting in place which hopefully will help the decision-making basis of the next council.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Before I put this on to Deputy Ahier, data has been a big concern of yours and you have committed to providing more data. Can you give me today a commitment that we will have these I.T. (information technology) systems in place by the end of this political term?

The Chief Minister:

The I.T. side, again I will hand back to Rowland because that is definitely his area, but the end of this political term is some ... I cannot remember the exact date but it is sometime in July. Now, some I.T. systems will be happening and going live - I have April in my head for one of them - but there will be others where it is a longer-term programme. So, in other words, they have started but the work will complete after this political term, no question. But the fact they are contractually committed and well advanced would give me great confidence that they will obviously be completed and will deliver. Rowland, do you want to add some more to that?

Assistant Chief Minister:

The data collection for the combined employer return is on track to collect the data on a monthly basis in 2022. So the first time the data will be collected I think is the middle of next month. The second side of it is obviously the self-service side of this, which involves employers being able to input and manipulate that data. What I mean by that is to put in their requests for new licences and change of licences. That is taking a little bit longer. Now, we are expecting that to be during the second quarter, hopefully before the end of the quarter. In fairness, this is taking a little bit longer but the feedback we are having from business is they are very supportive but going through the challenges that they have had, the short-term challenges that they have been confronted with COVID, meant that they have not really wanted to dedicate the resource and time to delivering this. However, there is a willingness to ... we are pushing at an open door, effectively, to deliver this. Another point I really want to stress is the fact that this Government has decided to throw away a 1987 accounting system, which is pathetic in today's age, and replace it with the new I.T.S. (Integrated Technology Solution) project, which will be a great challenge, admittedly. That is evidence of the change of thinking to become a digital government as opposed to not, I think is a better way of describing it. Other data coming will be the census. As you know, the census is not within Government control. Statistics Jersey are an independent body so we cannot - and I say this with absolute respect to them, in parentheses - tell them what to do. We have to wait for them to deliver their particular work. We are expecting the first deliveries of that to come out in March. What does that actually mean? Yes, we have a long-term vision to have an e-census but when we have

this particular census we can have the platform to start going forward with that. A lot of these things are short, medium and long term. What I am trying to say is putting the emphasis on data and putting I.T. systems in place today, as soon as possible, so we can start making informed decisions. As I have mentioned before on tech, the bottleneck really is because of the huge demand for technology. Certainly, with the I.T.S. project, those people with the necessary skillsets, business analysts, project management, do not grow on trees and, therefore, finding the right skillsets to be available to do these projects is the challenge. It is a global challenge with the explosion of technology at the moment. It is not a local challenge, it is a global challenge. But the emphasis and the cultural swing towards data within the Government of Jersey is clear for everybody to see and I will keep championing that.

The Chief Minister:

But I think also, just to re-emphasise that ...

Senator S.W. Pallett:

We are going to lose our question plan if we are not ...

The Chief Minister:

Okay.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

All I would add before I pass over to Deputy Ahier is that I am disappointed there was not a simple “yes” to that, but I will hand over to Deputy Ahier.

The Chief Minister:

Sorry, Chair.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Chief Minister, the policy is described by the Assistant Chief Minister as breaking new ground because it draws together the projects of different departments which are already under way or proposed for future delivery into one document. Do you agree with this assessment?

The Chief Minister:

Bearing in mind your Chairman’s previous comment, I think the short answer is yes.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Thank you.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

I approve of that answer.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Can you please point to any other aspects of this policy that you consider to be innovative or ground-breaking?

The Chief Minister:

That is quite a challenging question there. Look, I think in the longer term if you treat the fact that the technology side has to be coming and has to be brought more to the fore, I would expect coming out of that work there will be a number of innovations, et cetera. But I think the focus to date on this has been very much about getting the foundations into the right place first. Because otherwise you would be building your house on sand and we know what that does. So, again, the short position at this stage is the focus of the policy going forward - the initial policy, this phase of the policy if you like - is about getting the data, getting the systems, getting the tech in the right place, so that you can then, as we have said, over time firm up on what that direction is going to be.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Thank you. What input has the Council of Ministers requested from Health and Community Services on the impact on the care sector of the ageing population as part of the development of this policy?

The Chief Minister:

I will pass that to Sue because I think that is quite a level of detail there.

