



Economic Development Committee (EDC) Minutes

Date: 05 July 2018

Venue: Council Chamber

Time: 9.00 am

Present:	Chairman	Hon Lawson Henry
	Members:	Hon Clint Beard Hon Gavin Ellick Hon Mrs Christine Scipio-O'Dean Government Economist (GE), Mrs Nicole Shamier Assistant Financial Secretary, Mr Nicholas Yon Director of Commercial Development & Enterprise, Mr Martin George
	Secretary	Mrs Connie Johnson
	In Attendance:	Ms Sarah Long, Representative of The Brighter Group Director of Tourism, Mrs Helena Bennett Marketing and Communications Manager, Mrs Justine Green
	Apologies:	Hon Cruyff Buckley Hon Financial Secretary, Mr Dax Richards Director ENRD, Mr Derek Henry

OPEN SESSION

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting. There were no members of the public present.

2. Declaration of Personal Interest

No members declared any Declarations of Personal Interests.

3. Discussion with Brighter Group Representative Sarah Long

The Chairman welcomed Sarah, Helena and Justine to the meeting and extended a special welcome to St Helena to Sarah. After introductions to all committee members were done Sarah thanked the committee for inviting her along and for also having the opportunity to visit the Island and experience St Helena first-hand. She gave a very detailed and comprehensive update on the background of Brighter Group highlighting that they specialise in travel and tourism and the business had not ventured outside of this sphere. She said for marketing the split is 70/30 and said their clients includes Jordan, Belize, Madagascar, Taiwan and Dominica to name a few.

She said that with regard to PR they are well known in the industry for representing a lot of destinations and stressed that they are committed to the destinations in good times and bad. In December last year the company was bought by an American Company Finn whose ethos was "work hard play nice" St Helena she said was exciting because of its rich history and wonderful wildlife and the Brighter Group would make sure promotional ideas were realistic and doable.

The Chairman thanked Sarah for the update.

George Everett GC and
(GE) asked what would be the new creative ideas for St Helena and Sarah said that a copy of the creative ideas could be provided to EDC.

Action: Secretary

Sarah further explained that it would be about creating a Press Pack, dealing with Media enquires such as meeting the media every day, pitching all the time and networking on behalf of all the clients. She said having media visits to fit in with budget should be available but added that you just can't beat sending people to the country. To promote the positioning of the campaign eg Positive Isolation - the essence of the destination provided, aspect of purity, disconnecting with the rat race, connecting with family and friends and ideal peace is significantly good for your wellbeing. Challenges will be what does remote actually mean but there is a beauty in being remote and also what travelling means and finally arriving at the destination.

She said marketing is key so there is the bi-centenary of the death of Napoleon coming up and they are in talks with Dan Snow a historical expert and ex telly celebrity so just having him talking and tweeting about the Island with his followers will mean the value of just this one relationship is fantastic. Another idea would be about getting David Attenborough to visit St Helena and they are in touch with his team as well and how about getting the Millennium Forest a legacy of the Queens Commonwealth Canopy which can be achieved working in conjunction with the National Trust. She said this organisation is here to stay; where is St Helena she said:- "Just look down"

Helena added that they have started talking with various tourist boards, creating a map of the seven wonders, flagging certain areas of best whale/dolphin watching, diving, scenic walks etc. They know money is tight but use to making funds go as far as possible and have new ideas and will be speaking to new audiences. She said that Brighter Group has also helped the Tourist Office with their marketing strategy and will be assisting them with their Crisis Management Plan.

Hon CB asked about whether or not the Tourism website would be upgraded at this time and Sarah advised that it was not a part of their remit to re-design the website.

Hon CB asked if it was a good route for tourism coming through Jo-burg and Sarah said it was a challenge to consider, there had been bad publicity but visitors travelling needed to be educated, research the right information so there were positives and we have to make it work.

The Chairman said that while it was early stages the number of real tourists are low what can be done to increase numbers and Sarah replied that she had only been on board for one month, the plans on paper are on the right track and these things take time, they do have proven track records and will put a programme of activity in place educating tour operators to attract more visitors with a mixture of PR and marketing representation. Air Access is the way forward to attract time rich and cash rich visitors.

GE added that the benefit of the RMS was a five day learning of the culture of St Helena; Sarah replied that yes one made friends on the ship but quirky stories, the dialect, really lovely stories in the media and the genuine warm welcome is really important.

The Chairman thanked the team for a very interesting discussion and said he looked forward to hearing more brighter things from the Brighter Group.

4. Update on ESH Report, May 2018 (Director of Commercial Development & Enterprise)

The above report had been circulated for advance reading and the DCDE gave a brief update.

GE said that with regard to the buy local campaign there was a need for retailers to order the right products more precisely to avoid glut and questioned whether ESH had spoken to or invited the retailers in to discuss; MG said this issue had been identified a number of years ago and the ultimate end goal was to formalize by contractual arrangement a wider cropping plan and be supported by critical players from the Farmers Association and he hoped that some positive progress would be made in the next year.



The Chairman suggested that Delia from ESH be invited to EDC to give a broader overview and also Darren Duncan who leads on SHG's National Agriculture Policy, he added that the big retailers be invited after this. He said that the meeting with the farmers in May was a call for help and we need to try and put things in place to help them. He added that perhaps Leigh Morris TOR'S could be shared with the EDC and Leigh could also be invited to the EDC one month.

Action: Secretary

MG said that they received three EOI from people willing to offer training but there was no interest from the public willing to be up skilled. Hon CSO asked if an advert could be done to let the public know what training could now be provided and MG said that they would look into this and also go on the radio.

The Chairman thanked the DCDE for keeping the committee updated.

There being no further business, this session of the Agenda was concluded and the Committee moved to closed session.

Minutes Approved: 
Chairman


Date: 2-08-18

