

ST. HELENA
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

THE PRESIDENT

The Honourable John Gilbert Cranfield

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

The Honourable Chief Secretary	-	Mrs Susan O'Bey
The Honourable Financial Secretary	-	Mr Dax Richards
The Honourable Acting Attorney General	-	Mr Allen Cansick

ELECTED MEMBERS

The Honourable Clint Richard Beard
 The Honourable Cruyff Gerard Buckley
 The Honourable Jeffrey Ellick
 The Honourable Corinda Sebastiana Stuart Essex
 The Honourable Anthony Arthur Green
 The Honourable Lawson Arthur Henry
 The Honourable Cyril Kenneth Leo
 The Honourable Christine Lilian Scipio
 The Honourable Derek Franklin Thomas
 The Honourable Russell Keith Yon

The Honourable Gavin George Ellick	-	Excused
The Honourable Brian William Isaac	-	Overseas

CLERK OF COUNCILS

Mrs Connie Johnson

PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Friday, 6th December, 2019

The Council met at 10.00 am
in the Council Chamber, Jamestown

(The Speaker in the Chair)

ORDER OF THE DAY

1. FORMAL ENTRY OF THE PRESIDENT

2. PRAYERS
(The Right Reverend Bishop Dale Bowers)

3. ELECTIONS

ELECTION FOR MEMBER OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

The Speaker –

Honourable Members, our next item of business is Election for a Member of Public Accounts Committee. Could I have a proposer please for someone to serve on the Public Accounts Committee? Councillor Thomas?

The Hon. Councillor Derek Thomas –
I propose the Honourable Jeffrey Ellick.

The Speaker –
Thank you. Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –
Thank you. Councillor Ellick, you've been proposed and seconded to serve on the Public Accounts Committee, do you accept?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –
Yes, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –
Honourable Members, Councillor Ellick has been proposed and seconded to serve on the Public Accounts Committee. All those in favour say Aye, those of a contrary opinion, No.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker –
The Ayes have it, congratulations Councillor Ellick, you're now a member of the Public Accounts Committee.

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –
Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –
Next item of business, please?

(Inaudible)

The Speaker –
Can I just confirm then that there are no further nominations? Thank you very much indeed.

4. ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT

Good morning, Honourable Members of Legislative Council, ladies and gentlemen, I bid you a very warm welcome to the first sitting of the twelfth meeting of Legislative Council.

I would like to inform Members that I have given Mr Darrin Henry permission to take photographs for a short period this morning.

I will take this opportunity to congratulate the Honourable Jeffrey Ellick on his successful election to this House of Legislative Council, I wish him all the very best during the tenure of his office.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Bishop Dale Bowers for giving us the benefit of prayer, I would also like to thank Mr Merlin George for his continued support as our Mace Bearer.

I have been in contact with the Honourable Brian Isaac in Pretoria, but at the time we e-mailed he had not seen his Doctor as she was away on conference. His appointment was re-scheduled but I haven't had any further indication. On behalf of all Members, I wish him well and look forward to having him back on the island again soon.

I also have apologies for absence from Councillor Gavin Ellick who is not well this morning and he's got an appointment with the Doctor this morning as well.

We welcome back Councillors Christine Scipio, Gavin Ellick and Clint Beard who attended the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Jersey, Commonwealth Parliament Conference in Uganda and the Westminster Conference in London respectively. From all your reports, the respective Conferences were both fruitful and beneficial for the island.

Honourable Members, I won't prolong this this morning because we have quite a long agenda. Honourable Members, for this session we have seventeen Sessional Papers, three Questions, eight Motions followed by the traditional Adjournment Debate, all of which will have a

significant impact on good governance. I will now call upon the Clerk of Councils to announce the next item of business, please?

5. PAPERS

SP 31/2019 – The Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Speaker –
Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –
Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 31/2019 entitled Equality and Human Rights Commission – Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2019.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 32/2019 - The Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Speaker –
The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –
Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 32/2019 entitled Performance Audit Report - Procurement of Sea Freight Service Contractor.

Ordered to lie on the table.

33/2019 – The Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Speaker –
Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –
Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 33/2019 entitled St Helena Government – Response to Recommendations on the Performance Audit Report – Procurement of Sea Freight Services September 2019.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 34/2019 – The Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Speaker –
Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –
Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 34/2019 entitled Performance Audit Report – Procurement of the Fuel Management Contractor.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 35/2019 – The Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Speaker –
Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards =
Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 35/2019 entitled – St Helena Government – Response to Recommendations on the Performance Audit Report - Procurement of the Fuel Management Contractor – September 2019.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 36/2019 – The Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Speaker –
The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –
Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 36/2019 entitled Performance Audit Report – Jamestown Hospital Refurbishment Project.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 37/2019 – The Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Speaker –
The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –
Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 37/2019 entitled St Helena Government – Response to Recommendations on the Performance Audit Report – Jamestown Hospital Refurbishment Project September 2019.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 38/2019 – The Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Speaker –
Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –
Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 38/2019 entitled – St Helena Government – Response to Recommendations on the Public Accounts Committee and Progress Register as at 25 November 2019.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 39/2019 – The Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Speaker –
The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –
Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 39/2019 entitled – St Helena Government – Response to Recommendations on the Public Accounts Committee in Sessional Paper 05/2019.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 40/2019 – The Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Speaker –
The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –
Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 40/2019 entitled The St Helena Government – Currency Fund Annual Financial Statements 2018/19.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 41/2019 – The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex.

The Speaker –
The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 41/2019 entitled Report to Legislative Council on the Formal Session of the Public Accounts Committee held on 29th July, 5th August and 12th August 2019.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 42/2019 – The Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Speaker –
The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –
Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 42/2019 entitled A Bill for an Ordinance – The Currency (Amendment) Bill, 2019.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 43/2019 – The Honourable Lawson Henry.

The Speaker –
The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –
Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 43/2019 entitled – A Bill for an Ordinance –

The Financial Services (Amendment) Bill, 2019. I have here an Authority to Proceed signed by His Excellency the Acting Governor.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 44/2019 – The Honourable Anthony Green.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Anthony Green?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper No. 44/2019 – A Bill for an Ordinance – The Police and Criminal Evidence (Amendment) Ordinance, 2019.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 45/2019 – The Honourable Attorney General.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Attorney General?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 45/2019 entitled A Bill for an Ordinance – The Public Accounts Committee (Procedure) Bill, 2019.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 46/2019 – The Honourable Anthony Green.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Anthony Green?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 46/2019 – The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Application) Order, 2019.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SP 47/2019 – The Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, I beg to present Sessional Paper 47/2019 entitled – Enterprise St Helena Annual Report 2017/2018.

Ordered to lie on the table.

6.

QUESTIONS

Question No. 1 – The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex to ask the Honourable Chief Secretary.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Will the Honourable Chief Secretary tell this House what is the current position regarding the investigation commissioned by Her Majesty's Government, following the United Kingdom Public Accounts Committee hearing, to ascertain where responsibility lies for the inability to open St Helena Airport for scheduled commercial operations on time?

The Speaker –

The Honourable Chief Secretary?

The Honourable Susan O'Bey –

Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the Honourable Member for the question. The question does not fall under an area of responsibility for which a Committee Chair or ex officio member of Executive Council is responsible, none of these have any responsibility for the airport. Under Standing Order, Rule 1, of Legislative Council, in such circumstances the Governor may direct a member of Executive Council to answer the question. I have been directed by the Acting Governor to provide the following response: The current position is that an investigation was carried out, it led to an out of court settlement between the Department for International Development and Atkins regarding Atkins advisory role in the design of St Helena's Airport. Following standard legal practice, the terms and arguments and the penal settlements are commercially confidential.

The Speaker –

Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you. Will the Honourable Chief Secretary indicate when the investigation was concluded?

The Speaker –

Honourable Chief Secretary?

The Hon. Susan O'Bey –

My understanding is that the investigation was concluded in January of this year.

The Speaker –

Next item of business, please?

Question No. 2 – The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex.

The Speaker –

Sorry, sorry, I beg your pardon.

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Sorry for the pause, Mr Speaker, but I was waiting to see if the Honourable Member had any further questions.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Mr Speaker, could I ask the Honourable Chief Secretary if there is a report written in relation to this matter and, if so, when will it be available to Executive Council? Thank you.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Chief Secretary?

The Hon. Susan O’Bey –

Mr Speaker, the only information I have is what I communicated to the Honourable Member. I don’t have any further information on this and there certainly must have been a report the Honourable Chair shared with this, with St Helena.

The Speaker –

Councillor Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Mr Speaker, could I ask the Honourable Chief Secretary to give an undertaking that she will consult with Her Majesty’s Government to find out if there is a report available and given the impact that the failure of the airport has had can on the people of St Helena that a copy of that report be made available to St Helena? Thank you.

The Speaker –

Honourable Chief Secretary?

The Hon. Susan O’Bey –

Mr Speaker, I could give an undertaking to follow through on the request, but I cannot give an undertaking as to the outcome of that request.

The Speaker –

Next question, please?

Question No. 2 – The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex to ask the Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Will the Honourable Financial Secretary tell this Council why sea freight is no longer subsidised and what options exist to reduce further escalation of freight rates that are already having a negative impact on our community?

