**EXCO REPORT: Tuesday 17 December 2013**

The first item under the open agenda was the Application to the Governor in Council to grant development permission under the Airport Development Ordinance 2006 for the revised Wharf, sea rescue facility and fuel pipeline at Rupert’s Bay.

Representatives from Air Access, Halcrow and Basil Read were present for this agenda item. A presentation was given on the proposed changes and there was a discussion on various details regarding the design and construction of the proposed Wharf. There has been extensive public consultation on this proposal, which includes a jetty, a slipway from the Shears, a sewage outlet pipe, fuel pipe, sea rescue boat facility and access road to the jetty.

The new Wharf jetty will be constructed from the South West point of the bay projecting in a North Easterly direction. This is significantly different from the original design where the jetty would have projected into the bay from the beach area. The Land Development Control Authority had made several recommendations for the Governor in Council to consider, covering actions to be taken both during construction and prior to the Wharf coming into operation.

Executive Council agreed to grant development permission subject to the conditions with minor amendments recommended by the Land Development Control Authority.

The second item on the open agenda was the Rationalisation of the SHG Forest Estate. This was a recommendation from ANRD which had been endorsed by the ENRD Committee, to release unproductive forestry land to crown estates. As some of this land could be made available for commercial and residential use, Executive Council was unanimous in endorsing this proposal and praised ANRD for being proactive in releasing land that they no longer require, which will be of benefit to the community.

The next item was the St Helena National Agricultural Policy 2014-2020. This is a comprehensive document setting out the overarching policy direction for agricultural planning. It is designed to increase production and the quality of produce, up-skill farmers, and determine infrastructure requirements and partnerships between SHG, ESH and the private sector. Executive Council was pleased to endorse this plan, as agriculture is one of the main economic drivers for sustainable development.

There was then a discussion on the release of Government buildings for sale, including the ex PWD store. Paul McGinnety and John Clement outlined the process by which these buildings were placed on the market. As the ex PWD store is considered to be a significant development under the terms of the Land Disposal Policy, it will need to go through the Estates Strategy Panel prior to any recommendation to Governor in Council for a final decision on sale. The building will not necessarily be sold to the highest bidder – all factors, including proposed usage, will be taken into account prior to any decision to sell.

The Social Policy Plan was then introduced for endorsement by Executive Council. This plan had been written after a period of extensive consultation and over 300 members of the public had been involved. Paul McGinnety, the interim Director of Environment and Natural Resources, was commended for a clear and easy to read document which provides comprehensive guidance on the way forward. Executive Council was pleased to endorse this plan.

An information paper was then presented on the revised fuel prices, which shows a reduction in prices for both diesel and petrol.

During the closed session, a request for approval for funding of a Special Warrant was approved.

Under AOB, the situation regarding trees in the Duke of Edinburgh Playground was raised. Last week a branch fell, landing in Market Street, with no one injured and no damage caused to vehicles. However the risk to the public remains and it was requested that urgent action be taken.

The Governor reported that he will be leaving the Island on Monday 23December 2013, returning on Friday 17January 2014. As part of his overseas tour he will be carrying out official duties in the UK and on Ascension Island.

As this is the last ExCo meeting of 2013, on behalf of Executive and Legislative Council I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.

**SHG**

**17 December 2013**