

Memorandum for Executive Council

SUBJECT

Climate Change Policy

Memorandum by Chair of ENRC

ADVICE SOUGHT

1. Executive Council is asked to consider and advise whether the Climate Change Policy, July 2019, (Annex A), should be endorsed.

**BACKGROUND &
CONSIDERATIONS**

2. St Helena is distinctive for its unique and isolated position in the South Atlantic. It has many characteristic environmental features but a limited supply of some key resources such as freshwater leaving it more vulnerable to Climate Change than larger countries. St Helena Government (SHG) acknowledges the need to create a Climate Change Policy with a view to planning for short, medium and long term environmental changes that are likely to impact on the quality of island life if left unmanaged.
3. The key driver for anticipated external environmental alteration is climate change. Globally it continues to be a major scientific issue and challenge for national governments. The latest report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was designed to define the impacts of global warming reaching 1.5 degrees Celsius. It also highlighted the increased impact of a further warming to 2C above pre-industrial levels. However, maybe the most telling comment of the report is that the ambitions stated by worldwide governments in the Paris Accord of 2015 are no longer enough to limit global warming to 1.5C.
4. The world's climate changed during the 20th century. Global average surface temperature increased by about 0.6°C; snow cover and ice extent decreased; the temperature and acidity of oceans changed; and sea levels around the world increased between 10 cm and 20 cm. Seasonal patterns, including rainfall, have also changed the world over. The 1990s were the hottest decade and 1998 the warmest year on record, since temperature recording began some 150 years ago. And, while it is true that there have been natural and cyclical variations in the Earth's climate in the past, it is also true that the current rate of change is faster than anything the planet has experienced before.
5. There is an increased global appetite for action on Climate Change, which provides an opportunity for St Helena, as a small and isolated territory, to show global leadership in planting climate action at the heart of sustainable economic development

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on the Island.

**FINANCIAL
IMPLICATIONS**

6. At this stage in the process there are no direct financial implications. Council is being asked to endorse the principles and policy objectives outlined in this Climate Change policy. At this stage in the process no actions or action plans have been agreed. This will form the next stage of policy implementation where detailed planned actions will be developed and costed. Any new policy initiatives developed will need to be fed through the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) process, and prioritised with all other policy initiatives. In addition to this SHG will also continue to seek alternative external funding sources to deliver the action plans as well.

**ECONOMIC
IMPLICATIONS**

7. The Sustainable Economic Development Plan (SEDP) identified St Helena's Natural Resources and Geography as one of the Island's key comparative advantages which presents a draw to the Island. Alongside St Helena's Energy Policy, endorsed in 2016, which proposes we achieve 100% of our energy from renewable sources by 2022, enacting this Climate Change Policy will demonstrate that SHG is committed to developing a 'greener St Helena'. This has a significant positive effect on the image of our Island.
8. Endorsing the policy means some adjustments to our approach to food production, use and management of our natural resources, energy production, emissions and particulate management, and the development of our economy to meet these changing expectations. These changes, to deliver long-term sustainability of our environment and economy, have been shown worldwide, to have reduced costs in the long run. For example, managing particulate levels in towns reduces the healthcare costs of treating asthmatics, whilst planting trees to capture run off reduces the need for as significant an investment in reservoirs or other water collection means. Whilst the cost benefit of each action is unknown, particularly because the action plan has not yet been developed, looking anecdotally at climate change resilience actions across the world, it is likely that there will be a number of win-win actions both for the environment, economy, and the government budget.

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

9. N/A.
10. The key driver for anticipated external environmental alteration is climate change. Globally it continues to be a major scientific issue and challenge for national governments.
11. One goal of this policy is to reduce negative impacts of these alterations on St Helena residents by mitigating or adapting to

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the effects of climate change.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

12. There may be public or social impacts from implementation of future action plans, which will be examined as those plans are developed.
13. Implementation of the policy will have a positive environmental impact. St Helena's airport and continued import dependence adds a significant carbon footprint to a number of sectors on St Helena whilst also draining much needed financial resources from the Island. Overreliance on the import of fossil fuels, food and construction materials are areas in particular that impact both on the Island's climate footprint and contribute to significant outflows of expenditure. St Helena has the potential to become a test-bed for up-scaling new climate-impact-limiting economic development that can inspire action in other Island communities and larger nations across the globe.
14. Environmental resources could be globally prized as a tourist product, but they are also essential as they are integral to the functioning of the Island and the health and well-being of its people.
15. In practice we all need to consider how our homes, buildings, wastes, transport, energy generation and personal use of resources can have less of a negative impact on the environment and ultimately the climate.

PREVIOUS CONSULTATION / COMMITTEE INPUT

16. The Environment & Natural Resources Committee (ENRC) was presented with an information paper and agreed for a policy to be developed on 18 August 2016. Thereafter internal consultation within the Environmental Management Division (EMD) and external consultation with Connect Saint Helena Ltd. Feedback was received from key Environmental Specialists including; internally – EMD's Terrestrial Conservation Officer, LEMP's Ecologist and LEMP's Team Leader – Compensatory Works, Head of the Agriculture & Natural Resources Division (ANRD) and externally – former Director of Amberol (UK based plastics recycling company), Environmental Consultant (former SHG Climate Change Officer).
17. On 6 October 2016 a Climate Change workshop was held with internal and external stakeholders, which was followed by public consultation from 12 October 2016 for a four-week period.
18. On 30 January 2019 the Chair of the ENRC presented the draft policy to Chair Persons Assembly. On 19 June 2019 the draft policy was updated including a Foreword by H.E Governor Dr Philip Rushbrook.

PUBLIC REACTION

19. There was positive reaction to development of the policy. Feedback received during public consultation was favourable and assisted to develop the policy further.

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PUBLICITY

20. Executive Council's decision will be mentioned in the ExCo Report and associated broadcast. If endorsed, a further update will be provided to the public and the Policy will be uploaded to the SHG website.

SUPPORT TO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

21. The Climate Change Policy supports the National Goal; *Altogether Greener* in the St Helena Island 10-Year Plan 2017 – 2027 and ENRD Strategic Priority: *Protect the natural environment by conserving biodiversity, preventing, minimizing or mitigating against any negative activity and/or impact, to conserve and enhance the Island's natural capital.*

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OPEN AGENDA ITEM

Open item.

Corporate Support
Corporate Services

10th July 2019

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