

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE FINANCE AND ECONOMICS COMMITTEE
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ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 10th MAY 2005

Question

Would the President –

- (a) explain why the public sector authorised workforce has increased by 89 for the year ending December 2004, at a time when the private sector is decreasing?
- (b) confirm whether this increase is consistent with the Five Year Vision for the Public Sector, approved by the States in May 2004, and, if so, how?
- (c) confirm when the Committee intends reducing the authorised public sector headcount limit?

Answer

- (a) One has to be very careful to understand the terminology used in presenting the annual manpower statistics. It is certainly true that the authorised public sector workforce has increased by 89 for the year ending December 2004, and R.C.20/2005 clearly shows that the growth has been primarily in the fields of education and health, two core social services where manpower plans had been approved over an extended period

However, whilst the Deputy asks about the number of authorised posts, by far the more illuminating statistics that fall from the Public Sector Manpower Report for December 2004, are in respect of the actual number of employees.

As at December 2004 the data apparently shows there to be 21 more employees than at December 2003. However, after allowing for the Met Office staff transferred from the Airport to Environment and Public Services during that year, the underlying figures show an actual fall in headcount over 2004, albeit only 1. (Trading Committees are not included in the Manpower Report).

This fall was despite the actual staffing for the Education, Sport and Culture and Health and Social Services Committees increasing by 72, for reasons I have already explained. It, therefore, follows that there must have been a corresponding reduction in other areas.

- (b) The fall in actual employees and authorised headcount cap, outside of the frontline service growth awarded by the States, reflects the efficiencies which Departments are having to achieve as a result of the tight spending controls overall.

Those tight spending controls demand that more is done with the same or less resources, which is entirely consistent with the Five Year Vision for the Public Sector approved by the States in May 2004, which requires efficiency savings of £20 million per annum by 2009. That cash saving will inevitably result in manpower savings over the period.

Those significant efficiencies and the associated reduction in headcount will occur over the five years to 2009, the first year of which is 2005. Although it predates the five year plan, the 2004 figures represent a worthwhile preliminary move towards a better, simpler and cheaper public service, and shows firm commitment by all Committees involved.

- (c) The Committee fully expects that as a result of the Five Year Vision for the Public Sector and a reduced funding allocation there will be cuts to both the authorised manpower levels and actual numbers employed this year.

Whilst the analysis of authorised posts is not very meaningful, the important statistic being the actual number of staff employed, there have been instances where Committees have hung on to unfilled posts, and I will be approaching all Committees to ensure that unnecessary vacant posts are returned.