The Speaker –

The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for her question. Mr Speaker, when HMG agreed to fund the design, build, operate and hand back project for the St Helena Airport the decision was taken after a number of years of planning and after preparing a business case to the Chief Ministerial Support. The business case outlined a number of options for future access to St Helena. This included replacing the RMS St Helena with a new passenger/cargo vessel and continuing to provide an ongoing subsidy for that service. Ultimately HMG agreed to fund the Airport Project, however, the business case was clear that there was an expectation that any new sea freight service would operate on a commercial basis without an ongoing subsidy. SHG signed up to the business case in 2011 through the exchange of letters with Her Majesty's Government. In previous communications, HMG made it clear they would make available a subsidy for accessibility by air through the running of the airport and the air service, however, any new shipping service would be expected to operate on a fully commercial basis. The tender for the new shipping service was therefore taken to the market on the basis that the service would not be subsidised. Since the start of the new shipping service there have been a number of increases due, in particular, to changes in bunker costs, currency fluctuations and general inflation. These are the agreed budget adjustment factors for the commercial shipping service to St Helena. It should be noted that whilst the RMS service was heavily subsidised, most of that subsidy actually was used to cover the passenger handling activities and not the freight service. SHG are already covering the additional costs of having to transport cargo from Ruperts into Jamestown which is estimated to cost around £0.5m each year. The most vulnerable members of society are protected as the Minimum Income Standard would be changed to reflect any increase in prices as a result of higher freight rates. SHG, however, is currently producing a policy document to consider options for a direct subsidy into certain types of freight which, if supported, would take effect from the new financial year. Budgetary provisions has been included in the draft budget for 2020/2021 and will be one of the discussion points at the upcoming Financial Aid Mission. SHG is aware of the likely impacts on freight rates after low sulphur fuel regulations which are due to come into effect from 1st January 2020. We are working with A W Ship Management Limited to find a source of low sulphur fuel which would have the least impact on the?.....adjustment factor and ultimately the cost of the freight. SHG will be considering what, if any, intervention can be made to cushion the impacts of the new legislation. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much indeed. The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

I thank the Financial Secretary for his response. Will the Financial Secretary give an update of the actions taken following the Motion moved by my Honourable Colleague, Councillor Derek Thomas, regarding looking at other options for freight?

The Speaker –
Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –
Mr Speaker, I don't have those details offhand, I will look to actually be able to provide a response to Members, but in other forums I have already given a number of updates on and the progress that's been made ...?.....the previous Motion that has been raised by the Honourable Derek Thomas.

The Speaker –
The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
I thank the Honourable Financial Secretary for his response and I look forward to a current update in due course. Will the Honourable Financial Secretary state whether the issue of escalating freight rates will form a key element of the discussions in the Financial Aid Mission next week; I know he said that they were one of the topics under discussion, but will this be one of the topics that is given the highest priority?

The Speaker –
Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –
Mr Speaker, a number of topics will be given priority during this Financial Aid Mission, I can't say that this is going to be the highest and top priority, but it will be one of the priorities that we will be discussing.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Thank you.

The Speaker –
Thank you very much. Any other questions? The Honourable Christine Scipio?

The Hon. Christine Scipio –
Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, will the Honourable Financial Secretary tell this House of this subsidy policy will be shared with all elected members?

The Speaker –
The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –
Mr Speaker, the policy is being drafted and as with the policy process it will go through the appropriate Committee that is responsible for this specific subject and at the moment whilst the shipping is the special responsibility of the Governor he has delegated that activity to come through Economic Development Committee, so, in due course, as far as that policy process, that will be brought forward to Economic Development Committee.

The Speaker –
Thank you very much. Any other questions on.....? Next question, please?

Question No. 3 – The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex to ask the Honourable Chairman, Economic Development Committee.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Will the Honourable Chairman of the Economic Development Committee tell this Council what further actions are required in order to finalise the Labour Market Strategy and when it is expected to finalise the Labour Market Strategy and when it is expected that the Strategy will be implemented?

The Speaker –

The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank the Honourable Member for her question. The Economic Development Committee endorsed the draft Labour Market Strategy at its 28th November meeting. Executive Council will consider whether to approve the final draft strategy on 17th December. If approved, the Labour Market Strategy will be finalised with effective from 1st January 2020. Officers have developed an internal implementation plan that identified specific steps required to implement the policies and programmes proposed. The organisation responsible for activating those steps and target base for implementation. The Senior Economist has already given?.....who will have responsibilities related to the Strategy and will be scheduling meetings with key stakeholders after the media who have?.....specifically discussed work. Work has begun to implement some of the most popular aspects of the Labour Market Strategies. Efforts to include we more consistently implement SHG HR policies have been ongoing with good results in several areas. The best example is work to ensure that job postings clearly indicate that an experienced or competency based test can be substituted for specific qualification. In addition, planning for how to fund and staff ...?....access St Helena cash is already on the way. Finally, the Senior Economist and I have been back on both radio stations following the 28th November meeting of the Economic Development Committee to raise further awareness of the strategy and to talk about the changes made following the public consultation?..... Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Will the Honourable Chairman state when the final draft will be made available to the public?

The Speaker –

The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Mr Speaker, the version that went to the Economic Development Committee is already in the public domain, once approved by ExCo it can formally issue it then. Thank you.

The Speaker –
Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
May I ask the approximate date on which it will be made available?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –
This can be on 18th December after ExCo.

The Speaker –
Thank you.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Thank you.

The Speaker –
Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Will the Honourable Chairman say whether it is envisaged that any changes to legislation will be required before the strategy can be implemented and, if so, in what areas?

The Speaker –
The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –
None that I am aware of. There is underlying policies such as Immigration that my Honourable Friend will be aware that in relation to that aspect the Senior Economist has to work with the Immigration Working Group. Thank you.

The Speaker –
Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Will the Honourable Chairman inform this House what steps will be taken to ensure that the necessary resources will be in place to support implementation of the strategy?

The Speaker –
Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –
I can say, Mr Speaker, my Honourable Friend will be aware that this topic of information that, as I said in my substantive reply, that discussions to?.....staff, the cash centre is already underway and forms part of the impact project related process that is undergoing, secondly, where there is other sources, as I understand it, will be done on a shared basis within existing resources. Thank you.

The Speaker –
Thank you. Any other Member wish to speak? Next item of business, please?

7. **MOTIONS**

Motion No. 1 – The Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Currency (Amendment) Bill, 2019 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council.

The Speaker –

Do we have a seconder, please? Oh, sorry.

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, I would like to advise that I have the authority to proceed from the Governor in accordance with section 73\2(a) of the Constitution.

The Speaker –

Is there a seconder, please?

The Hon. Susan O’Bey –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

The Mover wishes to speak to the Motion?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Currency (Amendment Bill, 2019 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council. Mr Speaker, this Bill seeks to amend the Currency Fund Ordinance to make minor but important changes to the way in which a deficit is treated and to allow for a surplus to be transferred to the General Reserve of the Currency Fund rather than going directly to the General Revenue of the St Helena Government as is currently required under the Ordinance. Mr Speaker, these changes are seen as a tidying up exercise for the practical management of the Fund by the Currency Commissioners. The current Ordinance is silent on how to deal with a deficit arising in the year and therefore it is proposed that section 16 is amended to allow a deficit to be met from the General Reserve of the Fund. The Ordinance also articulates under section 17 how any surpluses should be applied and in which priority order. The proposed amendment to section 17 will allow for the surplus to be transferred to the General Reserve of the Currency Fund and allows the Commissioners to transfer, with the approval of the Governor, any amount in excess of ten percent of the demand liabilities of the Fund to the General Revenues of the St Helena Government. Mr Speaker, the practice in previous years has been to transfer any such loss or deficit into the General Reserve of the Fund. Rightly so, this issue has been identified in our recent audit and brought to the Commissioners to transfer the surplus to the SHG General Revenue even if SHG do not need or have not budgeted for the additional revenue. Therefore, the amendment is requested to address the anomaly to ensure future treatment of any surplus or deficit is in line with best practice and allows the Commissioners to make a recommendation

to the Governor to withdraw funds from the General Reserve of the Fund to support Government spending when required. Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Honourable Members, I put the question that the Currency (Amendment) Bill, 2019, be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council. The question is now open for debate. The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Mr Speaker, I rise in support of this Bill. I feel the?..... of the Currency (Amendment) Bill, 2019 as mentioned by my?.....?.....(*inaudible*).....tidying up exercise and I give it my full support. Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Any other Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Mr Speaker, as a member of the Public Accounts Committee, I am very pleased that this tidying up exercise is taking place?.....?.....and now it is going to be addressed.....?.....

The Speaker –

Thank you. Any other Member? The Honourable Mover wishes to reply to the debate?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I'd just like to thank the Honourable Members for their support and look forward to going through the detailed provisions of the Bill. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Honourable Members, I put the question that the Currency (Amendment) Bill, 2019, be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker –

Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Council do resolve itself into a Committee to consider the detailed provisions of the Bill.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Susan O'Bey –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you,

Question that the Council do resolve into a Committee, put and agreed to.

Council in Committee.