[13:45]

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Thank you. Health and Community Services are obviously involved with the general planning of the care sector. However, the thing that has been done very specifically in terms of ageing population is a specialist report from PWC, which has looked at all aspects of ageing on the population. That is in terms of the impacts on the labour force, so that is what extra staff will you need in different sectors, so obviously it takes into account the care sector, and then also the impact on demand. What is the demand of a population that is older? What is the balance between older people and younger people in terms of spending habits? All that work has been done. That is a detailed piece of work. We have yet to go into all the ins and outs of the implications of that, but that is what we will be working on in the next few months. Alongside, Health and Community Services are working on a workforce plan I think in this year, so we will bring those pieces of work together.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Thank you very much, Sue. I will now pass over to Deputy Truscott.

Deputy G.J. Truscott:

Thank you. You have spoken about the need to balance the economy and the environment in this policy. Do you believe there is sufficient focus on the environment and the need to maintain green spaces and the quality of life in the common population policy?

The Chief Minister:

I think the point there is it is what comes out of the policy that will then focus on the environment side. As we have said, I think we have been as clear as we can be, certainly in hearings and I believe in the policy as well, that we know it is that very careful balance between community, economy and environment. It has to be those 3 because if you ignore the environment then the joy of living on Jersey, in somewhere that is vibrant, that has green space and has nature around it and in it, would be lost and that would be a tragedy.

Deputy G.J. Truscott:

What consideration has been given to mental health and well-being of Islanders in the development of this policy?

The Chief Minister:

I think that is another one for Sue, if that is okay.

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

So, another piece of work that is under way at the present time is a review of incapacity benefits, and that will work very closely with the population policy in the coming years. So we know that we have people who fall out of the workplace due often to mental ill health because they cannot get the support they need at the right time. The Minister for Social Security has recently published a report on incapacity benefit review, which will lead to a lot of additional actions in the coming next 2 years, I think. So there is a very clear theme running through the population policy that we need to help the people who live in Jersey to be as productive as possible. That means paying attention to their mental and physical health needs as well as to provide them with the skills and training they need to do jobs that are going to be available in the future economy.

Deputy G.J. Truscott:

Thank you, Sue. I will hand it over to the Chair again.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Thank you, Deputy Truscott. What certainty are you able to provide to local businesses that the Government's current approach to inward migration will continue in lieu of actions which implement a new population policy?

The Chief Minister:

I do not know if I can add much to one of the earlier questions, which is around if you look at the actions we have taken in response to certain concerns and issues that have been raised, we have responded accordingly, which to my knowledge had assisted those particular sectors with their short-term issues. So I would hope from that perspective that we are demonstrating, yes, one has a longer-term goal but equally we are going to respond to some of those shorter-term requirements.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

I have had a comment made to me that there is again some confusion around which is the current approach in terms of are you currently using the current migration controls or have you already implemented in part the new controls, the 9-month, 4-year and 10-year permits, which have yet to be agreed by the States? What is the current approach?

The Chief Minister:

I think on the basis we are at a fairly detailed level and on the basis that he has been escaping and sitting quite quietly, I am going to hand that over to Neil, who has some of that wider depth of knowledge.

Senior Policy Officer (2):

Thank you, Chief Minister. So, currently we are utilising the existing Control of Housing and Work Law controls, both through business licensing and the use of H.A.W.A.G. (Housing and Work Advisory Group). The new Control of Housing and Work Law amendments, which have been put forward last week, come off the back of the agreement of P.137 by the States Assembly last year. We will not be moving forward with those until clearly they have been agreed by the States Assembly for debate, which I think is due 29th March.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Can you assure us that no permits have been issued under the new guidelines as such yet?

Senior Policy Officer (2):

Yes.

The Chief Minister:

Yes. Chair, apologies, as you know I am on a fairly tight timeframe today. I am getting quite close to having to need to go, so I do not know if you have a final question aimed at me and then perhaps I can hand over to Rowland to continue the hearing. Thank you for agreeing to this.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

The questions would have been for either of you and we do understand you have a busy diary, so if you do need to leave that is fine with us.

The Chief Minister:

Okay. Can I just thank you for the understanding on that? I appreciate it. Okay, I will leave you for the rest of the hearing.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

That is great and thanks for your appearance today as well. We will carry on with the next question. There is, as you know, considerable concern about the long-term goal of reducing reliance on inward migration and what this would mean for businesses who are currently struggling to recruit staff and trying to incentivise people to come and work here. Have you sought to communicate with businesses about how this would be managed in the longer term, Assistant Chief Minister?

