

3.13 The Deputy of St. John of the Chief Minister regarding the number of local applicants for the post of Director of Human Resources and local succession planning:

Would the Minister advise how many local applicants applied for the post of Director of Human Resources, whether the historical Civil Service exam system which existed to pick out high fliers early on is still operational, and whether any local candidates are currently being trained for chief officer positions? If this is not the case, explain why.

Senator T.A. Le Sueur (The Chief Minister):

The post of Director of Human Resources for the States of Jersey was advertised in January 2009, both within the Island and nationally in the U.K. There were 2 Jersey residents out of 29 applicants, one of whom who had only recently moved to the Island and was not “locally qualified”. Neither of the applicants were existing States of Jersey employees. Four people were short-listed for interview, all of whom had substantial H.R. experience over a number of years, together with the appropriate qualifications. The Civil Service exam system ceased over 30 years ago during the 1970s and there have been a number of initiatives introduced since then to deliver the States commitment to developing and retaining staff. There are 2 comprehensive development programmes running at present. The Future Leaders Programme which commenced in 2007 and currently has 11 participants which is designed to develop future senior managers and chief officers, and the Modern Manager Programme, which is an 18 month programme aimed at developing middle and senior managers, which has 191 registered participants since that scheme commenced in September 2006. All appointments are made within the framework of the Appointments Commission Code of Practice which requires that normally open competition takes place for each post. We do have a succession and career management policy and discussions are continuing with the Appointments Commission about how the States succession plans can be tailored to meet the needs of that policy.

3.13.1 The Deputy of St. John:

In my time on the Public Services Committee of the day - which has been succeeded by T.T.S. - we put in place a training programme for chief officers of which the current chief officer, who is in fact about to move on from his position, was one of the successful trainees. Has that department taken any steps to train a successor to the current post holder given that he has just been elevated to another post within the States, and if not, why has a succession planning policy not been put in place in that department.

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

The training programme which the Deputy refers has, as I said, been superseded by the Future Leaders Programme but having the same objectives just delivered in a different and more up to date way. Having had that chief officer who was successfully trained under that scheme promoted - and I think that validates the benefit of that scheme - we shall now be trying to do the same thing to ensure that a future chief officer can also achieve the same objectives. It is an ongoing process, at the current time none of the cohort of that programme is in a position to take that level of responsibility at this stage.

3.13.2 The Deputy of St. John:

Given that the chief officer has been in place for quite a number of years within T.T.S. and his senior staff within that department are very, very able, can the Minister explain why they are still looking outside the Island, although they have had a selection procedure, and identified what I call a high flier, why they are still looking outside of the Island for a person to take over that particular department?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

We have indeed got some very good staff at T.T.S. and we have a person in place currently acting as chief officer who is a very sound, and I believe will deliver a very good service in that department. But I repeat, our objectives within any appointment is to get the best person for the post, for a challenging role. In order to do so one needs to be able to validate and get regional experience from different candidates with different skills. Ideally, and in many cases, it would be possible, for a local resident candidate to deliver and demonstrate the same or even better levels of skills than his competitors.

3.13.3 The Deputy of St. Martin:

I am a little bit concerned about it because we continually find we are always employing someone from outside the Island. Would the Chief Minister not agree that surely if someone ... if he confirmed that there was a deputy in this particular occasion, in this particular area, but why are deputies not promoted? It always seems to be that - I am not talking about Deputies of the States - I am talking about a deputy to the post holder, why are these deputies not ever promoted on to taking over the full role and was there a deputy in this particular case who was overlooked?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

It is certainly not the case or the intention that deputy chief officers should not be promoted if they meet the criteria. Equally I like to think that deputy chief officers from one department might well move to a different department, but I do stress the need to get the right person for the post, and in many cases I have to say, perhaps somewhat sadly, that there is a reluctance of some senior staff, especially to go forward for promotion to take the top jobs, and that is, as I say, disappointing to me and I think something that we do need to look at as an Employment Board to try to improve upon.

3.13.4 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Would the Chief Minister not concede that despite years and years of best intentions these policies have always ground to a halt? For example, rather than appoint out of Island chief officers for 5 years, they come for 5 and then they are transformed into full permanent appointments thereby losing the benefit of passing on their experience to other senior managers. Will he also not acknowledge that inevitably - and this is a difficult issue - a person from outside has a broader experience and will always generally speaking win over a local candidate, but where they will not win over is on the ability to handle the local situation and the politics of the local situation: issues which have often been underestimated. Would he therefore not accept that the system needs to be applied in a much more nuanced way and people should not be imported and for years thereafter block positions? **[Approbation]**

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

It is a very difficult task which any Appointments Board has in trying to select a single candidate. They have to match the abilities and the local skills that a person

can bring which an outsider cannot bring to cases where an outsider may have more experience and more to offer. One has to set down criteria for any job application, job specification, and I am sure that Appointment Boards when selecting a candidate have to take into account and balance those criteria in a very difficult way. It is not an enviable job which is why I believe it is equally, if not more important, that the task is overseen by the Appointments Commission which can be independent and can validate the actual selection process. Other than that, all I can do is maintain that although we do not always achieve the success which I would like, and I am sure other Members would like, we do have success from time to time and we should be grateful and rejoice in them.

3.13.5 The Deputy of St. John:

Given that we have some very high fliers within the engineering field at T.T.S., and I mean high fliers because they know the system that works in Jersey, whether it is our waste system, whether it is our incinerator, *et cetera*, they are specialist in their field in engineering within Jersey, which is totally different to running a single system in the U.K. where you are just responsible for one area. These people are multi-tasked. Can the Minister explain who writes the job description when they go off Island and are the people who apply locally, would they have, shall we say, the extra qualification that somebody who writes a job description, and I have seen these done in the past in my time on the committee, but somebody who writes a job description adds in something a little different that the local person will not have within their C.V. (curriculum vitae) and that really always worried me. I want to know from the Minister that we are getting like from like, that the job description that was given to the members here who applied for the position several months ago are having the same job description advertised in the U.K. and it has not been altered in any way?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

The Deputy makes some serious allegations there which I would like him to validate privately with me at some early stage in the future. If there is any evidence that the job description has been flawed or biased or tampered with in any way in order to eliminate local applicants then that is certainly against my principles, against those of the States Employment Board, and I think those of the Members of this House. I believe job descriptions are made in a fair and valid way and should be validated also by the Minister and the chief officer concerned. But I think in his question the Deputy raises maybe some fundamental difficulties. Yes, we do have some splendid engineering staff at the Department of Engineering Skills, staff in other departments with technical skills. The skills one needs to be a competent engineer are not always the same skills as one needs to be a competent chief officer, and I think there is a danger here in trying to simply transfer skills from one regime into another, and all I can do is emphasise the fact that the selection process is done rigorously and, in my view, if it can be improved further we will do but I think that it is not as biased as the Deputy would have me believe at the moment on little or no actual fact.