

EXCO REPORT – TUESDAY 24 JUNE 2014

Executive Council met today, Tuesday 24 June 2014. It has been a little while since ExCo met, so this was a fairly large agenda. There were seven items on the Open Agenda.

The new Chief Secretary Roy Burke was welcomed to his first Executive Council meeting.

The first item discussed was the proposed amendment to the Customs and Excise Ordinance to provide for a duty free shop at the Airport terminal. Duty free shopping is customary at international airports and Council agreed that a Bill for an Ordinance to amend the Customs and Excise Ordinance should go forward to the next formal meeting of Legislative Council. Council also agreed to enact Regulations to provide for exemption of customs duties on goods imported for supply and sale in a duty free shop.

The second item was to again amend Customs Regulations to bring into force the appropriate forms to be completed by persons arriving and departing St Helena. These relate to declaring goods in excess of the current duty free allowances and to declare currency being carried in excess of £6,000. ExCo approved the forms.

The third item was the application for development permission for the new Fire Station to be constructed at Alarm Forest. In attendance were the Planning Officer and the new Head of Planning and Development Control to provide technical advice. Executive Council recognises the need for a new Fire Station as part of the Airport certification process. There were no major concerns with the building, but issues to be addressed include ensuring that rainwater run-off from the roof is managed and that suitable traffic safety measures are in place. The existing bus stop will also need to be relocated.

The fourth item was also an application for development permission for Constitution Hill Road. This road is in need of repair and approval for this was given. It was pleasing to note that certain individuals had given up short strips of land free of charge to create additional road space. Executive Council commended these individuals for their public spiritedness. In granting development permission, Council requested an advisory note from SHG for the repair and maintenance of the Run, as it was recognised that storm water could cause erosion to its fabric.

The fifth item was a request for approval to remove unproductive land from the National Forest Estate. This was approved, as it is important that land not being used for forestry can be released for other developments.

The sixth item was an application to wind up the St Helena News Media Board. This relates to the previously existing media service. The application was approved and any assets realised from the previous Media Board will be transferred to SHG.

The last item on the Open Agenda was a request for approval to register the company *St Helena Hotel Development Limited*. It is vital for the continued economic development of the Island that there are sufficient hotel rooms for visiting tourists post-Airport. This company would lead negotiations for the financing and construction of a hotel, although it is important to note that this is not giving the go-ahead for a specific hotel and that no monies have yet been allocated. Executive Council gave approval and there will be further information on any hotel development in due course.

On the Closed Agenda there was a recommendation that diesel for commercial fishing vessels be duty free. Executive Council recognises the importance of commercial fishing and was pleased to grant this concession. This equates to a reduction in price of approximately 27p per litre, backdated to 1 April 2014 and to run for initially one year.

The meeting closed at 11.30am.

ExCo
24 June 2014