Assistant Chief Minister:

I think the feedback from Jersey Business has been very positive in the response that they gave to you. I am not going into the detail because I am not blessed with the detail, but I believe the responses for the call for construction workers and hospitality workers by the Minister for Economic Development, Senator Farnham, proved the flexibility in order to listen to the demands of businesses in the short term as we go through this particular stage. I am not sure what I can add to that.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Are you using Jersey Business purely as your only conduit to local businesses or are you communicating directly with them about some of the concerns that they have?

Assistant Chief Minister:

No, we had workshops with Jersey Business. We had I think 3 workshops, 7 to 10 people. We are constantly open to any input of information that we have. So population@gov.je is a valid email address if anybody wants to respond to us. No, I am very confident we are out there. We are a small community. People have challenges; they do come to us, rest assured.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Minister, does that conduit exist through Economic Development, for example, and the Minister for Economic Development? Have you had any feedback through that department?

Assistant Chief Minister:

As I said, we are bringing together a long-term policy here and the short-term issues, of which there are many, are still handled by the respective Minister concerned, as we have discussed, with Housing, Education, and the Minister for Economic Affairs. So, if there are challenges that are needed we will receive those challenges. They will come back to us from Senator Farnham or the respective Minister. I am confident of that. The dialogue is open.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Okay. I will hand back to Deputy Ahier.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Assistant Chief Minister, among the concerns raised in the submissions to this review is that while there is a good focus on the role that education plays in the future, the proposal does not address the related increase in need for teachers to provide that training and education. In the view of one of the submissions, no proposals were cited which assist teachers moving to Jersey, improve their pay so that this is possible, or which address the significant number of staff moved towards retirement in the next 10 years. Which of the actions outlined for future Governments to take on will address these issues?

Assistant Chief Minister:

I do not want to be a stuck record but for the detail I can hand over to Sue. But I still go back to this is the platform for the future to ensure that we have policies in place that ensure we do have the balances going forward that I have discussed with you regularly so we are in control of any form of unforeseen circumstances that come our way, that we can manage them in a proper way. For the detail, I will hand back to Sue.

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

I have read with interest the submission from the teachers' representative and very good points are made, but these are points that will need to be built up over the coming years. So, we know that we need to attract the right kind of skilled labour to Jersey. We know that we need to address housing issues. We know that we need to significantly improve education and skills provision within the Island. So, these are a multiplicity of areas and I think the message today is that we are here to provide the foundations to those policies and that without those foundations any specific kind of tactical changes that we make will not last very long. So, absolutely we need to look at the tactical issues around teaching and teaching staff and teaching provision, but we have to get the structural

issues right first. So I think these are all good ideas for the future. We do not have plans to deal with them today but it will be a matter for the Minister for Education. Absolutely, these are things that need to be taken into account as we move forward with the policy.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Thank you. Assistant Chief Minister, submissions received from other industry representatives also focus on the need to be able to attract quality staff. Housing and accommodation is a factor for many. What broader assurances can you give, bearing in mind that you are not able to dictate the work of future Governments, that these longstanding issues will be addressed in a way that balances the need for inward migration with protection of the environment and the character of the Island?

Assistant Chief Minister:

I cannot give such assurances but what we can do within the policy is, as I said, set the platform - and I am going to say a phrase that I loathe, the direction of travel - for future Councils of Ministers and Assemblies. One thing I have learnt during this, and hopefully it comes through in the policy but I do not think it is written specifically, is we have to move from a buyer's to a seller's market. What I mean by that is we are all aware of the wonderful contribution the Bretons gave the farming industry lifting potatoes in the 1960s up until the time that they got a better offer at home when the car factories were opened in Nantes and Rennes, when we had a wonderful situation where for Jersey our economy was very strong and we could offer very attractive wages to people to come over. We were in control then. That has changed now. We are now in a global market where we have to attract the right skills that we need for this particular Island. We have to set up a platform to be attractive so if we do need teachers, everything you have described ... we will never eliminate our reliance on inward migration. There will always be skills we need. We have to make sure that we are the destination of choice for those migrants, those skills that we will always need. That hopefully will come through as a sort of unwritten but very strong message that comes through within the policy. Sue would like to add to that.

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Just in terms of housing, again one of our themes is the work between and within all the Council of Ministers. The Minister for Housing has issued a number of plans and projects which are going to address the housing supply. It is not a short-term fix by any means but the earmarking of additional sites for housing development and innovative ways of working with the construction industry to improve the speed at which new houses can be built, all of these things will help us address the situation of the housing supply and the issues that immigrants do face at the present time.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

With the increase in the housing supply, I ask the question again about the protection for the environment. How does the policy make the commitment to protect the environment?