The Chairman –

Honourable Members, we are now in Committee stage. I put the question then that the Title, Enacting Clause and Clause 1 do stand part of the Bill. Any Member wishes to speak?
Title, Enacting Clause and Clause 1.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

We move on to Clause 2. The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Thank you, Mr Chairman. For the benefit of the listening public and Members, the amendments to section 16 that's proposed under Clause 2 would actually allow for the deficit to be actually met from the General Reserve of the ...?.... by itself, so Clause 2 (2) actually looks to bring that into effect and then there will be an additional subsection under Clause 16 which will allow, in the event that there is in excess of ten percent of the ...?....liabilities of the fund, the Commissioners, with the approval of the Governor, can actually direct that amounts in excess of ten percent is actually transferred to General Revenue of SHG, so Clause 2, as it stands, implements those two amendments by allowing for a deficit and then also allowing for the transfer from the General Reserve if there is funding in excess of the ten percent of the ...?.... liability.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Any Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Christine Scipio?

The Hon. Christine Scipio –

Thank you, Mr Chairman. May I ask the Financial Secretary where existing under current legislation the title of section 16 states General Reserves of the Currency Fund and according to that in front of me it's the General Reserve Currency Fund. Are you proposing to include the word "the" or is it just an oversight?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

I think that's just an oversight. Thank you very much.....

The Hon. Christine Scipio –

So, what does this mean then, Mr Chairman?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Can I propose an amendment then, Mr Chairman?

The Chairman –

Yes.

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Chair, that the General Reserve of, where it says, the title just before subsection (2) should read “the General Reserve of the Currency Fund”.

The Chairman –

Okay. Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Susan O’Bey –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Chairman –

Any other Member wishes to speak to the amendment? The Honourable Anthony Green?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Yes, thank you, Mr Chair. The Honourable Secretary, I did have a clarification sorted about how this relates to section 20, but I just wondered whether, I support this in terms, in layman’s terms, I’m just wondering if you could just explain the difference between how the operating of the profit and reserve will be now as against what it will be as against what it is now, in layman’s terms?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Can I just come back to that one, I think we missed a part of the process where we need to agree the amendment first.

The Hon. Anthony Green –

I do beg your pardon, Sir.

The Hon. Dax Richards –

But I will answer your question.

The Chairman –

Then I put the question then that Clause 2 be amended to read General Reserves of the Currency Fund with the inclusion of “the”.

Question on amendment, put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

So, we’ll speak to the amended Clause 2.

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. So, if I understand your question correctly, Honourable Member, you’re asking in terms of the actual management of the fund how do we treat surpluses and deficits now and how we propose to under the amendment. So, we have in the past been treating the surpluses that are generated by the Currency Fund in the manner that we have wished to do with this proposed amendment, however, in recent years we’ve actually, which has been brought to us by the Auditors, that have had to physically transfer any surplus at the end of the year into the General Revenue of the St Helena Government, so regardless of whether SHG needs those funds or not or whether they’re budgeted for, the way the law currently stands we had to comply with it and actually transfer revenue at the end of the financial year into an SHG position. In terms of the deficits, the only deficit that’s happened

in recent times has happened quite a number of years ago and, as I said, we were applying to the Currency Fund proposed amendments that we're putting through now, but there was no legal basis at that time for us to do so.

The Hon. Anthony Green –
Thank you for that.

The Hon. Dax Richards –
This provides the clarity now in terms of how we should be..?.....

The Hon. Anthony Green –
Thank you. Thank you, Mr Chair.

The Chairman –
Any other Member wishes to speak to the amendment?

Clause 2 (as amended) –

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –
Can we move on to Clause 3, please? The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –
Thank you, Mr Chair. So, Clause 3 looks to amend section 17 which is, as it stands in the current Ordinance, is entitled to distribution of surplus of the Fund, just checking the wording to make sure it's consistent. So, we are proposing to repeal paragraph (c) as it currently stands under the Ordinance, this is the paragraph at the moment that determines that SHG, that the Currency Commission, sorry, needs to actually transfer any surplus at the end of the financial year directly into the General Revenue of the St Helena Government. So, Part (a) looks to repeal that and replace part (c) with the words "any remaining surplus must be transferred to the General Reserve" so it gives effect to those amendments that we wanted and now that we've changed section 16 with the previous amendment we now looking to delete paragraph (d) which gave that similar effect, so it actually moved it to the right clause of the Ordinance now, the group really responsible for that.

The Chairman –
Any Member wishes to speak to Clause 3? The Honourable Anthony Green?

The Hon. Anthony Green –
I just wonder, Mr Chairman, if the Honourable Financial Secretary could just confirm, we're talking about General Reserves, so is it General Reserves of the Currency Fund or there's also a General Reserve of the St Helena Government?

The Hon. Dax Richards –
You're absolutely right, so the Currency Fund has its General Reserve, as you know, it's set up under this Ordinance and the SHG Consolidated Fund, as Members will probably be more familiar with, contains a number of Reserves within the Consolidated Fund and one of those is also called the SHG General Reserves.

The Hon. Anthony Green –

So, if I may, just to clarify, under Clause 3(c) any ...?.....surplus must be transferred to the General Reserve, refers to the General Reserve in the Currency Fund

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Yes, this is the Currency....?.....

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Thank you, thank you, Sir.

The Chairman –

Any other Member wishes to speak?

Clause 3 –

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Can we move on to Clause 4, please?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Chairman, the Clause 4 gives effect to section 18 where the current title is “Determination of Surplus of Fund”, the proposed amendment changes that now to ensure that the correct title will be “Determination of Surplus or Deficit of the Fund” to take account of the previous amendments that we’ve just approved.

The Chairman –

Any Honourable Member wishes to speak to Clause 4?

Clause 4.

Question put and agreed to.

Council Resumed.

The Speaker –

Right, we’re back in..... we’re out of Committee stage now. Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, I beg to report that the Currency (Amendment) Bill, 2019, passed the Committee with one amendment and to move that this Council approves the said Bill and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted.

The Speaker –

Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Susan O’Bey –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker–

Thank you. You can speak to the Motion, Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, again, I'd just like to thank Honourable Members for their support in bringing the Bill forward. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Honourable Members, I put the question that this Council approves the Currency (Amendment) Bill, 2019, as amended, and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted. All Members are invited to speak? No? Honourable Mover? No?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Nothing to respond to.

The Speaker –

Honourable Members, I put the question that this Council approves the Currency (Amendment) Bill, 2019, as amended, and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker –

Next item of business, please?

Motion No. 2 – The Honourable Lawson Henry.

THE FINANCIAL SERVICES (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2019

The Speaker –

The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Financial Services (Amendment) Bill, 2019, be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council. Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Councillor Buckley. You may now speak to the Motion, Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, at present the Financial Services Ordinance 2008, the Ordinance puts significant restrictions on non-government ...?... insurance companies in that no part of Financial Services Regulatory Authority, FSRA, to provide insurance on St Helena.

These restrictions include under section 8 of the Ordinance an obligation to have at least two individuals on St Helena who would effectively direct the business. Further, when a company is admitted to provide insurance, there are a number of regulatory requirements that would not be enforceable or appropriate for a non-domicile company. These include control by the FSRA of admitted companies participation in the relevant business, section 13, in control of shareholders section 14. These are matters that a non-domiciled insurance company would be regulated on their own jurisdiction, in their own jurisdiction, sorry. The difficulties with not being able to admit non domiciled insurance companies became apparent when the St Helena Airport Limited, SHAL, needed a particular, essential insurance in October 2019. An international company was commissioned unable to provide insurance to the airport as it could not be admitted under the Ordinance. A solution was eventually found that the company provided the insurance on a non-admit basis. However, there is no guarantee with the insurance in the future that this will be the case. SHG has state-owned entities, other business on St Helena and individuals could, as matters currently stand, find themselves in a position where they are unable to provide any insurance or have to do so at a cost above the market rates. The Financial Services (Amendment) Bill, 2019 allows the FSRA to admit a non-domiciled company by dispensing with the requirements of the Ordinance. They must do so by issuing a directive and the relevant company must hold a licence in the territory where they are registered. Further, the FSRA must be satisfied that the licensing oversight and control in that territory is sufficient. These requirements will be in place to provide what are currently considered the most efficient if non-domiciled companies are admitted to provide insurance. The amendment allowing non-domiciled companies to potentially access St Helena's insurance market could lead to insurance costing less. This is not guaranteed and the financial implications of each insurance company policy will need to be considered on a case by case basis. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move and commend the Financial Services (Amendment) Bill, 2019, to the House. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much indeed. Honourable Members, I put the question that the Financial Services (Amendment) Bill, 2019 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council. The question is now open for debate. The Honourable Derek Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Mr Speaker, I rise in support of this amendment, the Financial Services (Amendment) Bill. This is a sensible amendment, it allow for business to obtain insurances where they would normally have difficulty, so this can only add value to our economic development in terms of going forward in St Helena, so this is a sensible amendment. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Any other Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex

Mr Speaker, I declare my interest as President of the St Helena Chamber of Commerce....

The Speaker –

Thank you.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

.... and I would like to state that insurance has been a key issue of concern to members of the Chamber for a number of years. It is a limited provision on the island, it does not extend to all

the requirements of local businesses, particularly those developing more complex functions and diversifying, therefore, this amendment is welcome. I also am relieved to see that the Regulatory Authority will still play a key role in deciding what companies can, in fact, offer insurance on island, because I think it is very important there are also protections in place as we all know there are a lot of unscrupulous insurance brokers throughout the world who might otherwise think that St Helena is a soft option, so I fully support this Bill.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much indeed. Any other Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I, too, rise in support of the Motion. I think this will be a very good move for the island as both of my Honourable Friends have mentioned. It does give the opportunities to the island business community, but also long term, in terms of SHG considering taking up insurance itself for some of the more significant risks, so I welcome this amendment and as Councillor Essex has said, there are safeguards still in place to ensure that the local Financial Services Regulatory Authority has to sign off on the use of a specific insurance ...?....

