

3.19 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier of the Chief Minister regarding the establishment of an independent office to consider representations from ‘whistleblowers’:

Will the Chief Minister be bringing proposals to the Assembly for the establishment of an independent office to consider representations from whistleblowers and, if so, when?

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

There is a current policy on serious concerns which has been in existence for a number of years. It allows employees to raise concerns about issues which they believe are contrary to the public interest and the normal route for raising concerns is through the line management chain. However, we are developing a new policy, a part of which should include a provision for a member of staff to be able to raise a concern with an independent person if they feel the need to do so. The policy has also been revised to give clearer time scales for addressing concerns and to designate a suitable independent person to ensure that the process is open and transparent. The revised draft policy is on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting of the States Employment Board, and once it has been agreed I can confirm it will be circulated to all States Members.

3.19.1 Senator S. Syvret:

It may be of interest to the Chief Minister and the Assembly to know that I have nearly completed a draft report and proposition which will be asking the Assembly to agree to the introduction of a Public Interest Disclosure Act - I am discussing this with the Greffier at the moment - which will cover the right to make public interest disclosures of all employees, not just public sector ones. Would the Chief Minister be minded to support this, given that the legislation has been in existence and working quite successfully in the United Kingdom for some years?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

I have no objection to the policy in principle but without seeing what proposition the Senator is lodging, I am not in a position to say whether I would support it or otherwise.

3.19.2 Senator A. Breckon:

I wonder if the Chief Minister is aware that the Comptroller and Auditor General does have an avenue for people who do wish to express such matters that might be in the public interest?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur:

I am, and I believe these arrangements should be put on a more formal basis and that is why the Employment Board will be considering that matter.

The Bailiff:

Very well, that concludes oral questions with notice.