**EXCO meeting of 10 July  2012**

Good afternoon,

Our agenda today began with an update, a first quarter report, from the Director of Infrastructure and Utilities, David Thompson, on progress with the 2012 -15 Infrastructure programme.  In the DAPM aide memoire signed earlier this year DfID registered some concern that progress was behind schedule on some projects and cautioned that we must aim to do better.  Recognising this, the quarterly update to EXCO forms part of the monitoring process on this critically important area of government activity.  Acknowledging that capacity constraints accounted for some of the problems, in what is an ambitious programme,   Councillors welcomed advice from the Director that discussions were underway with private sector interests to help address this.  Additional support in programme management would also soon be coming online from an offshore company. Councillors directed that more information should; be made available, especially on the projects of most concern to the public, such as the roads programme.

We then moved to discussion of a proposed second extension to the 1998 agreement between SHG and Argos Helena Ltd.  Council agreed a further extension of the agreement, for three years, to 27 April 2015. The extension provides a measure of job security for Argos employees and some assurances for the local fishing industry.

The Financial Secretary then presented a paper which sought authority simply to vary the amount of cash that may be held at the Customer Service Centre and at the Post Office.  Council had no difficulty in accepting the variation which was in response to changing demands.

We then took another paper related to the fishing industry.  This asked for approval to introduce a change to the Island’s Commercial Fishing Licence Policy, which would allow fish catches made beyond the fishery limits of 30 nautical miles to be sold without first offering the catch to the St Helena Fisheries Corporation (SHFC).  Such a licence would be available only to a person of St Helenian status or ordinarily resident in St Helena, operating a St Helenian fishing boat.  The proposal followed consultation with all the main fisheries stakeholders none of whom had raised objections. Council agreed the request noting that work would be undertaken as soon as possible to review the environmental impact of the Commercial Fisheries Policy to ensure that it allows for the development of a sustainable commercial fishery.

We then considered a paper which sought to take forward work to introduce a minimum wage.  This required Council to advise that sections 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the Employment Rights Ordinance 2010 should brought into force to allow an Employment Rights Committee (ERC) to be formed. The ERC would then be tasked with making recommendations to Governor in Council with respect to setting a minimum wage.  It was recognised that this would be a complex and challenging piece of work.  It would need to be given careful consideration while fully assessing the impact of a minimum wage on both the private and public sectors and also how it should be set in relation the level of IRB and Basic Island Pension.  The intention would be to introduce other elements of the Employment Rights Ordinance such as the right to have a written statement of terms of employment and the right not to be unfairly dismissed to coincide with the introduction of a minimum wage.  Council agreed that steps should be taken to establish the ERC without delay. In due course, the Education and Employment Directorate would provide further details of measures to be introduced under the Employment Rights Ordinance.

The next paper advised that the annual meeting of the EU and Overseas Countries and Territories would be held in Greenland in September 2012 and sought advice on who should represent St Helena.  It was agreed that as Councillor Greene would be overseas on CPA business in September that he should also attend the EU/OCT meeting.  SHG’s UK representative Kedell Worboys would also attend. It was to be established whether representatives from Tristan da Cunha and Ascension Island would also attend as funding is available from the EU for up to four representatives to take part.

The last paper before us today was a ‘Framework Agreement’ to guide the relationship between SHG and Enterprise St Helena (ESH).  Essentially an operational guide, it sets out the roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders – the Governor, Chief Secretary, Executive Council, the Chief Executive for Economic Development, the ESH Board of Directors, DfID and Elected Members. It also provides for the means of oversight at the strategic level.  The Framework Agreement will be subject to review at intervals not exceeding three years. A full copy of the Framework Agreement will be placed on the SHG website.

Our meeting ended this afternoon at a little after one o’clock.

Thank you for listening and a very good afternoon to you all.

**Mark Capes**

**Governor**

**10 July 2012**