The Speaker –

Thank you very much indeed. The Honourable Mover wishes to respond to the debate?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I'd just like to thank the Honourable Members who spoke in support of the Bill and look forward to the House going through the Committee stages of the Bill. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much indeed. Honourable Members, I put the question that the Financial Services (Amendment) Bill, 2019 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker –

Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Council do resolve itself into a Committee to consider the detailed provisions of the Bill.

The Speaker –

Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you.

Question that the Council resolves into Committee, put and agreed to.

Council in Committee.

The Chairman –

Okay, Honourable Members, we're now in Committee stage. I put the question that the Title, Enacting Clause and Clause 1 do stand part of the Bill. Any Member wishes to speak?

Title, Enacting Clause and Clause 1.

Question put and agreed to.

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Mr Chairman, may I at this stage invite the Attorney General to talk us through the detailed provisions?

The Chairman –

By all means, thank you. Can we move to Clause 2? Attorney General?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Just Clause 1 the short title?.....

The Chairman –

Oh, sorry.

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

.....?.....

The Chairman –

Okay, thank you. Okay.

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Clause 2 inserts a new subsection (10) in section 9 of the serving Ordinance?..... It firstly gives the FSRA the authority by on application by a insurance business ...?..... in St Helena grant them a licence by a directive. Such directive?.....domiciled company?..... be able to meet. There are two specific regulations which?.....two specific requirements which the new subsection 10 details ...?.... take place. The first?.... is found in 10 (a) if that the FSRA is satisfied the business holds the appropriate licence to carry out an insurance business?..... and, secondly, the FSRA is satisfied that those licensing requirements are sufficient and stringent enough for both?.....business by that ...?..... That's?..... ?.....

The Chairman –

Thank you. Any Member wishes to speak to Clause 2? The Honourable Christine Scipio?

The Hon. Christine Scipio –

Thank you. May I ask the Attorney General for clarification, because the title of section 9 says Issuing of the Licence where what's in front of me states Licensing of Certain Businesses

registered outside St Helena. My understanding only section 9, Clause 10 relates to that, Clauses 1 to 9 doesn't, so are you suggesting that we have an amendment to the title?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

No, there's no suggestion of an amendment to the title there, the title we're looking at is a title?.....itself, there's no suggestion that title?.....

The Hon. Christine Scipio –

Right, okay. So those words doesn't, will not form part of the Ordinance?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

No, they're part of this amendment?.....the Ordinance will only be a.....?.....suggest.....?.....

The Hon. Christine Scipio –

Okay. Thank you.

The Chairman –

Any other Member wishes to speak?

Clause 2.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Okay, we move back into Council.

Council Resumed.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Mover wishes to respond?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I beg to report that the Financial Services (Amendment) Bill, 2019 passed the Committee and to move that this Council approves the said Bill and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Mover wish to speak to the Motion?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Just to say again, Mr Speaker, thank you to the House for their support in taking this important piece of legislation through the House. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you. I put the question then that this Council approves the Financial Services (Amendment) Bill, 2019 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted. Any Member wishes to speak? I take it you wish, it's your prerogative to respond.....

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Just to say again, thank you to the Members, Mr Speaker, for their support in moving this Bill through the House?...

The Speaker –

Okay, thank you. Honourable Members, I put the question that this Council approves the Financial Services (Amendment) Bill, 2019 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker –

Our next item of business, please?

Motion No. 3 – The Honourable Anthony Green.

THE POLICE AND CRIMINAL EVIDENCE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2019

The Speaker –

The Honourable Anthony Green?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Police and Criminal Evidence (Amendment) Bill, 2019 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council.

The Speaker –

Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Cyril Leo –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you. The Honourable Mover now may wish to speak to the Motion?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Thank you, Mr President. Mr Speaker, the Police and Criminal Evidence (Amendment) Bill, 2019. At present, all convictions in St Helena are recorded by the Police and subject to the application of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 are included as part of the Criminal Records check. This means that even convictions for minor offences can be included as part of these checks. On St Helena, there is at present no distinction between recordable and non-recordable offences. To address this problem, the introduction of a distinction between recordable and non-recordable offence is proposed similar to that in England and Wales. There are three objectives for the proposed legislation. Firstly, to remove the predisposition, or, in

my words, the tendency of requiring every minor offence having to be disclosed as part of a Criminal Records Check. Secondly, to prevent residents of St Helena potentially being unduly penalised for previous minor offending, and, thirdly, to modernise the Criminal Justice System and application of relevant laws. To bring about a distinction between recordable and non-recordable offences, a new criminal database will be required. The Bill requires the Police to establish a new Criminal Records Database for recordable offences. Following the approach of England and Wales, recordable offences are those for which imprisonment can be imposed by the Court unless there is an exemption. The Bill will also enable the Governor in Council to make regulations addressing the following five points: Exemptions – exemptions for non-imprisonable offences to be recordable on the database; secondly, exemptions for imprisonable offences not being recordable on the database; (3) how the Criminal Records Database will be implemented and maintained; (4) the way information can be requested from the database; and, fifth, the manner in which information can be disclosed in accordance to a request. The Bill will come into effect on the dates to be fixed by the Governor. There are enabling provisions in the Bill for the distinction between recordable and non-recordable offences to be applied retroactively. To summarise a few points, Mr Speaker, if this legislation is agreed today it will start the process of modernising our Criminal Records disclosure system and bring it more in line with England and Wales. This will benefit the community as it will mean non recordable offences are not disclosed in standard Criminal Records checks that are often used when applying for jobs. Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much indeed. Honourable Members, I put the question that the Police and Criminal Evidence (Amendment) Ordinance, 2019 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council. The question is now open for debate. Councillor Derek Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Mr Speaker, I rise in support of this amendment to the Police and Criminal Evidence (Amendment) Bill. Again, as I say, a sensible amendment to the Bill. As the Mover alluded to, it will distinguish between recordable and non-recordable offences. At the moment, we know that all offences are recordable, even minor, very minor, trivial type of offences which do jeopardise people from job opportunities, this will give people a better chance in securing jobs and it also modernise the Criminal Justice System so the public at large will stand to benefit from this, this is a sensible amendment to the Police and Criminal Evidence. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Any other Member wish.... The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Thank you, Mr Speaker and I thank the Honourable Mover for this Bill. As he has very carefully pointed out, this is a very important amendment in going forward in relation to how we administer the Criminal Justice System in St Helena and as he also pointed out it distinguishes between recordable and non-recordable offences and this has benefits with the people in going forward and I fully support this amendment. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you. The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. This is another very important tidying up piece of legislation, which, in fact, is long overdue. I had a constituent who approached me, particularly looking to go offshore employment, and when he went to get a vetting certificate he had it recorded that he had a conviction for parking on a double yellow line about fifteen years ago and unfortunately because the policy of the employer to whom he was applying for a job was that they would not employ anyone who did not have a totally clean sheet with regard to Police conviction, he was unsuccessful. That is the sort of situation that this amendment will avoid for the future and I would ask for clarification when we get to the appropriate part of the proceedings whether, in fact, the records will be made retrospectively, the date of commencement will be made retrospectively, or whether the new rules will only apply going forward, but I fully support the proposed amendment. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Any other Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Mover wishes to respond to the debate?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the Honourable Members for their support. As I mentioned in my introduction, the comment my colleague, Councillor, the Honourable Corinda Essex, I did mention that there are enabling provisions in this Bill for distinction between recordable and non-recordable offences to be applied retroactively, so I thank Honourable Members who have spoken and I look forward to the support of other Honourable Members. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Members, I put the question that the Police and Criminal Evidence (Amendment) Bill, 2019, be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker –

Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Council resolves itself into a Committee to consider the detailed provisions of the Bill.

The Speaker –

Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Cyril Leo –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you.

Council in Committee.

The Chairman –
Honourable Members, we're now in Committee stage.

Question that Council resolves itself into a Committee, put and agreed to.

I put the question that the Title, Enacting Clause and Clause 1 do stand part of the Bill. Any Member wishes to speak?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –
.....?.....if I need to.....(*inaudible*)

The Speaker –
Okay, by all means, okay. Do you wish to take Members through?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –
Yes,?.....Clause 2 unless there's any issue to Clause 1?

The Chairman –
Are there any issues with Clause 1?

