

STATES OF JERSEY



TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT PARTNERSHIP: DISBANDMENT

Lodged au Greffe on 18th March 2003
by the Economic Development Committee

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

to refer to their Acts of 23rd November 1994 and 5th December 2002 concerning the establishment of an agency known as the Training and Employment Partnership and to agree that the agency should be disbanded with immediate effect.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

REPORT

Introduction

The States, on 5th December 2002, agreed to transfer responsibility for the Training and Employment Partnership (TEP) from the Employment and Social Security Committee to the Economic Development Committee with effect from 1st January 2003. The report that accompanied the proposition (P.197/2002) contained reference to the agreement by the current TEP Board to act as a “caretaker body” to ensure that the function continued seamlessly and was properly managed during any transition phase.

The Economic Development Committee has given careful consideration to the issue of how best to deliver the aim and objectives of the TEP which were included within P.197/2002 as Annex B and are appended as the **Annex** to this report. Having consulted the Chairman of the TEP Board, the Committee is of the firm view that the aim and objectives will best be met by disbanding the Board and integrating its functions fully within the Strategic Development Directorate of the Economic Development Department, which is charged with taking a holistic view of the development of strategies for the Island’s industries, a fundamental component of which must be raising skill levels and improving business performance.

Background

Since the days of the Industry Organising Committee in 1999, which developed the proposals for the establishment of an Industries Committee, there has been a strong feeling in many quarters that responsibility for training for industry would be more appropriately placed within the remit of the new Committee at some stage. Indeed, the terms of reference for the Industries Committee, as agreed by the States in 1999, included specific reference to training in paragraph (f) of the ‘Initial Responsibilities’ –

“to develop further, in conjunction with the Employment & Social Security Committee and the Education Committee, a joint strategy and plan, for States approval if necessary, for the provision of training for industry.”

For a number of reasons, work did not start in earnest on this matter until early in 2002. In February, 2002, there was a meeting of the Presidents and Senior Officers of Industries, Employment and Social Security and Education at which it was agreed that it would be appropriate for the training and business development functions to be transferred from Employment and Social Security to Industries and the officers were charged with taking this forward. It was also generally felt that the TEP Board had served its purpose but that in future executive functions should be integrated fully within the Industries Committee’s department.

Throughout 2002, the officers worked together to produce a joint paper on the approach to training/business development and lifelong learning which was approved by the Industries and Education Committees towards the end of 2002.

Discussions between the Presidents of Employment and Social Security and Industries started in earnest in the autumn of 2002 with a view to presenting a proposition to the States for the transfer of responsibility for the TEP Board with effect from January 2003. Following discussions with the TEP Board, it was agreed that the Board would remain in office on a ‘holding’ basis until the Economic Development Committee was in a position to consider the most appropriate structure for the future.

Discussion

The Chairman of the TEP Board wrote to the President of the Economic Development Committee on 8th January to the effect that the Board supported it being disbanded, resulting in the executives being integrated within the Economic Development Department, as long as it signed off in an orderly and effective way and that the Committee picked up its responsibilities. Particular reference was made to the importance of the links between the various Committees and Departments involved. The Board decided not to arrange any further meetings unless required by TEP executives, as no new policies would be considered pending the issue of this Report. Certain Board members have indicated their willingness to assist the formulation of future policy if suitable opportunities

are created. The joint paper presented to the various Committees late last year indicated clearly that the relevant officers of Education, Sport and Culture, TEP and Industries/Economic Development have been meeting regularly and that they were extremely positive about working in close co-operation in the future. This group has already met on several occasions this year and also had constructive meetings with the Principal/Chief Executive of Highlands College, who is delighted to be involved in the planning process for the future and is taking care to ensure that the strategy for the College fits in with the training and business development strategy and the lifelong learning strategy. This is most encouraging.

The Economic Development Committee believes strongly that this core officer group will be able to meet all the aims and objectives included in the TEP Strategy. Of course, they will not work in isolation. The group will include a senior officer from Employment and Social Security when considering social inclusion issues; the Principal/Chief Executive of Highlands College will be fully involved in consideration of further education issues; and, more generally, there will be wide consultation with the most appropriate individuals and organisations in relation to specific objectives within the strategies.

In addition, the officers of the Economic Development Department will be closely involved in the work of the Strategic Development Boards and Advisory Groups which form the basis of the partnership between government and the Island's industries in the development of cohesive strategies for the future.

The Committee is confident of success in achieving a 'joined-up' approach that will ensure the best use of available resources and the avoidance of wasteful duplication of effort.

Conclusion

The TEP Board has made a valuable contribution to training and business development over the years but it recognises that now is the time to adapt to the new structure of Government and to integrate this function into the overall remit of the Economic Development Department.

The Committee recognises the importance of training and business development to the economy as a whole. It shares the view of the Policy and Resources Committee as expressed in paragraph 95 in P.101/2002 (Population Policy) –

“A crucial requirement of the way forward is a new and intense focus on the skills issue. Jersey's skills levels at the top end of the scale compare poorly with the U.K. (and especially poorly when the Jersey-born workforce alone is compared) and, at the bottom end of the scale Jersey's position is, along with the U.K.'s, poor compared with Europe more generally. The Industries Committee, together with the Employment and Social Security Committee, is looking at skills and training issues in detail, but the problems will ease in the longer term only through clear strategic actions instituted now. One important issue will be to look at practical ways of seeking to keep in the Island more of those who have benefited from its excellent education system and generous student support arrangements.”

The spirit of wholehearted co-operation between Education, Sport and Culture and Economic Development, and other related bodies, will provide a platform for achievement of joint objectives and optimisation of resource utilisation. It will also provide an opportunity to review the aims and objectives of the present TEP functions, along with the lifelong learning functions, in order to ensure that budgets and resource allocations for 2004 and onwards truly meet best value criteria.

Financial/manpower implications

There are no financial or manpower implications for the States arising from this proposition.

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2003 TO 2005

Aim

To be recognised as having a positive impact on the economic and social development of the Island through working to raise skill levels and improve business performance.

Objective

To work with employers, employees, and the community to –

- raise participation and achievement rates in vocational training, post compulsory learning;
- improve competitiveness by raising skills;
- reduce ‘marginalisation’ of the present and future workforce, and improve access to training;
- monitor the quality of training delivery, and support improvements;
- encourage local organisations to review current business practices and improve effectiveness and efficiency;
- research and monitor trends to ensure the appropriate skill improvement and business development support programmes are correctly prioritized.