**ExCo meeting of 4 September 2012**

This morning I welcomed Councillors’ Cranfield and Buckley to ExCo, they having kindly agreed to cover the absence overseas of Councillor Thomas and Councillor Green.  I also welcomed our new Financial Secretary, Colin Owen.  Our agenda today was not too heavy; only four papers to consider, of which two were just for information.

Our first paper sought approval of the National Environmental Management Plan. Tara Pelembe, Director of Environmental Management, joined the meeting to answer questions on the paper, which we noted had been approved by the Natural Resources Environment and Development Committee. Once approved by ExCo the plan would become the formal environment framework for St Helena for the next 10 years.  A series of targets are included in the plan for the setting of environmental standards and for environmental legislation with a view to establishing a clear system of monitoring and enforcement.  On receiving reassurance that the plan did not cut across Investment Policy Principles and did not commit to additional expenditure, beyond that already envisaged, Council approved the paper.

We then reviewed a short information paper which explained the revised fuel prices that had brought a welcome reduction of six pence per litre of diesel and a four pence decrease on a litre of petrol.  The reductions were made possible by a shift in the US dollar/ pound exchange rate and the delivery of a larger than usual shipment.

Our next paper called for HM Prison to be granted an exemption from the Tobacco Control Ordinance 2011.  The Director of Police joined the meeting to explain the case for an exemption. It had become apparent that the special circumstances of HM Prison, the physical structure of the building and the essential safety and security measures, make it impossible to apply the conditions required by the Tobacco Control Ordinance.  It was noted too that in other jurisdictions prisons were exempt from similar legislation to control tobacco use and that here, as elsewhere; the matter could be dealt with by the Prison Rules and Regulations. After some interesting discussion of the special factors prevailing at HM Prison, Councillors agreed to grant the exemption.

Our final paper was a short information paper which summarised the key issues to be considered when setting benefit levels.  This was relevant to the current work related to the establishment of a minimum wage and to the setting of utility tariffs, tax/duty reforms and the like.  Expert advice was being sourced from overseas, including from the University of York.

And with that we concluded our meeting today a little before noon.

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

**Mark Capes**

**Governor**

**4 September 2012**