

Minutes of the 27th Meeting of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee held on 18th June 2015 @ 09.30am in the Council Chamber.

Present:	Hon. Gavin Ellick	-	Acting Chairman
	Hon. Cyril George	-	Member
	Hon. Dr. Corinda Essex	-	Member
	Hon. Christine Scipio-O'Dean	-	Member
	Mr Derek Henry	-	Deputy Director of ENRD
	Mr Nicky Lawrence	-	Secretary
Invited:	Mrs Lauren Evans	-	DAPD – Item 1
	Mrs Morag Stevenson	-	Solicitor General – Item 1
	Mr Darren Duncan	-	Head of ANRD – Item 2
	Miss Myra Young	-	Forestry Officer – Item 2
	Mr Martin Hannah	-	Head of Planning & Building – Item 3
	Miss Lucy Cranfield	-	Finance Manager – Item 4
	Mr Ben Hathway	-	Roads Manager
	Constable Jonathon Clark	-	Police Representative
Apologies:	Hon. Wilson Duncan	-	Overseas Conference
	Mr Trevor Graham	-	Overseas Conference

The Acting Chairman welcomed everyone present and opened the meeting.

Open Agenda.

27.1 Disused Burial Grounds at Rupert's and New Legislation for the Reburial of Archaeological Remains.

The Deputy Airport Project Director (DAPD) presented a Briefing Note on the Disused Burial Ground in Rupert's Valley. This paper stated that the St Helena Airport Project had obtained full Development Permission from Governor-in-Council in 2008. Included in the Development Application was the alignment of a road that passed through known but not clearly defined burial grounds of liberated Africans; whilst the Environmental Statement made provision for the excavation, research and re-interment of archaeological remains.

Although the Burial Grounds Ordinance makes provision for disused burial grounds to be used for public purposes, only burial grounds in Jamestown are declared to be disused burial grounds as stated in the Ordinance. However, it is acknowledged that burial grounds in Rupert's Valley could arguably be considered as disused burial grounds due to the fact that they were accepted as such at the time of

the development of a Power Station and Bulk Fuel Installation in the area in 1985 and 1986. The Committee expressly stated that they were prepared to accept this precedence solely for the purpose of dealing with the specific request being made by the Deputy Airport Project Director.

In order for the development of the Access Road, the Burial Grounds Ordinance requires that the Council Committee (ENRC) declares that they are agreeable to the disused burial ground being used for a public purpose, in this case, for the use of road and fuel pipeline alignment. A member felt that ENRC does not have the Authority to make this decision and objected to the proposal until a Site Plan is received.

A recent review of all legislation revealed that although agreement had been given by Governor-in-Council for development, no formal agreement had been sought from the ENRC, as required by the Ordinance. Therefore it was requested that the ENRC, which has responsibility for the Burial Grounds Ordinance provide the necessary agreement. The Committee were content to grant such approval subject to receiving a clear site plan of the area.

Members discussed the issue with the applicants and agreed that they submit a site plan of the areas required via email to Committee for their consideration.

Action: DAPD & Solicitor General

27.2 Forestry Strategy.

The Head of Agriculture & Natural Resources Division (ANRD) gave a PowerPoint presentation on a proposed 10 year Forestry Strategy for 2015-2025.

He said we are in changing times and the challenges now faced are being highlighted as a background introduction to the proposed Forestry Strategy now being drawn up. The main areas worked into the Strategy that are Policy related are economic, social, environmental and financial protocols.

With aspirations to increase tourism, agriculture and fisheries will be given a higher priority than forestry. The Strategy must be in line with the resources available. The Forestry Ordinance is very much outdated, although requests have been made to the Attorney General's Chambers for its review.

The Forest Estate rationalisation exercise has begun which means unproductive areas will be excised from the Forest Estates and may be used for other purposes.

Key Services such as Firewood production and operation of the Sawmill and Timber Treatment Plant have been divested to the private sector. Imported timber is very much in demand and there is no longer reliance on local timbers, whereas there is still a high demand for firewood.

Renewable energy has no link to Forestry but funding is now being moved to renewable energy sources such as solar energy.

A 44% decrease in Staff also impacts on Forestry operations. In the Silviculture section as there is a lack of management and operators skills which limits the ability to provide required services. Funding for Technical Co-operation staffing cannot be obtained. Most Silvicultural operations have to be undertaken by contractors.

The smaller range of services to the community are being undertaken by the Private Sector, with a lower emphasis on production related services with more support going to recreation and countryside management etc.

There is no DFID Natural Resources Advisor to support forestry development.

The presence of invasive weeds has an impact on forest renewal and there is limited funding available to tackle this problem. A member suggested presenting a motion in Legislative Council to secure funding for invasive weed control.

Other issues discussed were the provision of refined species of timber for the small cabinet making industry. The use of endemics was also suggested.

The Acting Chairman thanked the Head of ANRD for his presentation. Head ANRD will bring a draft policy back to Committee at a later date.

Action: Head of ANRD

27.3 Update on Building Regulations.

The Head of Planning and Building gave a PowerPoint presentation to Committee on the proposed new Building Regulations.

The Land Planning & Development Control Ordinance of 2013 replaced the 2008 Ordinance.

The old Regulations have not been revised in 15 years, therefore need to be revised to accommodate new designs for building.