Assistant Chief Minister:

I will leave Sue to answer but I may have a comment after Sue has finished.

[14:00]

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

I think to a certain extent there is very little we can do in terms of positively doing things with the environment to address the population policy. The things that we have to do are we have to address the way the economy works and the way the community works in order to protect the environment. To a certain extent, it is right that you do not see many environmental policies in the population policy because the population policy is about finding other things to do which will reduce the number of people that need to come to live here, making best use of those people that are here, getting our housing solutions correct, and all those things together will help us to protect the environment. If we do not do the economy actions, we do not do the skills actions, we do not do the housing actions, we will inevitably have a detrimental impact on our environment. If we do those actions, we can help to preserve the environment. We will have a better working economy, which will give us the public funding to support the environment, and we will have less pressure on the environment in terms of taking up land for housing. It should be noted, though, that people worry about building on green fields. The total amount of land devoted to housing in Jersey as a whole is really quite small and the Island Plan identifies some suitable sites for new housing developments. These are not going to have impacts on our precious natural environment. These are going to be developments which are close to existing built-up areas and have good services. We are doing everything we can, the Government as a whole is doing everything it can, to protect the environment, but most of those things it is doing through supporting other policies to work better.

Assistant Chief Minister:

We are about to debate the bridging Island Plan and that attempts to manage those tensions very clearly. As I said, this is the overriding policy which brings together all the Ministers, which brings together each individual ministry with overall common objectives. That is the ambition of it.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Thank you. I will pass over to Deputy Truscott now.

Deputy G.J. Truscott:

I will just ask for a steer from the Chair. It is 2.00 p.m., Chair. Do you want to continue? I do not know how members are fixed for time.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

It is another half hour's meeting. It is an hour and a half.

Deputy G.J. Truscott:

Apologies, I thought we were on an hour. There we go, that is fine.

Assistant Chief Minister:

Thank you for your effort there, Deputy Truscott.

Deputy G.J. Truscott:

Always considerate to the end. The next heading is rights of workers and their families. During this panel's review of the migration control policy at the beginning of last year, the panel were assured that human rights and the rights of children would be considered in the development of both those controls and the common population policy. Please can you describe how those rights have been incorporated in this policy?

Assistant Chief Minister:

Very much so. There is detail here and I will hand over to Sue, who is totally au fait with it.

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Last week we published the amendments to the Control of Housing and Work Law and in that document, in that proposition, we have included the children's rights impact assessment which has been prepared, which runs more or less across both the change to the law and the population policy. We have done a full impact assessment for children's rights. I think it is one of the first ones to be done. I think we slightly took the Greffe by surprise so we had to reissue it with the full document in it. That work has been done, so you can read all the work that has been done against looking at children's rights across a whole range of different areas. It is obviously an important point for the future and I believe you have spoken to the Children's Commissioner this morning. We continue to work closely with her office as to making sure that we are taking account of children in everything that we do.

Deputy G.J. Truscott:

Have any revisions to employment legislation and access to employment tribunals, which would ensure equity for all workers, been considered for inclusion in the actions to support the population policy?

Assistant Chief Minister:

Carry on, Sue.

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

I think you are referring to the submission that you received from Liberate, and again they make good points. The specific points in terms of access to the employment tribunal will be a matter for the Minister for Social Security and to a certain extent the Minister for Home Affairs, where it is talking about the rights of workers under work permits. But again it has been very useful information that your panel has gathered and the Assistant Chief Minister will be passing those comments back to the Minister for Social Security and the Minister for Home Affairs. I think just at first glance some of the issues that they are raising are very sensible and I am sure can be dealt with very quickly. These are not perhaps the level of detail that you would expect to find in the common population policy itself in terms of improving the quality of information on our website. I am sure we can attend to that without much delay.

Deputy G.J. Truscott:

Thank you. Senator Pallett, you have a question?

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Yes. I am pleased that there is the children's rights impact assessment with the amendments to the Housing and Work Law. Is there any particular reason that on such a big policy as the common population policy that a children's rights impact assessment was not included within this policy? Also, obviously the common population policy is intended that it is updated each year. Is it an intention to include a children's rights impact assessment on each update each year?

