

**REPLY BY THE CHIEF MINISTER TO A QUESTION ASKED PURSUANT TO
RULE 6 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE BY DEPUTY LAURIE QUERIPPEL**

Question

I, and I'm sure many of our fellow Islanders were grateful to hear that the Policy Council have apparently committed to provide Guernsey households with a plain language guide explaining the implications of the debate that took place in June 2013 in relation to the report entitled Managing the Size and Make up of the Island's Population.

Could you kindly advise when this document will be available for public consumption and confirm that hard copies will indeed be delivered to every Guernsey household?

Answer

I can confirm that the Policy Council has agreed to produce plain English guides in relation to the proposed new population management system and that such guides will be delivered to all Guernsey households. In order to put that into context, it may be helpful for me to explain where we are in the process of developing the new system.

In June 2013, the States debated a series of recommendations, contained in Billet d'État XI 2013, that set the guiding principles for how the size and make-up of the Island's population might be managed in the future. On the first page of that Billet, the Policy Council stated that:

“While the States is invited to vote on the core components of the new regime, which will form the framework for new legislation, and to agree to a broad approach to its governance and management, one or more further reports will be submitted for approval in due course in the form of detailed proposals built on these foundations.”

Later in the report, the Policy Council stated that:

“Given the complexity of this workstream, it is clear that there is still much work to do in order to:

- Develop the detailed proposals,
- Consult with the public on those detailed proposals,
- Establish the policies which will govern the day-to-day decision making,
- Obtain various approvals of the States,
- Draft and approve the necessary legislation, and
- Establish the administrative arrangements to implement the new regime.”

Some commentators have suggested that the development of the new system has been completed and therefore believe that its implications can be clearly defined. However, the above passages make it clear that this is not yet the case.

Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly for some, the issue of how we “transition” from the Housing Control Law to the new population management system cannot be considered until the fundamental detail of the new regime has been developed and agreed. Transition arrangements will involve considering how each and every individual living in the Island will be affected as we move to the new system. This is a significant piece of work that will require public consultation and further States debate.

It may also be worth me pointing out that following significant public feedback during the last six months, the Policy Council has been through a process of reconsidering the recommendations regarding Long Term Residency that were agreed in June last year. This process has included reviewing all of the public feedback received on this particular issue, as well as workshops for States Members to consider alternatives. The Policy Council hopes that this will be debated at the July States meeting and is currently developing an associated public communication plan.

Because there are several stages for the new proposals to go through before we can implement the new population management system fully, the Policy Council is very conscious that it will be helpful to explain key elements at each stage in easy-to-understand formats accessible to the public in various ways. At the final stage, these can be brought together into one guide to help steer individuals through the new system.

Question

Once the document has been made available to the public how much time will be allowed between its distribution and the next report and States debate in regard to the issue of population?

Between the distribution of the document and the next debate will the Policy Council be organising a series of public meetings and presentations to enable members of the public to ask further questions and contribute their views?

Answer

With respect to the States debate on Long Term Residency expected to take place in July this year, a leaflet explaining what is to be debated will be sent to all households to coincide with the publication of the July Billet d’État. This provides a period of just over 5 weeks. During that period, the Policy Council will be arranging public presentations of the proposals, at which there will be opportunity for members of the public to ask questions.

With respect to future debates on the detailed proposals for the new population management system, the Policy Council is fully committed to involving, and communicating fully with, the public. Once the further detailed proposals have been developed, the Policy Council will be in a position to consider the specific communications programme required and I have no doubt that public consultation and presentations will form part of that programme.

Date of Receipt of Question: 27th May 2014

Date of Reply: 5th June 2014