The new Regulations being drawn up will have two functions which are Planning Control and Building Control.

Planning Control will:-

- Establish Authority
- Review Policies
- Promote development of land
- Oversee siting and design of proposed developments

A phased start of these disciplines began in February 2014.

Building Control will:-

- Establish standards of construction of buildings, structures and control services such as management of waste water.

The Regulations currently being drafted will have five parts:

1. General
2. Control
3. Verification of design
4. Information
5. Appendices and Schedules

Once drafted the Head of Planning and Building stated that he would like the Building Inspector to lead on a public consultation process, followed by a corporate review.

The Acting Chairman asked how will the new Regulations differ from the old Regulations. The Head of Planning and Building replied that Building Regulations are very much the same the world over but are adapted according to circumstances. He gave an example that applications for siting of swimming pools has now been incorporated into the new regulations.

The next step will be to present a finalised draft expected to be completed by October or November 2015 to the Attorney General's Chambers.

Action: Head of Planning & Building.

27.4

Report on Financial Performance for period 1 – April 2015/16.

The Finance Manager (FM) told members that monthly accounts are expected to be finalised on the 10th day of each month and presented to Committee one month in arrears. It was noted that May's accounts had been finalised but could not be brought to this meeting. However, FM will provide these accounts electronically to members.

A member suggested that it would be appropriate to wait for the updated version of accounts as obviously there would have been changes made. Members agreed but some parts of the April accounts were discussed.

Action: Finance Manager

27.5

Matters arising from Minutes of 27th May 2015.

Monthly Financial Reports.

At the last regular ENRC meeting a Resolution had been made that the monthly accounts will be presented to Committee at monthly intervals. A member expressed annoyance that the Resolution had not been reflected in the Minutes. The Secretary apologised for this oversight.

Tracked Vehicles.

The Roads Manager reported that all operators had been spoken to and the Chief of Police is in the process of formally writing to the people concerned reminding them of their obligations.

Duke of Edinburgh Playground.

The Roads Manager told members that he had been advised that he cannot excavate a disused burial ground without the presence of an Archaeologist. He said he could do some compaction tests to determine if the area can withstand vehicle movements. The Technical Staff have designed a car park layout and the Roads Manager said he had also asked them to apply for Planning Permission.

A member stated that the views of the Head of Planning & Building on the site visit will be beneficial before an application for change of use is made. Members asked for a further Site Visit and it was agreed for this to take place on Monday 22nd June 2015. A member asked for Police Representation at this site visit also which was agreed. Secretary to arrange a time for the site visit.

The Roads Manager told Committee that he had made some observations concerning the Duke of Edinburgh Playground. These being the sightlines for access to the park, opening of an entrance and also deciding if the Toilet Block should remain. He said that a budget needs to be identified and the matter should be managed to expectations.

Action: Secretary

Environmental Protection Ordinance.

The Deputy Director told members that he will confirm with Head of Environmental Management Division if a special meeting should be convened to discuss the draft Ordinance.

Action: Deputy Director

Jamestown Parking Review.

The Roads Manager said he had met with the Chief of Police and the Solicitor General and has arranged a Workshop with key stakeholders on the 24th June 2015. This is to implement a process chart to enable the implementation of the Jamestown Parking Programme. He will report the outcome to ENRC at a future meeting.

Action: Roads Manager

Traffic calming at Red Hill.

The Roads Manager told Committee he had made a Site Visit with a Police Representative. This was to investigate traffic calming measures in the Red Hill area following a road traffic accident very near to a residence. To improve traffic safety in this area the following options were considered:-

1. Install a super elevation on the road, however, this would involve extra and very costly work to be done.
2. Install speed bumps. This will slow traffic and can be installed under the R1 project.
3. Install speed limit repeater signs.
4. Lower the legal limit for alcohol when driving. It is evident most accidents are caused by drivers being over the legal limit.
5. Introduce lane width restrictions.
6. Use radar signs which indicate vehicle speed.

Members preferred for option 2 to be adopted.

Action: Roads Manager

Roads Works Programme.

A member asked the Roads Manager if he would furnish Committee with a Programme of works for roads.

The Roads Manager said that he will produce a works programme for the R1 roads project for Committee's information purposes only.

Action: Roads Manager

Information Item.

The Roads Manager said that further to a previous meeting he had requested 'delegated powers' to write to landowners etc requesting them to remove overhanging vegetation from the highways. Due to a misunderstanding the matter was referred to the Attorney General's Chambers for clarification. The Roads Manager said that he has had no response from the AG's Chambers but has researched the matter himself and found that 'highway' and 'public road' mean the same. He now asks for delegated powers to enable him to write to landowners and members of the public.

Members agreed on condition that he informs Committee when he does this.

Action: Roads Manager

LDP Review.

The Deputy Director told members that an email had been received from the Director this morning and he has forwarded it to the Chairperson of the ENRC SubCommittee which is the body dealing with the matter.

Action: Chairperson ENRD SubCommittee

27.6

Any other urgent business.

Community and District Roads.

Members were told that 10 applications for funding from the 2015/2016 budget have been received so far with others expected.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12.45pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday 16th July 2015 at 09.15am in the Council Chambers.**

Confirmed..........Date.....8th July 2015.....