Assistant Chief Minister:

I am going to leave Sue to carry on with this one because I think what we are actually talking about is the process with the new policy and how we work that through the Greffe.

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

There are 2 things. One impact assessment has been written. It covers both the law and the policy. Apologies that we have added it to the second document rather than the first document but that is the way that publications come through. So that does apply to both sides of it. In terms of future years, I think what the common population policy talks about and asks approval for is the integration of future population policies within the annual Government Plans. That is going to be really important because the Government Plan sets out the Government's plan for the following year and you want the population policy, as the Chief Minister and Assistant Chief Minister have talked about, to be at

the heart of Government actions. So it is really important that those things are fully integrated. So I do not think at the minute there is an intention to write a C.R.I.A. (children's rights impact assessment) for the Government Plan each year, but if that was to be the case in the future I am sure that would be the way it would come through. So, we are not intending to do them at the minute separately each year but they would form part of the overall Government Plan process.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

So if there was any change in policy in regards to population there is not a current intention to either consult with young people or include a children's rights impact assessment in what those changes may well be?

Assistant Chief Minister:

I do not think that is what we are saying at all because that is certainly not the intent.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Can you clarify?

Assistant Chief Minister:

I can pass that back to Sue, if I may, but that is certainly not the intent.

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

For example, the next stage of work is going to be very important and we will want to include the views of children and young people because that is developing the detailed guidelines and the detailed regulations that are going to sit below the primary law. So when you have had a chance to look at the primary law in detail, you will see that it does not include very much detail. It creates the framework, the structure, which will allow the new types of permissions to flow through. It tries to simplify some of the wording, but basically it is a vehicle through which you can create regulations which will do the actions which the States have already agreed to. So I think absolutely we are going to continue to work with the Children's Commissioner and with representatives and young people themselves, and the next stage of the law, which will be done during 2022, will have more tangible impacts on children and families. It will be very important to get the views of people at the time as to how they see those changes coming through.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

But now we are doing it. We are doing exactly what a lot of people are getting confused about, confusing the population policy with the migration controls. In terms of the population policy, there is not a children's rights impact assessment. Our population policy will be updated each year in the

Government Plan. Is there any intention to include a children's rights assessment in changes to the population policy, not changes to the migration controls, the population policy?

Assistant Chief Minister:

Sue, do you want to carry on with that? I am just ... I am not sure where ...

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

In terms of very important legal rights around human rights and children's rights, when the regulations that lie underneath the Control of Housing and Work Law are published, we will publish a full human rights assessment of the regulations. Now, you do not normally do that. You only provide E.C.H.R. (European Convention on Human Rights) statements for primary law. Acknowledging the importance of the regulations in this particular case, we will publish a full E.C.H.R. statement for the regulations and I would imagine we will publish a full C.R.I.A. at the time for the regulations as well. So that is the regulations under the Control of Housing and Work Law. In terms of the population policy, the population policy is going to be a very broad beast running across many different areas. As I ...

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Sorry, including children, which is why I am asking the question.

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Children, yes, absolutely, of course. The plan as it is currently laid out is to incorporate future population policy actions into future Government Plan actions. I think the way in which those actions are looked at and consulted upon will be part of the Government Plan process. That is what I am saying. That is still to be fully decided. We are absolutely open to suggestions as to how to run that process properly and appropriately across all segments of the population.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Okay. Well, maybe we will make that a recommendation, we will see.

Deputy G.J. Truscott:

Continuing on, I think you have pretty much answered question 20. I will move on to 21. Apart from acknowledging the view raised in the public consultation that Jersey could be more welcoming to those who come to work here, how is this tangibly addressed in the population policy?

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

If you look back to some of the early work that was published around this area, there is an action to look at migrants' rights. We started this work towards the end of 2019 and unfortunately this is one

of the areas that was disrupted by COVID. We have not had a chance yet to come back to that area, but that is absolutely the intention to do so. Our focus for 2022 will be on developing the regulations, as I have just talked about, because that is the mainstay of how the new controls will work. As soon as that work is well in progress, we will go back to the migrant work review and we are keen to make sure that migrants have a consistent and simple approach to their rights when they arrive here. At the minute there are many different rights and things that come in when you have been here for 6 months, a year, 2 years, 3 years, 5 years, and this can be very confusing. I am sure many migrants are missing out on some things that they are entitled to do because they have not realised that after 2 years they are entitled to something extra. So we need to have a clearer approach to that so that migrants understand exactly what they are entitled to, to make the rules simpler, and to make sure that migrants get all the rights that they should have from day one. Migrants in the future will be a very valued part of our society because we are trying to limit the number we need. The ones that do come will be absolutely essential to Jersey for our economy and our society, so it is really important that they are well looked after when they are here.