Title, Enacting Clause and Clause 1.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –
I put the question that Clause 2 do stand part of the Bill. Attorney General?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –
Yes, Mr Speaker, Clause 2 sets a new section in to the Police and Criminal Evidence Ordinance 2003 that there will be a new Criminal Records section in section 16 (2) (a). You'll see in Clause 2 the first part of that is the new title Criminal Records Interview and defines Director of Police and Convictions which is needed for the further additions in subsections ii and iii of 16 (2) (a). Subsection 2 gives the obligations applying to the Police?.....to establish?.....tain from the Records database which will contain convictions from the imprisonable offences?.....recorded. Subsection 3 gives Governor in Council powers to make relevant regulations to include exemptions, the way the database is to be maintained, the way that?.....to be made to the information from the Criminal Records Database and the way information can be disposed and subsection 4 then gives Governor in Council power to order?.....regulations?.....and it's in regard to one of Councillor Essex's questions?.....
(*inaudible*)

The Chairman –
Any Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Can I ask on that point, would that be done on a case by case basis or on a blanket basis?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

.....?.....Governor in Council.?....by the time this gets to Governor in Council?..... as to whether or not?..... if it is applied retroactively when the regulations are given maintaining and recording?.....(*inaudible*).....

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

So, for example, in relation to cautions, reprimands and written warnings which were classed here as convictions, how would they be treated; would they be recorded - formally recorded - on the database or not?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Sorry, Honourable Councillor Essex,?.....ask if you could repeat the question?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

It states here under 16 (2) (a) (i) that a conviction includes a caution, reprimand and written warning, would convictions that are cautions, reprimands or written warnings normally be included on the database?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Yes, they would,?.....all the?.....which are imprisonable offences they are recorded on the database, but?.....this legislation?.....being spentthey would not be disclosed to?.....criminal records.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Right, thank you.

The Chairman –

Thank you. Any other Member wish to speak? Councillor Christine Scipio?

The Hon. Christine Scipio –

Thank you, Mr Chairman. Could I ask the Honourable Mover if it will be in the legislation or you propose to present regulations, what's the timeframe for the regulations being drafted or implemented as this Ordinance will be enacted and have no teeth, is there a timeframe?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Mr Speaker, I don't have a specific timetable, but, it will...?..... endeavour to pull it through for regulation as fast as possible, assuming we get through today.

The Hon. Christine Scipio –

Thank you, Honourable Mover.

The Chairman –

Thank you. Any other Member wishes to speak?

Clause 2.

Question put and agreed to.

Council Resumed.

The Speaker –
Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Anthony Green –
Mr Speaker, I beg to report that the Police and Criminal Evidence (Amendment) Bill, 2019 has passed Committee without any amendment.

The Speaker –
Thank you. Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Cyril Leo –
Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –
Thank you. The Honourable Mover may wish to speak to the Motion?

The Hon. Anthony Green –
Mr Speaker, I should have added before that I would ask that this Bill is approved and it is recommended to the Governor that it should be enacted. Thank you.

The Speaker –
Do you wish to speak to the debate, the Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Anthony Green –
Thank you, I have no more to say.

The Speaker –
Thank you. Then I put the question that this Council approves the Police and Criminal Evidence (Amendment) Bill, 2019 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted. Any Member wishes to speak further? The next checkpoint is the Mover, do you wish to make.....

The Hon. Anthony Green –
Thank you, Mr Speaker, no further comment, thank you.

The Speaker –
Then I put the question, Honourable Members, that this Council approves the Police and Criminal Evidence (Amendment) Bill, 2019 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker –
Next item of business, please?

Motion No. 4 – The Honourable Attorney General.

THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE (PROCEDURE) BILL, 2019

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Public Accounts Committee (Procedure) Bill, 2019 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Dr Essex. You may now speak to the Motion, Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Mr Speaker, the Public Accounts Committee does not fall under any?.....(*inaudible*)..... constitutions/committee.....?.....legislationrather than a Chair. The legal basis for the Public Accounts Committee comes from section 69 of the Constitution of St Helena, the Constitution details that the membership of that Committee shall be a Chair and another member from outside of the elected members of Legislative Council and three members from the Legislative Council. The Constitution doesn't currently state what quorum is required for the Committee to make decisions as it is silent?..... it has to be interpreted at present to require all five members to be present for decisions to be made. For the last four months, the Committee has found itself in the position where it could not make decisions as it only had four members following the resignation of one of the elected members. Today has been the first opportunity for a new member to be elected, there is also concern going forward that even after today's election another member may not be able to attend meetings for several weeks so there is an urgent need to?.... this situation. Section 61 (6) of the Constitution allows other functions and procedures to apply to the political Ordinance and this Bill is made with that provision in mind. The Bill will allow the Committee to make decisions with the Chair and two other members present, one member must be an elected member and this will allow the Committee to immediately continue its business and address most concerns?.....going forward. As a direct result of this change?.....occasion.....for five members and this could be?.....address this situation by?.....Chairman casting a vote to determine it. Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Members, I put the question that the Public Accounts Committee (Procedure) Bill, 2019 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council. The question is now open for debate. The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. As a long-standing member of the Public Accounts Committee, I am frequently being frustrated by the lack of provision for ...alternate members to deputise in the absence of appointed members which has arisen through illness of members, members being overseas and so on, particularly as the only provision that exists for the appointment of a temporary alternate member is if there is in fact a conflict of interest. Therefore, there have been many occasions when Public Accounts Committee decisions have had to be deferred, sometimes for weeks on end, until such time as a full complement of members could be present.

This obviously is not an efficient and effective way of working and it is an enormous relief to see this Bill being presented to the House today. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I rise in support of this Motion, the Public Accounts Committee (Procedure) Bill, 2019. This is a short Bill with a specific provision to establish a quorum for the PAC and the provision for the Chairman to have a casting vote that?.....members?.....so that the good work of the Committee?.....scrutinising work of Government and its entities ...?..... Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much indeed. The Honourable Derek Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, the role of the Public Accounts Committee is very crucial in scrutinising the working of Government and in recent years we have really seen the Public Accounts Committee going from strength to strength. This amendment to the Public Accounts Committee (Procedure) Bill will allow the Public Accounts Committee to discharge their functions in a more efficient and effective manner without being a hindrance, so I do support the Bill.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Any other Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Mover may wish to respond to the debate?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Just to thank Members for their support, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Honourable Members, I put the question that the Public Accounts Committee (Procedure) Bill, 2019 be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker –

Honourable Mover?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this Council do resolve itself into a Committee to consider the detailed provisions of the Public Accounts Committee (Procedure) Bill, 2019.

The Speaker –

Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –
Thank you.

Question that the Council resolves into a Committee, put and agreed to.

Council in Committee.

The Chairman –
Honourable Members, I put the question that the Title, Enacting Clause and Clause 1 do stand part of the Bill. Honourable Members, you are now invited to respond. This is the Title, Enacting Clause and Clause 1.

The Hon. Allen Cansick –
Mr Speaker,unusual.....?.....

The Chairman –
No-one wishes to speak?

Title, Enacting Clause and Clause 1.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –
Can we move on to Clause 2, Attorney General?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –
Yes, Mr Speaker, Clause 2 is the Interpretation section?.....as it is a new Ordinance and it gives definitions of three important terms that are used in the Ordinance itself, Chairman, Member and Public Accounts Committee and defines them by reference?..... that are detailed in the Constitution.

The Chairman –
Any Member wishes to speak to Clause 2?

Clause 2.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –
Clause 3.

The Hon. Allen Cansick –
Yes, so, Members, Clause 3 deals with quorum going forward ...?..... Subsection (1) details the quorum of the Public Accounts Committee must consist of the Chairman, ...?.... and two other members and subsection (2) details that no business of the Public Accounts Committee must be conducted unless a quorum is in attendance. I know there seems to be, my version of this?.....(*inaudible*).....there should be no decisions of the business of the Public Accounts Committee to be conducted unless a quorum is present.....?..... other members seems to have it correct.....?..... so, returning to subsection (2) no decision with respect

to the business of the Public Accounts Committee is to be made unless a quorum is in attendance.

The Chairman –

Any Member wishes to speak to Clause 3?

Clause 3.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

We move to Clause 4, Attorney General?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Yes, of course. Clause 4 gives a casting vote to the Chairman in what now going forward would be five members, there's a situation where?.....the Chairman has the casting vote.

The Chairman –

Thank you. Any Honourable Member wishes to speak to Clause 4?

Clause 4.

Question put and agreed to.

Council Resumed.

The Speaker –

Okay, we're back into Council. Attorney General?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Mr Speaker, I beg to report that the Public Accounts Committee (Procedure) Bill, 2019 passed the Committee with no amendments and to move that this Council approves the said Bill and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted.

The Speaker –

Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

I beg to second, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Dr Corinda Essex. The Mover may speak to the Motion if you wish?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

I have nothing to add.

The Speaker –

Honourable Members, I put the question then that this Council approves the Public Accounts Committee (Procedure) Bill, 2019 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted. Any Member wishes to speak further? I take it the

The Hon. Allen Cansick –
Just?.....for their support.

The Speaker –
Okay, thank you. Honourable Members, I put the question then that this Council approves the Public Accounts Committee (Procedure) Bill, 2019 and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker –
Next item of business, please?

Motion No. 5 – The Honourable Anthony Green.

THE REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS ACT (APPLICATION) ORDER, 2019

The Speaker –
The Honourable Anthony Green?

