

Memorandum for Executive Council

SUBJECT

Review of the current and future legislative, policy and operational provisions for the conservation and enhancement of St Helena's historic environment.

Memorandum by the Chairman of the Environment & Natural Resources Committee

ADVICE SOUGHT

- 1. Executive Council is asked to consider and advise whether the report and recommendations produced by the Environment & Natural Resources Heritage Sub Committee on the current and future legislative, policy and operational provisions for the conservation and enhancement of St Helena's historic environment, (Annex A) should be endorsed and accepted in principle, subject to these recommendations and associated actions being properly costed, appraised and prioritised through the MTEF process.**

BACKGROUND & CONSIDERATIONS

2. A Subcommittee was set up under the Environment and Natural Resources Committee (ENRC) to review the current and future legislative, policy and operational provisions for the conservation and enhancement of St Helena's historic environment. The Committee comprised of the former Chairman of the ENRC, Director of the Environment & Natural Resources Directorate (ENRD) (now Environmental Natural Resources & Planning Directorate ENRP), President of the St Helena National Trust (SHNT), Chairman of the St Helena Heritage Society, Head of Conservation for the SHNT, Chief Planning Officer and the Secretary to the ENRC.
3. In 2013/14, John Barber, Archaeological Adviser/Trainer to the St Helena Government, was engaged by ENRD to report on the legislative and policy framework for the protection of St Helena's historic environment. The report considered a wide range of proposals but the report was never finalised nor adopted by the relevant Council Committee.
4. The Subcommittee considered the Barber Report and its recommendations, together with associated legislation and policies and produced a report assessing the current situation, how it could be improved and resourced and made recommendations accordingly.

5. The report makes five main recommendations, which are that:
 - the Environment & Natural Resources Directorate (now ENRP) be tasked with coordinating the establishment of a National Heritage Strategy for St Helena.
 - the Environment & Natural Resources Directorate (now ENRP) prepares a draft Terms of Reference and calls a meeting inviting representatives of those engaged in the Heritage Sector for the purpose of agreeing to work together within a regular forum under a common Terms of Reference.
 - finances be identified in 2019 so that a contract be advertised and awarded to coordinate the completion, consultation and validation of the Historical Environment Record (HER).
 - key areas of support are needed to address immediate resource gap needs and to work towards enhancing Government's responsibilities for strategic management and oversight for the protection, conservation and enhancement of the island's historic landscape. These include securing a historic buildings specialist to work within Planning to prepare the HER for consultation and validation so that it can be adopted and be the statutory reference for planning and development matters on St Helena; prepare conservation management plans to support the Historic Conservation Areas with Jamestown being the priority and supported by design guidelines; mobilise the heritage sector and work with them to develop a heritage strategy for St Helena and within this consider the pursuit of UNESCO World Heritage Status.
 - members of the Heritage Sector work to establish a Heritage Grant Scheme to be launched in association with the publication of the HER as the island's statutory list.
6. A copy of the report (Annex A) which is the final version dated 13th February 2019 is attached.
7. Some of the recommendations of the report will require additional resources. Whilst the costs of these are currently unknown, it is likely that many of the recommendations will not be able to be progressed unless they are funded.
8. The resources include funding to back the Heritage Grant Scheme (estimated at between £200k - £250K over 3 years) and workforce requirements to support the work stream. (estimated at approximately £80K, made of up of £50K for TC Heritage Support and two local Planning Officer posts at £30K per annum)
9. The Planning Section of ENRP is under resourced. Planning cannot cope with the strategic issues of developing plans and policies alongside the current workload. Planning is key to supporting economic and sustainable development, without the

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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right plans and processes in place the island will fail to meet its sustainable development targets. Given the existing planning load and potential for further large-scale development on island increased resources will be needed to cope. The Planning Section will also have to deal with larger quantities of material when assessing applications concerning heritage structures. This will include the need for additional skilled support to be able to take this forward in a timely manner.

**ECONOMIC
IMPLICATIONS**

10. At the very least, the ENRP will need to bid for finances to provide technical support to complement existing staffing. Heritage projects such as the Jacob's Ladder will need to be considered as Capital Fund Projects.

11. Investment in heritage improves the quality of the tourism product offering and therefore contributes to St Helena's development as a tourism destination. In some cases, the development of heritage sites also brings into use spaces for local recreation.

12. Attributing funding to heritage has an opportunity cost, in that funding will not be able to be used on other public sector needs.

**CONSISTENCY
WITH
INVESTMENT
POLICY
PRINCIPLES
PUBLIC / SOCIAL
IMPACT**

13. N/A

14. There is strong public support for the conservation, enhancement and protection of St Helena's historic environment.

15. Having a Heritage Strategy and a coordinated approach for looking after the Island's heritage is a positive step for St Helena and should have positive public/social impact.

**ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT**

16. A Heritage Strategy will have a positive impact on the built environment of the Island. A co-ordinated, strategic approach as recommended in the Report, will potentially create a strong heritage identity for the Island.

**PREVIOUS
CONSULTATION /
COMMITTEE
INPUT**

17. The need for this report was discussed previously at ENRC, hence the formation of a subgroup to take forward this aspect of work.

**PUBLIC
REACTION**

18. The public is likely to respond favourably to the recommendations of the report, as it will be seen as a positive for St Helena. In the St Helena 10 Yr. plan the public saw safeguarding heritage (and natural resources) as a base for tourism.

PUBLICITY

19. ExCo's decision should be mentioned in the ExCo Report and associated broadcast. However, further coverage is recommended to inform the public of the report and make it available for viewing online via the SHG website and through hard copies placed in key places like the Customer Service Centre and the Public Library.

SUPPORT TO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

20. Altogether wealthier (safeguard Heritage and natural resources as a base for tourism)

LINK TO SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN GOALS

21. The establishment of a Heritage Strategy for the island in 2019 would lend support to achieving the island's Sustainable Economic Development Plan, 2018-2028 (SHG) Vision and Goal 6 to sustain and improve our Natural Capital, maintaining and enhancing St Helena's exceptional environment, landscape, heritage and cultural qualities for this generation.

OPEN /CLOSED AGENDA ITEM

22. Open agenda

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Corporate Support
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02nd May 2019