

Minutes of the 19th Meeting of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee held on 18th December 2014 @ 09.15am in Essex House.

Present:	Hon. Wilson Duncan	-	Chairman
	Hon. Gavin Ellick	-	Deputy Chairman
	Hon. Cyril George	-	Member
	Hon. Dr. Corinda Essex	-	Member
	Hon. Christine Scipio-O'Dean	-	Member
	Mr Trevor Graham	-	Director of ENRD
	Mr Derek Henry	-	Deputy Director, ENRD
	Mr Nicky Lawrence	-	Secretary
Invited:	Mr Andy Crowe	-	Housing Executive
	Mr Ben Hathway	-	Roads Manager
	Mrs Elizabeth Clingham	-	Marine Conservation Officer
	Mr Lourens Malan	-	Terrestrial Conservation Officer

The Chairman welcomed everyone and opened the meeting.

19.1 Housing Policy Manual.

The Housing Executive (HE) presented a Memorandum to Committee on the Housing Policy Manual. ENRC was asked to recommend that Executive Council adopts the range of housing policies contained in this manual.

HE said the Memorandum was brought to Committee in October and the consultation period had been extended. He said that as this Committee will be taking on responsibility for housing in future it was sensible that Committee should know in advance what they are dealing with before taking on this responsibility.

One of the significant issues was the two year rule for people being allowed to leave their properties vacant. HE said that he intended via ExCo to set up an appeals system should there be genuine reasons for people to leave their homes vacant for more than six months.

HE said that since drafting the report the budget for housing has fluctuated so much that some of the policies contained therein will be subject to funding. This would impact on areas such as repairs and maintenance.

HE took members through the Manual a section at a time and responded to the queries that were raised and also undertook to make amendments as suggested by Committee.

Committee gave support to the adoption of the SHG Housing Policy Manual.

19.2

Housing Satisfaction Survey and Tenancy Audit.

Committee was informed that during the months of August, September and October 2014 the Housing Executive and Housing Management Officer conducted a tenants satisfaction survey and audit to tie in with the new tenancy agreements.

Tenants were asked to rate each of the following as poor, fair, good or excellent.

- The conditions of your home
- *Result 51% poor, 18%good, 6%excellent.*
- Dealing with repairs/requests
- *Result 18%poor, 26%fair, 42%good, 13%excellent.*
- The appearance of your estate
- *Half of the tenants rate appearance as poor and a quarter as fair.*
- How to deal with neighbour problems
- *Most tenants had never reported neighbour nuisance.*
- Housing news and other ways we consult
- *A positive result with 46% of tenants rating this as excellent and 38% as good.*

Tenancy Audit.

Audit results indicate 7% of tenants have two more bedrooms than needed with 11% with one more.

65% of tenants have the correct number of rooms but 17% are overcrowded. A solution would be to encourage these tenants to exchange premises.

The committee is asked to note the findings of the 2014 tenants satisfaction survey and audit and the action being proposed to address these findings.

19.3

Verbal Update on Land Disposal Policy Review.

The Chairperson of the ENRC Sub-Committee informed members that a draft Land Disposal Policy (LDP) had been re-drafted and analysed. A GAP analysis had been undertaken with the matrix being finalised. Representations from the general public will be considered at the January meeting.

The second step will be the review of the Land Development Control Plan.

Members of the ENRC Sub-Committee were commended for their teamwork in reviewing the LDP.

19.4

Information item on successful Darwin bid and progress on other bids.

The Director of ENRD stressed the importance of Darwin funding for conservation work on St Helena as the cultural heritage constantly needs resources for natural and historical conservation.

The Terrestrial Conservation Officer (TCO) and the Marine Conservation Officer (MCO) then gave a presentation to Committee outlining how these funds will be used and the benefits gained.

Areas identified are in Fisheries Management with a bid for a Technical Cooperation (TC) post to provide additional expertise. Also in Marine Tourism Management to allow monitoring, tracking and development based on real data.

Social Economic Assessment which will also allow training and development with the visit of a Professor and two Phd Students.

There is expected to be a visit from the Georgia Aquarium which has donated 13 tags to enable the habits of the Whale Shark to be further studied.

Funding will also be used for training of relevant EMD staff at Kew Gardens.

It was agreed that the Committee will visit the Peaks in the New Year to see the works that have been going on.

The MCO and the TCO were thanked for their valuable and informative presentation.

19.5

Matters arising from minutes of 20th November 2014.

Community & District Roads assessment.

The Roads Manager told members that following the issue of a Press Release he is awaiting for those persons who qualified for assistance to respond and confirm their acceptance of the grant.

He also told members that he and a member of Committee had visited the back road at Longwood Clinic and at Colt Sheds to make an assessment and found that only minor remedial work is needed.

Publicity for the repair of the Hutt's Gate to Longwood Gate road will be made once dates and times have been determined for commencement of works.

Tracked Vehicles.

The Chairman apologised for letting this matter slip but told members he had emailed the Inspector of Police and is awaiting a reply.

Action: Chairman

Special meeting to discuss draft Environmental Protection Ordinance.

The date for this meeting is provisionally set for **09.00am on the 8th January, 2015 in the Council Chamber.**

The Director of ENRD told members that he has not yet received the draft Environmental Protection Ordinance which is a large document and members might require more time to read it through; therefore it is possible that the date might be pushed back. However, this is still to be confirmed.

Action: Director

Market Street.

The Roads Manager is looking at several issues concerning parking, an improved transport system and also management issues. A meeting of the Working Group is scheduled for next week addressing these issues in Jamestown overall and a proposal is expected to be brought to Committee in January 2015.

A member expressed appreciation that the issue is being given some priority.

Disabled parking behind Canister.

The Roads Manager informed Committee that work is programmed to paint double yellow lines in front of the disabled park to discourage other motorists from blocking access to this park.

Traffic lines Levelwood to St Matthews's Church.

The Roads Manager told Committee that this work has been programmed for end of January 2015. The public will be informed when the works will take place as soon as a firm date for commencement has been confirmed.

As a point of interest a member asked who is responsible if there was an accident caused by the lack of traffic lines. The reply was that due to the lack of resources it was not possible to address these issues, not only for road safety but many other day to day operational needs.

It was stated that many TC Officers and Officials are not aware of how things were in the past which is causing discontent among the locals as they believe no one is trying to do anything to improve matters.

Budget Update.

The Director said that work is ongoing and there is nothing to report at this time.

Arch Road.

A member expressed concern about the condition of the road at the Arch. The Roads Manager indicated that essential maintenance is planned for the New Financial Year.

Wharf Landing Steps.

The Roads Manager told Committee that an inspection had been made above the waterline with no defects noted. However, to make a full assessment of the condition of the Wharf Landing Steps it was agreed that divers would be needed and it was noted that this expertise is on island.

The Director of ENRD said he is unclear where full responsibility lies and suggested a meeting with the Port Authority and the Financial Secretary with a view to using Basil Read's expertise.

19.6 Any other urgent business.

Concern from Deputy Chairman.

The Chairman said he will give the Deputy Chairman the required instruction to prepare him should it be necessary for him to fill the Chairman's role.

Action: Chairman

Barracks Square

The Roads Manager will follow up on this matter.

Action: Roads Manager

Confirmation of date for next meeting is Thursday 22 January, 2015 at 09.30am in the Council Chamber.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 11.09hrs.

Confirmed..........Date.....15-01-2015.....