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Memorandum for Executive Council

SUBJECT

Liberated African Remains

Memorandum by, Chief Secretary

ADVICE SOUGHT

1. Council is asked to:
 - Authorise a loan request (appendix 1) from the St Helena Heritage Society for display in Jamestown Museum, the artefacts uncovered during the Rupert's Valley excavations when they return (in qtr. 4 2017) from the Liberated African exhibit hosted at the International Slavery Museum, Liverpool (NML).
 - Consider a request from Howard University in Washington DC USA to allow research to be conducted on the human skeletal remains of the Liberated Africans in order to reconstruct a snapshot of the lives and surrounding environment of the mid-19th century individuals originally buried at Saint Helena.
 - Note the attached progress report regarding the plans for reburial of the remains and to reaffirm the decision made by Executive Council in December 2016 endorsing the outcome of the 2015 Public Consultation. The report points out that progress is currently hampered by a lack of funding for the component parts of the project.

BACKGROUND & CONSIDERATIONS

2. Council will recall that during the excavations of the slave graves in Rupert's Valley, as part of the Airport Project environmental statement work, a number of artefacts were uncovered. These were primarily beads and fragments of cloth; there is a full list in Appendix 7.
3. In September 2008 Executive Council agreed to allow the artefacts to be sent to the UK for appropriate conservation and analysis (appendix 2), and this has been carried out. Part of the agreement (appendix 3) ensured that the display and interpretation material from the Museum display could subsequently come to the island when the artefacts are returned, thus providing purpose made displays. Some of the display material is already on St Helena, the balance will arrive with the artefacts later this year. The Display in NML has now concluded and the artefacts are expected to be

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returned in the 4th Qtr. 2017.

4. Council is asked to endorse the earlier intent that the artefacts and displays are placed on long-term loan (subject to review periods) to the Museum of St Helena.
5. Council is further asked to consider a request from a Doctoral Student from Howard University in Washington DC (appendices 4 and 5) to carry out research on the human skeletal remains of the Liberated Africans in order to reconstruct a snapshot of the lives and surrounding environment of the mid-19th century individuals originally buried at St Helena. Potential benefits to the island include:
 - The genomic and forensic analyses of this historic African sample could attract more academic tourism to the island
 - A scholarship for a student from St. Helena to acquire training and work in the Cobb Research Laboratory at Howard University under the tutelage of Dr. Fatimah Jackson, professor of biology and director of the Cobb Research Laboratory
 - Professional skeletal boxes from Howard University can be donated and shipped to assist with the memorialization services on St. Helena
 - USA support and monetary funds can be acquired and donated to the memorialization efforts in St. Helena
6. In considering this request, Council is asked to note that the research will involve the use of forensic anthropometry, and molecular genomic analyses and will entail the extraction of the petrous bone from the human skull. This has raised concerns around the proposed process and the level of invasivity involved and the subsequent impact on the remainder of the skull. A request for information detailing exactly this process will be carried out has been sent to the University but to date no information has been supplied.
7. Finally Council is asked to note the attached progress report (appendix 6) regarding the plans for reburial of the remains as per the mandate resulting from the public consultation carried out in 2015. Points to note in the report include:
 - ExCo designated a plot of land in Rupert's Valley (Plot RV0082) which is currently the Temporary Fuel Store, This is expected to be released before the end of 2017.
 - Outline Development permission was requested in April 2017 and granted in May 2017 (12 months' timeframe to submit a detailed design although a new

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outline application can be submitted for an extension)

- A Business case has been submitted to Capital programmes to request funding for this project however to date no budget has been allocated.
- The mandate given to the stakeholder group by Executive Council is being questioned by members and as a result no further progress has been made.

8. Council is asked to reaffirm the decision made by Executive Council in December 2016 endorsing the outcome of the 2015 Public Consultation.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9. Financial implications resulting from this memorandum are

- For the return of the artefacts and displays, shipping and insurance costs will be covered out of the Grant provided to NML in 2013 by Enterprise Saint Helena (ESH) (appendix 3)
- The cost of the research, if approved, will be covered by external means
- The Reburial project could be progressed to the planning permission phase for the sum of £20,000

ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

10. There are likely to be positive economic implications from the publicity generated in helping promote St Helena as a historic tourism destination, with the potential to encourage visitors to the Island.

CONSISTENCY WITH INVESTMENT POLICY PRINCIPLES PUBLIC / SOCIAL IMPACT

11. Likewise the completion of the reburial project may also generate further academic interest .

12. Not applicable.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

13. If the loan is granted, the Heritage Society intend to promote the exhibition through various media outlets, it is difficult to gauge the impact from the display and how this will be received both on St Helena and internationally, although the feedback from the international loan seems to be positive.

14. The reburial project is in keeping with the outcome of the public consultation carried out in 2015. Delays to this project are likely to attract negative public feedback.

15. Environmental impact will be considered as a part of the planning process for the reburial project.

PREVIOUS CONSULTATION / COMMITTEE INPUT

16. Original request for loan to NML ExCo Memo 03/2011 (Appendix 3).

17. An island wide and international consultation was carried out

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in March 2015 and the public was given the opportunity to express a view about the preferred long-term treatment of the remains. The results of the consultation showed that there was support for immediate re-burial in the Rupert's area and this was endorsed by ExCo on 20th December 2016.

PUBLIC REACTION

18. It is hoped the public will see the loan of the artefacts to the Museum in a positive light as there has been no negativity around the international exhibition. The Museum intends to publicise the exhibition and expand the knowledge and interest around the involvement of St. Helena in the abolition of the Slave trade. It is recommended the Heritage Society work with SHG Public Relations & Tourism in publicising the 'returning home' of the artefacts

19. Continued delay on the reburial project is expected to generate questions on the reburial of the Liberated African Remains which are currently stored in the former Pipe Store.

PUBLICITY

20. The Museum with the support of Tourism will look to promote the exhibit in various media outlets e.g. in the papers and around the island, web pages etc. The Museum also anticipate promoting an event in the coming months (e.g. a slavery awareness week) to start building a better understanding of St Helena's slavery history.

21. Whilst the Reburial Project is in the early planning stages and it might not be possible to answer all questions at this stage, the interest in this significant issue is welcomed and public interest/engagement can be seen as a positive step in the wider reburial project.

SUPPORT TO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

22. This Executive Council memorandum contributes to the 10 year plan which is fundamental to economic growth, development and education.

Promoting education for Children & Adults, a starting point to understanding part of St Helena's rich history and its place in the world then and now

Promoting tourism and wealth generation on St Helena

OPEN AGENDA ITEM

Corporate Support
Corporate Services

DATE OF MEMO

RB

13/10/2017