

Summary of Economic Development Committee Meeting held on 3rd October 2013.

This was the second meeting of the committee since its formation the first meeting was held on Thursday 5th September this was a short meeting so that the committee could establish itself.

The committee consist of Councillor Lawson Henry, Councillor Chairman, Derek Thomas Deputy Chairman, Councillors Bernice Olsson Gavin Ellick and Les Baldwin. Mr Paul McGinnety Head of ENRD Directorate, Mr Colin Owen Financial Secretary, Mr Robert Midwinter Director of Enterprise, ESH and Mrs Connie Johnson as Secretary

As this committee is very much cross cutting across SHG Directorates other officers from SHG are invited from time to time depending on the agenda items.

The meetings are open to the public unless otherwise advised in advance. Matters discussed at the meeting on 3rd October were as follows:-

It was proposed that a new Harbour Regulations be introduced prohibiting all vessels from anchoring around the wreck of RFA Darkdale in James Bay. The proposal follows on from the survey carried out of the RFA Darkdale by the Ministry of Defence last year. The recommendation of the Ministry of Defence is that such a "no anchoring area" be introduced.

The reasons for this restriction is primarily public safety, the wreck is a war grave, it is leaking oil and contains live ammunition. The committee agreed with the proposal and this will now proceed to Executive Council to be ratified.

Update from Chief Executive for Economic Development Mr Julian Morris from Enterprise St Helena on RMS performance and future shipping when RMS goes off line. Mr Morris advised that the RMS is currently performing very well against budget, both in terms of passenger numbers, which are up by 17.9% overall on the previous year, and also in terms of cost. A good response had been received in respect of initial expressions of interest to operate a post airport shipping service to the island, and a formal tendering process will take place in January / February 2014.

The Draft National Agriculture Policy (NAP) for St Helena was presented by Mr Darren Duncan Head of ANRD. The committee was informed that the draft policy had been out to public consultation earlier this year and detailed scoping discussion meetings with all sector stakeholders including producers, merchants, Farmers Association, Growers Co-operative, ESH St Helena National Trust, the former Natural Resources Development and Environment Committee and SHG agencies. The policy was endorsed by the committee to allow it to progress to Exco for approval as National Policy for the Island.

A policy options paper was presented by Mr Duncan and Dr Jill Keys seeking endorsement for the establishment of a biosecurity policy for the island based on the recommended option of strengthening the island's biosecurity in anticipation and readiness for the Opening of the Airport in 2016. The main aim of this option would be to strengthen both animal and plant health controls in a coherent biosecurity framework for both sea and air access. The committee endorsed this proposed policy option which will allow ANRD to proceed with the development of policy work.

Finally there was an update by Mr Robert Midwinter on the activities undertaken by Enterprise St Helena during the past month, along with the close-out of actions arising as a result of questions raised directly with members of the ESH team by elected members. Of the six points highlighted by Elected Members only one remains awaiting closure, which will be undertaken during the current month. ESH's annual programme is progressing well, albeit that it was recognised that in order to progress further with potential hotel developments and investor interests a number of pieces of work commissioned by ESH were awaited, including a Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA), Value for Money (VfM) Report, and an Independent Investor Study, all of which were anticipated by the end of October. It was further noted that Mr Midwinter would be undertaking a business related visit to Cape Town and London during November / December, with a number of his activities coinciding with those of Cllr Lawson Henry who will be attending the Joint Ministerial Council (JMC) in London and EU-OCT Forum in Brussels.