Deputy G.J. Truscott:

That is great, thank you. It sounds like it is part of the workstream and it is most valuable. I will hand you back to the Chair. Thank you.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Actually, Deputy, I think it is me, but that is fine.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Correct.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Assistant Chief Minister, what direct and targeted engagement has taken place with the consuls representing foreign nationals in Jersey to determine the impact of a future population policy on people who come to live and work here?

Assistant Chief Minister:

I will ask Michelle to give the details, but we have engaged with all of them and had submissions with all of them, Romanian, Polish and Portuguese in particular. Michelle, would you like to follow up on the detail of that?

Senior Policy Officer (1):

Yes, sure. We had meetings with the Polish consul and the Romanian consul, but we engaged with all of the consuls who are listed on the GOV.JE website, so that is all of the honorary consuls, Portugal, Italy, France. There are a number.

[14:15]

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Was there representation from the Philippines? I understand there are a lot of Filipinos working in the farming industry.

Senior Policy Officer (1):

There was not any direct contact, no. I am not aware if they have a consul, but if they do that is somebody that we will definitely be keen to talk to.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Thank you. Assistant Chief Minister, in your view how does the proposed policy support diversity and further the aim for Jersey to be an increasingly inclusive community?

Assistant Chief Minister:

I am sitting here with this huge document trying to work out the specifics in answer to very specific questions. I am afraid I cannot memorise all of that so I will go with the approach that has been taken by myself, the Council of Ministers and my policy officers. Sorry about this, who is echoing us? Sorry, Deputy Ahier, can we just sort this one out here? I will waffle for a bit to make sure I am not getting an echo. No, I am not getting an echo anymore. This Island has survived and thrived on inward migration for generations after generations after generations. We have a positive historical record of accepting those from many different cultures, creeds, races, et cetera, to this Island, extending it now to, as you have just mentioned, those from the Philippines who are helping us with our farming industry. I am a religious migrant from the southwest France as part of the Huguenots. We all arrived here at some stage and we have all been made welcome. Some of us have enjoyed the short-term benefits, earned some money and gone home and some of us have dropped anchor and stayed. I see no reason why that culture should change. This Island is a welcoming Island. I see no reason for that to change.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

How important was support for diversity felt to be in the delivery of this policy?

Assistant Chief Minister:

It is very important. It is today. It is important. Sue, do you want to put more meat on that?

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

I think, Deputy, that the Council of Ministers understand the importance of diversity across all policies, so I think the answer is that the population policy itself does not address diversity specifically but all the policies that sit underneath it include diversity as one of their major commitments.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Thanks very much. Now I will pass back to the Chair.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

One of the panel's earlier submissions to its review expressed the following view on behalf of migrant workers, and I quote: "It is noted that the Island has an ageing population and needs younger people to look after them and expand the economy. Most of us are in the younger age category and many have young children, so we are puzzled that it is made difficult for us to become equal residents with others, especially since we provide such a valuable workforce where workers are most needed." How does the population policy seek to address this?

Assistant Chief Minister:

I am not sure I get that. We have a stated aim of the common strategic plan to reduce our dependency on inward migration. We also, as I made it clear, want to have the balance of those particular tensions. I do not think that means ... I think this came from ... was it the Romanian consul? I think it came as an observation from the Romanian consul, who we met and spent time with and who gave a very valuable input and shared with us mutually how important their contribution is to our Island. But whether it is Romanians or anybody else, we have to somehow reduce this dependence and introducing the Control of Housing and Work Law amendments, which we will follow up in a year with the controls that we will put in place, that is where those decisions will be made. But that does not mean to say that there is any less recognition of ensuring that we have the inbound skills to protect our future. Sue wants to add to that.

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

One of the issues with the Romanian consul's submission and from other people as well is that E.U. (European Union) citizens are now subject to the Brexit rules. Although Jersey is fully in charge of its common population policy and the Control of Housing and Work Law it is not put in charge of its immigration policies. These come from the U.K. (United Kingdom). We form part of the common travel area and while that situation remains we will need to recognise some of the barriers that are put in place in terms of immigrants coming from outside the common travel area, including Romania. So we will do our best within the rules that Jersey can have control over to make sure that things

are as clear as possible, but it is not possible for us to override the main controls provided by the U.K.

