

EXCO REPORT - TUESDAY 18 OCTOBER 2016

The Open Agenda for today's ExCo was quite lengthy, with six items of legislation to discuss.

The Food Safety Bill makes provision for the regulation of food that is produced or procured for the purposes of trade. The Bill also establishes a regulatory authority. Council welcomed the Bill, recognising that this has been discussed widely in the community, and looks forward to the draft regulations which will support its implementation.

Secondly, the Financial Services (Amendment) Bill was intended to be a tidying up exercise and follows the recommendations of the Financial Services Regulatory Authority. This proposal received unanimous approval.

Both of these Bills will be presented to Formal Legislative Council as Government business in December.

For the next item Council recognised that the Road Traffic Bill had been subject to lengthy discussion by Elected Members and other stakeholders over many months. The Bill aims to modernise the current law, including changes in relation to driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs, and the use of seat belts. The Governor recognised the scale of the work done and thanked everyone for their considerable efforts. The Bill will now be subject to public consultation with the intention of bringing it to Formal Legislative Council in December.

The Customs & Excise (Amendment) Bill contained a number of technical amendments to enable the electronic transmission and use of data, for example through ASYCUDA, together with a Post Clearance Audit function. There will be further targeted consultation on this Bill before presentation to Formal Legislative Council in December.

The Employment Rights (Amendment) Bill was targeted at trading on Sundays and Bank Holidays. If the Bill is passed at Formal Legislative Council in December it will enable shops, stores and businesses to regulate their own opening hours on a Sunday, and to permit the sale of alcohol on Good Friday and Christmas Day.

Executive Council then considered the Marriage Bill 2016, which would allow same sex couples access to civil marriage on St Helena. Following extensive discussion it was agreed to defer further consideration of this Bill until such time as the Social & Community Development Committee had reconsidered its position. There were also some technical issues which the Attorney General would address. The Governor expressed her profound disappointment that the Marriage Bill 2016 could not be agreed today and urged Members to bring it back to Executive Council as quickly as possible.

ExCo
18 October 2016