**EXCO REPORT - TUESDAY 25 AUGUST 2015**

Executive Council met today, Tuesday 25 August 2015. The Governor welcomed Acting Chief Secretary Gillian Francis, Acting Financial Secretary Dax Richards and a member of the public.

There was one item on the Open Agenda. Executive Council was asked to consider and approve the *Better Life Allowance* policy and Amendments to Social Security Regulations. The Better Life Allowance will provide a higher level of allowance based on a needs assessment. Executive Council agreed payments for each level - using a set of criteria - as follows:

* Low - £10 per week
* Medium - £15 per week
* High - £35 per week
* Severe - £60 per week

This new policy is designed to help meet the additional costs for people who have various disabilities - giving them a better quality of life. It will be excluded from the calculation used to determine Household Income Level under the Social Security Ordinance and Regulations - and will therefore be paid over and above any other benefits.

Executive Council agreed that this policy will have a significant positive impact on the lives of some of the most vulnerable people on St Helena. The new policy will be effective from Tuesday 1 September 2015.

Included in the Closed Session was a request from South Atlantic Media Services Ltd (SAMS) to utilise the daily half-hour television broadcasting slot that is available to St Helena Government under the Television Broadcasting Licence agreement between SHG and Sure South Atlantic Ltd.

Members agreed to this, subject to various conditions - including that SHG would at all times have first call on the slot, and that this approval will run for a period of six months in the first instance after which the arrangement will be reviewed. This approval is also subject to there being no additional requests from other parties to utilise the SHG half hour daily TV slot.

Executive Council was also asked to consider and approve the Revised Capital Programme 2015-16, which was discussed at length and agreed.

The meeting closed at 11.30am.

**ExCo**

**25 August 2015**