The Hon. Anthony Green –
Mr Speaker, I beg to present the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Application) Order, 2019. If I may, Mr Speaker, I wish to advise Honourable Members that the presentation of this Order is for ratification only as the Order itself has already been approved by the Governor in Council last month, but in order to come into force it needs to be ratified by a resolution of Legislative Council. The Order is a subsidiary piece of legislation for which no debate is required. However, Honourable Members may wish to rise to express their views as to whether they agree or disagree with the ratification of this Order.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 applies to St Helena through the English Law (Application) Ordinance 2005. This means that the law as it stood up until 1st January 2006 in England applies to St Helena. Rehabilitation periods on St Helena are currently much longer than what applies in the UK because the legislation in the UK has been revised several times since 2006 and is in keeping with the more modern, up to date practice. The effect of this Order means that rehabilitation periods on St Helena are brought up to date and will be shortened to the rehabilitation periods that currently apply in England and Wales. The effect will be that convictions become spent quicker. When a conviction is spent, a convicted person is considered to be rehabilitated and that is why the entry of the conviction on the person's criminal record is not disclosed in certain circumstances.

Here now are just a few examples of the proposed changes to the rehabilitation periods. At present, for an adult with a conviction of six months or less in St Helena, the rehabilitation period would be seven years. As proposed, the rehabilitation period for the same conviction would be twenty-four months beginning with the day on which the sentence is concluded, including any licence period. A similar conviction for an offender under eighteen would presently be half of that for an adult. Under the revised legislation, the rehabilitation period would end in eighteen months beginning with the day on which the sentence is complete, including any licence period. One further example, at present the rehabilitation period where there has been a community or a youth rehabilitation order, the rehabilitation period within St Helena is five years. As proposed, this will be reduced to twelve months and six months for a

person under eighteen years of age. This legislation is a procedural change which should be welcomed by the public. It is seen as a sensible way forward in publicly recognising life after an offence. The Order has been published in the St Helena Government Gazette as required by section 5 of the English Law (Application) Ordinance, 2005. Section 6 of the English Law (Application) Ordinance 2005 requires that the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Application) Order, 2019 be ratified by resolution of **Executive Council**. Therefore, Mr Speaker, I move that this Honourable House resolves that the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Application) Order, 2019 be ratified. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Is there a seconder, please?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Members, the Motion is that this Honourable House resolves that the Rehabilitation Act (Application) Order, 2019 be ratified. The Motion is now open for debate. The Honourable Derek Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Application) Order, 2019 and like the Mover alluded to, can only come into force on ratification by resolution of Legislative Council. Again, I will give my support to this Application Act. We heard that this will provide.... At present there are longer periods rehabilitation periods for conviction, this will, before they come spent, this reduces the periods of time, which, again, is a good thing for those persons with convictions, it allows them a less time to rehabilitate and get on with their lives and make some meaningful contribution to their lifestyle, so this is a good thing, it will be well received, welcome by the general public. Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I too rise in support of the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Application) Order, 2019 and give it my full support. This is a very good?.....tidying up?.....under the Justice System and will be particularly welcome with people who unfortunately has minor convictions and are continually punished, especially when they're seeking jobs and?.....asked to?.....so?.....

The Speaker –

Thank you. Any other Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Mover wish to respond?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Thank you. Mr Speaker, if I may, I just want to confirm that the fact of this Order will be that convictions will become spent quicker so, Mr Speaker, I move that the Honourable House resolves that the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Application) Order, 2019 be ratified.

The Speaker –

Honourable Members, the Motion is that this Honourable House resolves that the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Application) Order, 2019 be ratified.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker –

Next item of business, please?

Motion No. 6 – The Honourable Cyril Leo.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Cyril Leo?

The Hon. Cyril Leo –

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the St Helena Government, without delay, will seek to establish communication channels with the Government of Angola, St Helena's closest neighbour on the African continent, to determine possible future economic business interests and mutual cooperation, and keep all Elected Members fully informed on progress accordingly.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Councillor Buckley. The Honourable Mover may wish to speak to the Motion?

The Hon. Cyril Leo –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. The Vice President of Angola came to St Helena for a private visit and on 16th September 2019 Vice President?.....with the Governor and our Executive Council on 20th September all Elected Members were briefed by ExCo Member, Councillor Henry on the Vice President's visit. Some three months on, we would now like to see communication channels commence between St Helena and Angola. This Motion speaks for itself, without further delay, St Helena must make a special effort to explore the potential for mutual cooperation and communication with Angola for possible future economic business interests. It was fitting that the Vice President of Angola and his family should choose to visit St Helena. During and after the Slave Trade era, St Helena has been the final home and resting place for many Angolans and that humanitarian connection through Liberated Africans has been an integral part of St Helena's history. Today, as we plan for the future, I believe the potential for cooperation and business ventures between St Helena and Angola by sea and by air should indeed be established without further delay. To start with, other Angolans may want to visit St Helena and share in our story of the Liberated Africans. As St Helena develops its fishing industry, we may find that Angola is a possible outlet for St Helena's fish products. I will encourage my fellow Councillors to support the Motion and to also add their suggestions and proposals to the list of possibilities. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Members, the Motion is that the St Helena Government, without delay, will seek to establish communication channels with the Government of Angola, St Helena's closest neighbour on the African continent, to determine possible future economic business interests and mutual cooperation, and keep all Elected Members fully informed on progress accordingly. Honourable Members, the Motion is now open for debate. The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank the Mover for his Motion. In rising to support the Motion, I wish to report to the House that following the visit to St Helena by the Vice President of Angola in September 2019 and?.....meeting with Executive Council had with the Vice President on 16th September, Council agreed that there will be merit in following up with a possible exploratory trade visit to Angola. As a follow-up to the visit, His Excellency Governor Rushbrook sent a note to the Vice President planning before the visit and encouraging further activity to determine possible future economic cooperation and to advise the President that he had requested the Chief Executive of Enterprise St Helena and myself, as Chair of the Economic Development Committee, to follow up with the Vice President on what possible opportunities that exist and to discuss, as suggested by the Vice President,?..... The CEO and I wrote to the Vice President on 29th October, but no response has been received as yet to the suggestion. The Head of the Governor's Office has very recently been in communication with the Vice President's Office and took the opportunity to request an update about the letter. Elected Members were briefed on the Vice President's visit at our meeting of 20th September and Council will continue to be kept informed as and when further information is received. Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you. The Honourable Cruyff Buckley?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise in support of this Motion put forward by Councillor Leo and it is only fitting that our closest neighbour should form some kind of economic or social connection with St Helena. Opportunities that might arise from twinning with Namibia in regards to tourism might prove beneficial, also the potential for air links through Rwanda airport, containerised shipping, which seeks to develop on a Motion put forward by Councillor Thomas, from Brazil could also be an option for St Helena going forward. As Councillor Leo and I serve on the Liberated African Advisory Committee, I think it is absolutely essential that we seek to establish links with cultural ministers in Angola with regard to their slave history as we all know that under 50%, almost half the population at one stage, was enslaved into hard labour and, indeed, passed through St Helena. We are more than aware of the urgent need to rebury the 325 African remains that were removed from Ruperts a decade ago, the reasons for the delay have unfortunately been beyond the Committee's control, however, it is of some consolation that progress is now being made to identify a suitable location, an alternative location, sorry, in Ruperts for the reburial and the Committee is in the process of pa...?.ing an interpretation centre, design plans for an interpretation centre at Ruperts within the Slave hospital and a memorial and contemplation area will also be built to keep alive the story of St Helena and the Liberated Africans. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Any other Member? Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I support the Motion because I consider that it is essential that St Helena takes advantage of any opportunities that it may have for economic growth and development and appropriate cultural links with other countries and territories that will be beneficial to the island's future sustainable development. I think it was an encouraging sign that the Vice President and his entourage took the effort to visit St Helena and I think we do need to make sure that we capitalize upon their interest and try and turn it to our advantage as far as possible. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Any other Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Mover wishes to respond to the debate?

The Hon. Cyril Leo –

Mr Speaker, as the peoples of both St Helena and Angola strive for a brighter and prosperous future with renewed determination, this Motion is the official driver for establishing the possibilities of a working relationship between the Governments of St Helena and Angola. I would like to thank Councillor Buckley, the seconder of the Motion and thank my colleagues for their supporting statements to the Motion.?.....

The Speaker –

Honourable Members, the Motion is that the St Helena Government, without delay, will seek to establish communication channels with the Government of Angola, St Helena's closest neighbour on the African continent, to determine possible future economic business interests and mutual cooperation, and keep all Elected Members fully informed on progress accordingly.

Question on Motion, put and agreed to.

The Motion is carried.

The Speaker –

Next item, please?

Motion No. 7 – The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this Honourable House resolves that water security be treated as a key priority, and requests that St Helena Government actively pursues development of an appropriate strategy to address both current water shortages and the likely future impacts of climate change.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Do we have a seconder, please? Honourable Derek Thomas, thank you.

