**EXCO meeting of 18 September 2012**

Today I welcomed Councillor Stedson Francis who was elected to EXCO at the meeting of LEGCO last week. Councillor Francis replaces Tara Thomas on EXCO.  I also welcomed Councillor Derek Thomas who had been way on a short break to Cape Town and acting Attorney General Frank Wastell who is standing in for Attorney General Ken Baddon who is away on a mix of business and leave until the end of October.

Our formal agenda today comprised of just two papers for decision and two for information.  The first paper, presented by the Acting Attorney General, sought EXCO’s approval for an extension to the Airport Development Area to cover a radius of 500 meters of inshore waters measured from the waterline along the coast from Gill Point to Bay Point.  Recent surveys revealed that the cliffs in that area, near the airport site, show signs of extensive cracks.  As Basil Read will soon begin extensive blasting operations nearby there was concern that this could cause significant rock falls that would present a hazard to anyone in the vicinity.  The 500 metre exclusion zone is purely a precautionary safety measure to mitigate the potential risk from falling rocks.  Council recognised the need to take all appropriate safety measures and agreed the recommendation.

The next paper was a draft of a declaration to be made at the forthcoming meeting, to be held in Greenland, of EU officials and representatives from the Overseas Territories; Councillor Green and Dr Essex will represent St Helena.  The draft sets out principles to guide the relationship between the EU and the Overseas Territories and some common goals such as achieving sustainable growth. Councillors had no difficulty in agreeing the draft paper.

We then considered a review of the effectiveness of measures introduced following closure of the Sandy Bay clinic last May, to ensure that the residents of Sandy Bay enjoyed good access to primary health care.  Director of Health Carol George attended EXCO to expand on the paper and to answer questions. Councillors noted that the review was generally positive and that steps had been taken to adjust the measures in response to suggestions from patients.   We thanked the Director and her team for monitoring the new arrangements and for preparing the helpful report.

Next up was a short information paper setting out options for the regulation of a divested utilities provider.  Councillors noted that one of the most important aspects of any regulatory regime would be that it should provide adequate protection for the consumer, especially when the provider enjoyed a monopoly.  Linked to that the consumer would need to have confidence in the independence and objectivity of the regulatory arrangements.  Councillors agreed to consider the paper alongside other work underway on divesting utilities and would decide on the preferred regulatory option when the matter returned to EXCO after further work and consideration by the Infrastructure and Utilities Committee.

Under ‘Any Other Business’ I mentioned the forthcoming visit, on 4 October, of Martin Longden, Deputy Director of Overseas Territories Department in the Foreign Office.   We also discussed the Motion presented by Councillor Buckley at LEGCO last week which called for some adjustment to the governance structure. I said that I would shortly put the request to the FCO for consideration.

And with that we concluded our meeting today at 11.30.

If I may, I’d like to use this opportunity to remind those in the East constituency of the upcoming by-election. The last day for submitting nominations is noon on Wednesday 3 October.  If there is more than one nomination then a poll will be held on Wednesday 17 October, when it would be important for the health of the democratic process that you should exercise your right to vote for the candidate of your choice.  For those thinking of standing for election to serve as a Councillor I would urge you to do so. If any potential candidates would like to talk to me about the role of a Councillor I would be happy to help. But please remember that you have only until 3 October to submit your nomination.

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

**Mark Capes**

**Governor**

**18 September 2012**