Assistant Chief Minister:

Good point, Sue. I think Neil wants to add to that.

Senior Policy Officer (2):

Further to Sue's point, we work within the immigration rules of the U.K. insomuch as we wish to be part of the common travel area. So Jersey does control its own immigration rules but we follow those of the U.K. because that is an integral part of being a member of the common travel area.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Okay. When it comes to welcoming migrants and making them feel that they are part of Jersey society, are we going to deal with the issue of healthcare? It is an issue that was brought up this morning in the public hearing with the Children's Commissioner, some of the unfairness around the provision of health service to those that come and work in the Island. Is that an issue that is being addressed within this population policy or more generally?

Assistant Chief Minister:

I think I have been clear from day one on my particular stance on that. I think it is unreasonable to ask people to come here, certainly in jobs that could be detrimental to their health, indeed dangerous, in construction or even catering in the heat of a kitchen ... yes, we have a provision to look after people in an emergency but we do not give them ongoing care. I am totally against that. Whether we extend that service to people working over here with a social security card that Health and Community Services delivers that service or whether we work with employees to ensure they have an insurance-based scheme I am not anywhere near the detail on that, but I absolutely recognise - I have been consistent on that from day one - that we must look after the health of those people who come to this Island to bring their skills and support our economy and support our society.

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Just to refer back to my previous comment, as the Assistant Chief Minister says, it is a really important part of the migrants' rights issue and that will be fully covered in the review that will start later on this year.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Okay. A simple question: do you believe, Assistant Chief Minister, that those coming to work in the Island, even if it was for a 9-month period, should have the right to bring their children with them?

Assistant Chief Minister:

I think we have an immigration challenge there. Who would like to answer that?

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

I will start and Neil will correct me in a minute. **[Laughter]** So the Control of Housing and Work Law does not now and is never in the future going to have any controls on children coming to Jersey. That is not its purpose at all. Its purpose is to control people who work in Jersey, so that is adults who work in Jersey, and the occupation of houses again by adults taking on tenancies or buying properties. The restrictions on dependants arriving in Jersey is part of the immigration system and, as we explained before, therefore, for short-term work permits that last less than a year the key principle is that a worker coming for less than a year does not bring dependants with them.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

I suppose a follow-on question from that would be: considering that the opportunities for employing migrant workers from all across the world have certainly diminished over the period of COVID and Brexit, do you not feel that is going to have a knock-on effect and might make us not particularly attractive to some countries?

Assistant Chief Minister:

I can agree with that but I am going to go back to my situation. We have to learn to sell. We have to make our offering to persuade people to come here attractive. Now, if you think of the numbers of people who move globally around the world as economic migrants, I do not know how many millions it is. We do not need many of them to tick all the boxes to encourage them to come to this particular Island. That is up to us. That is up to us to provide the right environment for the very few as a bigger picture that we need to attract to this particular Island.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Do you not agree that if we are not seen to be fair to migrant workers, offer them the best opportunities, that Jersey could be seen to be a place where migrant workers do not want to come and live and, in fact, even put Jersey's reputation at risk?

Assistant Chief Minister:

Yes.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Okay. That is a simple answer. Moving on, a slightly different subject: how has the Island's continued policy to appeal to high net worth individuals through Locate Jersey to come and live in Jersey been factored into the population policy?

Assistant Chief Minister:

It varies between 10 and 20 people a year on average, 15 people a year. It has not had a major consideration because of the very small numbers of people. However, if you were to put a recommendation as a result of this that we review it ongoing in the next iterations of the population policy, we would welcome that feedback.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

I would certainly question whether it is 15 people a year. Sometimes it has been 30 families rather than 15 people, so it is not a small number of people. In particular, how has the knock-on impact on the housing market in Jersey been evaluated or will it be evaluated? That is in regards to the 2(1)(e) high net worth individual policy.

Assistant Chief Minister:

You are talking about my comment on this or within the population policy?

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Within the population policy.

Assistant Chief Minister:

Well, again, the answer is the same thing. It is perceived it is very low numbers and we will review it at your recommendation should you submit a recommendation accordingly.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Do you not believe that the housing market has been inflated by the introduction of the 2(1)(e) system, the 1(1)(k) system, and that has fuelled the market through various areas, including the buy-to-let market?

Assistant Chief Minister:

Are you asking me as a Member of the Assembly or as on the population policy?