The Hon. Derek Thomas –
Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –
Thank you. The Honourable Mover may speak to the Motion.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you. Mr Speaker, we all know that we cannot survive without water, so I do not think that anyone would deny its importance. However, it is easy to take its availability for granted and not to face up to what a drastic change would be made to our lives if it really became in short supply. Not only would it have a disastrous impact on all types of farming, but also upon our daily routines. Imagine having to share bath water, not being able to flush the toilet every time it's used, etc. Standards of health and hygiene would inevitably fall and our quality of life would deteriorate enormously. Given the limited financial resources at our disposal, we are always having to prioritise the priorities on a largely short-term basis. This can result in immediate important needs becoming the focus rather than emerging, critical needs and as a result not enough attention is always paid to the future needs of St Helena. We are frequently urged to have a vision of what we would like St Helena to be in 2050, for example, and to identify what would be required to achieve this in order to inform our requirements with capital investment going forward, as an example. Although I am not actually a fan of visioning exercises, as these can turn into an unrealistic and unachievable mass, if not mess, of aspirations and expectations, I do believe that St Helena Government should establish a select list of high level, over-arching, 'must have', essential goals and outcomes that extend beyond the boundaries of ten-year plans and the like and which will provide a consistent focus to strategic development and resource allocation. I further believe that water security should top this list and I look forward to hearing my colleagues' views on this point. The fact that St Helena has experienced an unprecedented incidence of drought periods within the past six years, and the worrying evidence of global climate change indicate that our water security is facing a serious and potentially increasing risk as our supplies are dependent upon rainfall and ground water extraction. Key water sources, such as that at Osbornes, are already dry and cannot replenish without the long periods of rain. Aquifers can take decades to recharge, even with normal weather patterns. Currently there are plans to increase storage and to harness more surface water from the few remaining possible sources, but are these solutions sustainable? Are we at risk of building infrastructure that will not achieve the desired results or of extracting all the water still present in the aquifers supplying the deep-water boreholes so that these dry up as well? Mr Speaker, St Helena simply cannot afford to take chances with its water resources. Mr Speaker, given the increasing threat of drought and the already heavily depleted state of our fresh water sources, I believe desalination of sea water must be given serious consideration as a future option. We do have certainty that the ocean will not disappear in the foreseeable future. With modern advances, the technology is becoming more affordable and widely used. The advantages and disadvantages of desalination need to be explored fully and not just dismissed as too costly to the consumer. In order to improve St Helena's water security and make informed investment decisions, all options must be thoroughly examined. Consultants were engaged some years ago to prepare a water management plan for St Helena. The part of their report was not considered fit for purpose by Connect St Helena and resulted in a write-off by St Helena Government, although the study did assist formulation of strategic objectives by the water sector. I am aware that this led to the preparation of an interim plan that was compiled in 2015. However, preparation of a longer-term, substantive plan has been delayed. Therefore, at this point in time, St Helena does not have a finalised, updated and formally endorsed water management plan to inform strategic direction and decision making, although Connect St

Helena has informed me that it is hoping to obtain Darwin Plus support or other donor funding to address the situation and deliver an island water security plan. This would be a major step in the right direction, but what I am advocating in this Motion goes beyond the scope of an internal working document for Connect St Helena. Unless water security is to be at risk of becoming increasingly compromised, St Helena must have a well-rounded, evidence-based, holistic strategy, endorsed and enshrined at national level that examines not only current water shortages and all options regarding how to mitigate these, but also the likely future impacts of climate change. I believe that it would be irresponsible for the St Helena Government to fail to pursue development of such a strategy. Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Members, the Motion is that this Honourable House resolves that water security be treated as a key priority, and requests that St Helena Government actively pursues development of an appropriate strategy to address both current water shortages and the likely future impacts of climate change. Honourable Members, the Motion is now open for debate. The Honourable Derek Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise in support of this Motion, that this House resolves that water security be treated as a key priority, and requests that St Helena Government actively pursues development of an appropriate strategy to address both current water shortages and the likely future impacts of climate change. Mr Speaker, this Motion is of national interest to our island, we all know the importance of water supply for human use, farming and for our animals. When we look at our rain patterns for the past few years it is clear that climate change is upon us. We have not experienced the rain we expect, which, a few years ago, through the support of our funders in DfID project funding was approved for deep bore-hole drilling, which has been of tremendous support to us during this drought period. However, we must plan for the future and I know that this Council is very concerned about this and see water has top priority. When Connect has been tasked with prioritising their water project for capital funding in an order which will deliver the best outcome for the future. The Motion is calling for a strategy to address our ongoing water shortages, which is what's needed. We can only do so much from our capital funding where we have a whole range of competing priorities. Each year we find ourselves in a crisis situation, we cannot be in this boat alone, we need further support from Her Majesty's Government. We are fortunate that we do not have high levels of disasters like many of the other Overseas Territories. However, we do need support when it comes to climate change. I am aware that Her Majesty's Government holds a budget to support Overseas Territories under climate change. We should follow this through and see what financial support can be given to support St Helena in forming such a strategy. We have water continuously running into the sea at Sharks Valley, we know from Connect that this water source can be pumped up to serve our reservoirs, but at a great cost, costs which our public will not be able to bear and afford. We have in place a strategy to try and encourage and develop local farming and animal production. These efforts are continuously hampered each year by periods of drought and water restrictions. Our economy will simply not grow if we are not able to address our water shortages each year. A long-term water strategy is needed for St Helena if we are going to move forward. Mr Speaker, I support the Motion, I beg to move.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Mr Speaker, I rise in support of this Motion and thank the Honourable Member for raising this in the House today, that this Honourable House resolves that water security be treated as a key priority, and requests that St Helena Government actively pursues development of an appropriate strategy to address both current water shortages and the likely future impacts of climate change. Mr Speaker, before I joined this Government, I recall that there was an infrastructure consultancy report prepared. This was done by a man called John Cox and it was done even before the airport was supported, and the purpose of this report, as I understand it, was to look at what future infrastructure requirements would be needed for the island to accommodate an increase or influx of people visiting St Helena after the airport. As with many other reports undertaken by SHG and DfID, taking those reports forward require money, something that we have been very short of here on St Helena. The Cox Report identified many proposals on expanding and upgrading our water infrastructure. Some of this work has been undertaken, but in the absence of a proper investment programme for a long period of time, further development?.....infrastructure to build our resilience has not been undertaken. Since that time in ...?.....the island's utilities have been divested?.....has continued to provide a level of subsidy to the newly-formed?.....company, Connect St Helena and I wish to acknowledge the good work that has been done by Connect St Helena during the period that Connect has been responsible for our utilities. Over recent years, as has been said today, we have experienced the third drought and each time the impact on our various reserves have been significant and the cost of transferring water from different parts of the island has been significant too. SHG, as the sole shareholder of Connect, must therefore, as the Motion asks, have a strategy to deal with the ever-increasing need for more water and to build our resilience to climate change. Climate change, despite what the President of the United States let the world believe, is for real. It is also evident that the low-lying islands are mostly impacted, but other islands, like St Helena, are seeing these impacts as well. St Helena needs to do its part in?....., but we cannot do this on our own and we need the support from HMG as indicated. Small countries are feeling the most impact from climate change, therefore, to combat this we need to build our resilience. To do this, we need a plan, but we also need financial support for the long-term future. Mr Speaker, I therefore support the Motion and again thank the Honourable Member for tabling it before the House today. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you. The Honourable Chief Secretary?

The Hon. Susan O'Bey –

Mr Speaker, I also rise in support of this Motion. As Councillor Henry has just said, the climate change is very real and it is being felt, not just on St Helena, it's of global concern, we can see how climate change is actually becoming a key priority as an agenda item in the upcoming UK elections. We see or we hear stories of countries that are impacted by severe flooding and, of course, the opposite end of the spectrum, as we are doing here, countries that are impacted by drought. I fully support the Member's recommendation for a strategy, we have strategies in place to address energy, to build resilience in our energy production, we have strategies in place to build resilience in our telecommunications and we should have strategies in place to build resilience in our water supply. Despite the fact that water is seen as the remit of the Utilities Company, Connect St Helena, I believe it is everybody's concern and it is of national importance that this Government addresses the issue through the provision of the long-term strategy. What we have been doing to date, I would suggest, is addressing, is putting in place short-term measures, we don't know, what we don't know at the moment in relation to our

water supply, and I think it is timely that we address this through long-term planning, so, Mr Speaker, I fully support this Motion.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much indeed. Any other Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Russell Yon?

The Hon. Russell Yon –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I rise in support of the Motion tabled by my Honourable Friend, Dr Essex. 2013, 2016 and now 2019 are the date of years which have something all in common for St Helena. They are in the cycle of the past six years that St Helena has been faced with a serious shortage of water. There are several years prior that we have had droughts, however, these past dates that I have alluded to, shows that there is now a weather pattern formulating which is having a rather detrimental impact to our island. Records show that there have been an abundance of rain in the early years of St Helena's history and it is only now, from the late 1990s that we have been struck with more frequent droughts that is more than we have anticipated. It is not just happening here, but across the world, weather patterns are changing. Those countries who would be experiencing dry weather periods are now experiencing flash floods along with more frequent rain showers, whilst others, like St Helena, are gasping for the next rain shower. Climate change is impacting the world, rising sea levels are on the increase and both the North and South pole are experiencing large demise of their land mass as sections of ice break away, the effects of global warming and greenhouse gases. In St Helena, we have recently approved our own climate change policy, which we hope will be the basis for all of us to change our behaviour and come to terms in a more positive way of addressing the dramatic changes that a simple policy can have on the world we live in. As Chairman of the Environmental and Natural Resources Committee, we worked in conjunction with?.... on this policy and finally our Governor, Dr Rushbrook, who, after writing his foreword ...?.....policy, gave it his approval. Elected Members and finally Executive Council gave their stamp of approval also. It is now a document that should not remain on the shelf untouched, it is within the remit of St Helena Government to implement and in doing so, it will address the issues that we have prioritised within its pages. There are practices and measures we must apply for our future. A recent article has highlighted the water quantity of Victoria Falls, although they frequently experience periods of dry weather, it has never hampered their water supply until now where it is estimated that a shortage of 50% of rainfall have reduced the water levels on that Falls, which borders the Zambia and Zimbabwe countries through its lowest rainfall in the past twenty-five years. This impact on the electricity supply of both countries who are heavily reliant on hydropower from plants on the Kariba Dam which sits on the Zambezi river upstream of the waterfalls. The shortage of rainfall is being felt worldwide. St Helena is no different as our shortage of water is hampering our economy and development plans, farmers are struggling to plant their gardens or to keep their pastures alive, construction works has been halted due to the lack of the valued commodity and most of all, mankind is being asked to reduce their consumption on the basic needs. Our population are becoming tired of frequently hearing that we need to reduce the consumption of water and we should all be thankful that the majority of us on island are adhering to these requests. Our Utilities providers has done a lot in securing and developing water storage areas across the island and without the additional storage and access to our deep aquifers we would have been in serious trouble long before now. Our dependence on the rain to provide life's precious commodity is also showing our vulnerability in not having developed a sound infrastructure for our water for the future. It is this casualness of the island's authorities to be heavily dependent on rainfall as our main supplier of fresh water. Even with the greatest storage capacity, it will allow us to catch it and

