

2018.11.20

6 Connétable D.W. Mezbourian of St. Lawrence of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding the place of the Customs and Immigration Service within the Justice and Home Affairs Department: [OQ.187/2018]

Will the Minister explain why the target operating model for the Justice and Home Affairs Department has changed from that of June 2018, which included a customs and immigration service, to a new model in November 2018, which excludes a customs and immigration service?

The Connétable of St. Clement (The Minister for Home Affairs):

The target operating model published on Monday last week, is intended to be a starting point for discussions around the transition from the current Home Affairs operation to the new Justice and Home Affairs Department structure. This provides an opportunity to see if we can enhance the level of collaboration, co-operation and cohesiveness and, indeed, integration of our services where appropriate. I should make it absolutely clear that the functions of the customs and immigration service will, of course, continue to be carried out in the most efficient and effective way possible.

3.6.1 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

I am concerned that the target operating model will reduce front line services in customs and immigration. How will this assimilation improve service delivery, in particular, the protection of our borders?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

I have made it very clear during the speech I made when I first bid for this job and subsequently that my line in the sand, as it were, is that whatever operational model we have, no reduction in the level of service to the public of Jersey will be tolerated. In fact, with a new operating model, new efficiencies and new co-operation, the removing of the silo mentality, I strongly expect an enhanced service through all the services that come under the Home Affairs Department.

3.6.2 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

What is the percentage of customs officers leaving between now and next June?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

I am sorry but I do not know and I really am not quite sure if I understand the question.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Well, I think, Senator, in fairness it is not a question that is within the area covered by moving from one target operating model to another, the specific numbers, but the Minister does not know the answer. Do you want to ask a different question or a differently phrased question?

3.6.3 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Yes, if I might. The Minister has said that he does not want a reduction in the service provided by customs and immigration. It is alleged that 20 per cent of the officers will be leaving between now and next June and I wonder how he is going to maintain that service if this number of people leave.

The Connétable of St. Clement:

I really am not prepared to comment on rumours which have not yet reached my ears or to answer a hypothetical question.

3.6.4 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

I am sure the Minister will know that basic level training for customs and immigration officers is, in fact, 3 years basic level. So really to try and follow up on the Senator's question, the Minister will know of resignations from the service. My question is: if he is asked to, will he approve recruitment to fill those vacancies within the service?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

The customs and immigration service, along with the police service, the fire service and the ambulance service, are essential for the well-being of the people of this Island, and I have made it absolutely clear I will take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that those services maintain at least the level of excellent service they offer and wherever possible to enhance it. I think it can be enhanced with increased co-operation and collaboration between all of those services.