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Population policy.

Assistant Chief Minister:

Then I will go back to the same answer. We have not reviewed that and we will be very happy to receive a recommendation from you in order to do so.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Do you not believe it should have been evaluated?

Assistant Chief Minister:

We have covered an enormous amount in a very, very short space of time. This is a big policy that has involved engagement with all members of the Council of Ministers. We have received input on surveys from 1,700 people. We have done 8 focus groups, I think, one of which you attended, Senator Pallett. I do not have the list in front of me of the amount of engagement we have done. If we have fallen short in one area, then I apologise, but as I said, this is an iterative work in progress and any feedback that you wish to give us on areas that we might not have covered as detailed as you would like, we will be delighted and welcome the opportunity to take it up going forward.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

I have from me one last question. It is again a slightly different subject. I think we are certainly going to have to fill future needs gaps in the Island, skills gaps. I think we would all agree that. If we are asking children to maybe reassess or maybe to change their aspirations for what they may do in the workplace in future, including what they might study in higher education, how do you see that conversation between Government and young people and how that might pan out in future if we are asking them to fill those?

[14:30]

At the moment they are free to do what they wish but we may need to try to fill those skills gaps. How would you see Government intervening in that or assisting in that?

Assistant Chief Minister:

This is carrots, is it not? This is all about the carrot. This is all about maintaining Jersey as a great place for the young to develop. Not everyone will. A large percentage, we learnt this during the focus groups when we were meeting the young people there, a lot of them see their future outside of the Island. Obviously, high property prices is being polarised at the moment, but a lot of them see that. We heard it quite clearly that they wish to pursue careers which are not exciting in this particular Island. I think we talked about one person who wanted to be at the top end of the media world and said her only choices over here were the rather small by comparison media outlets that we have. She had loftier ambitions than that and wanted to go and plough her trade. That is what is happening. The young, we are learning very clearly, see greater excitement in foreign shores. What we have to do is to let them go if they want to go and then monitor them and track our diaspora to make sure we can encourage them back when the time is right for them and monitor the skills that they are developing elsewhere and match that against the shortfall that we have and do some

selling and produce the carrots for that. That is what we have to do. I am not in a situation of pigeonholing certain kids to be shoved to certain sort of education which fits the needs of the Island. We have been doing that for 20 years in the finance sector and it is not acceptable. We have to let our young fly and blossom and bloom with their own specific skills, their own ambitions, and then encourage them back, whether it is appropriate or not, encourage them back. They are our Islanders. We want them.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Senator Vallois tried to address this issue through the Big Education Conversation. I do not know if you were aware of that. That seems to have lost traction. Is that something that will be picked up and maybe brought forward again?

Assistant Chief Minister:

It sounds very interesting. I have lost track of it as well. Sue has a comment on that.

Head of Policy, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Yes, the Big Education Conversation was a very good project but there has obviously been change in the political leadership of the Education Department since then. The new Minister has equally good ideas for going forward and I think there is a very significant education reform programme coming along for both higher education and secondary education and skills as well. I think there is significant work to be done in all those areas.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Okay. We look forward to that. I have no further questions. Deputy Ahier, Deputy Truscott, anything you want to add?

Deputy G.J. Truscott:

Nothing further, thank you, Chair.

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

No, likewise, Chair.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Okay. Assistant Chief Minister and officers, can I thank you for your time this afternoon? It has been a long hour and a half, I know, but it has been informative, unless you have any other further comments to add, Assistant Chief Minister?

Assistant Chief Minister:

No. Thank you for your engagement. While we are a little bit reluctant to have 2 public hearings for one policy, it has proved great co-operation between us. It is important that the Island understands what we are doing and everybody challenges everybody, because that creates the best outcome. I thank you for your positive engagement with that. I believe we have lodged the Control of Housing and Work Law amendments and just to say we will be clearly delighted to meet with you at your convenience at some stage before obviously it is debated. I thank you for your engagement and participation which has been very productive for all of us.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

Thank you. Yes, we have noted that the Control of Housing and Work Law amendments have been lodged and we will, I am sure, be in touch very shortly to discuss how we want to move forward on that. Again, I thank you for your attendance this afternoon. We are slightly over time. Can I thank all those that have listened in today? I am sure it has been informative to them and I think the more we discuss this the better the understanding becomes. I will bring the hearing to a close and I wish everybody a good afternoon. Thank you.

[14:34]