store the water that is escaping our homes, which is constantly being highlighted to us, however, without the rainfall we will still end up where we are today, praying for the rains. As we depend now on our low aquifers to provide us with the water we are consuming across the island, we should be mindful that aquifers take decades to recharge. Information provided within the Deep Aquifer Exploration Drilling Feasibility Study undertaken by WSP in 2017 indicates that these few boreholes across the island can continuously supply a amount of water required to maintain the essential consumption for the island and with the frequent droughts the island is experiencing over the last two decades no mention has been made how to address climate change when it comes to our fresh water security. Other avenues of supply should be explored and being a small island in the middle of the South Atlantic Ocean we must also be innovative. With the future of the island's energy to be provided by renewable energy, with the arrival soon of PASH, our Utility Provider should welcome this with open eyes. Here lies the opportunity to investigate the possibilities of combining renewable energy with reverse osmosis technology to produce potable water from the vast ocean that surrounds us. Some research work has been undertaken, however, and I somehow believe that the costings being shared are based on figures provided from Ascension Island, which, in respect of that design, the provider on Ascension first of all provides those households supplied from this system with several cubic metres per month free of charge and then the additional consumption cost is recovered at £28.00 per cubic metre. With renewable energy and hydro power-driven pumps assimilated into a system here on island our cost per cubic metre will be lower. The set up might be expensive, but within a specific timeframe that cost would be recovered and operated in a way that would become affordable to the end customer. There will be no need to operate a system here in periods of drought only, but have a setup where it's continuous operation will see our own water supply mixed with the stored water supply and treated together before being distributed to our consumers. This process would ensure that we are not dependent on our rain water stock, but it would also allow that stock to last longer. The initial treatment system would be a solution for the Western side of the island and allow the water collected on the Eastern side to remain within that area to support those currently being fed off that system and for the future developments planned in the Eastern areas. This area of the island has the potential to develop just as much as the Western side. Securing the future water supply for the island is paramount. It will support the SEDP, Climate Change Policy, Peak Management and most of all our water strategy when one is provided. Mr Speaker, I support the Motion.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much indeed. The Honourable Cyril Leo?

The Hon. Cyril Leo –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I fully support this high priority Motion. No-one in this Honourable House should need to be convinced of the urgency of this Motion to be put into motion. We are faulting on years of catch up. The UK Government and St Helena Government have an obligation to ensure that the people of St Helena have adequate fresh water supplies and that appropriate contingencies are in place to combat climate change. St Helena is experiencing yet another severe drought period. It is yet another clear warning of the urgent need to take immediate action to improve our water storage infrastructure. We must be better prepared to capture rain water flows and we must also make a special effort to trap and utilise the tonnes of precious, underground freshwater that even during severe drought periods is literally wasting into the surrounding ocean. Mr Speaker, I support the Motion.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much indeed. Any other Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Cruyff Buckley?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I'm not going to reiterate what all my Members clearly pointed out, it is a critical situation and I thank the Honourable Dr Essex for bringing this Motion to the Honourable House and I too would like to see different methods, all methods of increasing our water supply explored, not only surface?....., an option of desalination with renewable energy perhaps as a driver and also other innovative methods such as mist capture. Mr Speaker, thank you very much, I support the Motion.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Does the Honourable Mover wish to respond to the debate?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I would like to thank all Honourable Colleagues for their support for this Motion. They have highlighted a number of key considerations we need to address in moving this forward. For a start, the financial implications, which always tend to come back to bite us and obviously would be a major constraint with regard to what is feasible or not feasible to implement. Also, reference was made to the Infrastructure Plan and within John Cox's Infrastructure Plan there was a proposal for pumped storage systems, which I think are another option which could be re-examined in the light of new technology and would merit further investigation. The Honourable Chief Secretary recognised the national importance of having a strategy for water resilience and security and I think that that is a major step forward, because, as she indicated, although we do have strategies in other key areas like energy at the moment, we do not have one regarding water, which is arguably even more vital. Other colleagues mentioned the green technologies that are growing every day and developing further worldwide and the extremely compelling evidence relating to climate change, which I don't think any of us can ignore or deny and, as my Honourable Friend on my immediate right indicated, these are issues that we, as a Government, have obligation to address, so I would like to thank you all for your support. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Members, the Motion is that this Honourable House resolves that water security be treated as a key priority and requests that the St Helena Government actively pursues development of an appropriate strategy to address both current water shortages and the likely future impacts of climate change.

Question on Motion, put and agreed to.

The Motion is carried.

The Speaker –

Honourable Members, I think this would be an appropriate time now to adjourn the meeting for lunch and we will resume again at half one. Thank you.

Council Adjourned.

Council Resumed.

The Speaker –

Okay, Honourable Members, welcome back. We will resume our business for this afternoon and I'll ask the Clerk of Councils to announce the next item of business, please?

MOTIONS (Resumed)

Motion No. 8 – The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex

The Speaker –

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this House resolves further to the practice of good governance that Sessional Paper No. 41/19, namely the Public Accounts Committee Report to Legislative Council for the formal sessions held on 29th July, 5th August and 12th August 2019 is adopted by this Council and requests the responsible member of Executive Council, in accordance with section 69 (9) of the Constitution of St Helena, to advise Legislative Council of the action proposed to be taken by Government in respect of these reports.

The Speaker –

Do we have a seconder, please?

The Hon. Allen Cansick –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Would the Honourable Mover wish to speak to the Motion?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, this Motion is a key procedural step in ensuring that there is appropriate open and transparent follow up to the formal sessions held by the Public Accounts Committee in which it fulfils its scrutiny function and identifies areas in which improvement or further action is recommended. Sessional Paper 41/19 contains the summary of the lines of inquiry and findings of the Public Accounts Committee in relation to the audited annual financial statements of the St Helena National Trust, St Helena Government and St Helena Fisheries Corporation for 2017/18 and of the Equality and Human Rights Commission in respect of both 2016/17 and 2017/18. The appropriate member of Executive Council to advise Legislative Council of the action proposed to be taken by Government in response to the Report is the Honourable Financial Secretary. He will have the task of considering the Public Accounts Committee's findings and recommendations and then provide feedback regarding how these will be taken forward. However, I would also urge all Elected Members of Legislative Council to study all aspects of the Report as they too have a key role in promoting and supporting good governance and ensuring that the public purse is spent responsibly, effectively and efficiently. I would also encourage the general public to follow the work of the Public Accounts Committee. It is frequently stated that there is little accountability, but greater awareness of the role and remit of the Public Accounts Committee would help to provide a measure of reassurance. It exists to challenge, scrutinise, probe and identify both strengths and weaknesses and it takes its role seriously. Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much indeed. Honourable Members, the Motion is that this House resolves, further to the practice of good governance, that Sessional Paper No. 41/19, namely the Public Accounts Committee Report to Legislative Council on the formal sessions held on 29th July, 5th August and 12th August 2019 is adopted by this Council and requests the responsible member of Executive Council, in accordance with section 69 (9) of the Constitution of St Helena, to advise Legislative Council of the action proposed to be taken by Government in respect of these reports. The Motion is now open for debate. Any Member wish to speak? The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I rise in support of the Motion. As my Honourable Colleague has said, this is the process that we now follow in terms of dealing and responding to the Report of the Public Accounts Committee. As that Responsible Officer, as she quite rightly outlined, it would be our intention that a response to this Report would actually be the one that was laid earlier today, sorry, would be brought to the next Legislative Council meeting and as has been agreed with the PAC will be reported on on a six monthly basis, so I rise in support of the Bill.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Any other Member wishes to speak? Does the Honourable Mover wish to respond to the debate?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Just to thank my Honourable Friend, the Financial Secretary for further clarifying the process and the next steps and to reiterate the importance that this procedural matter would actually help to address issues relating to the Government. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Members, the Motion is that this House resolves, further to the practice of good governance, that Sessional Paper No. 41/19, namely the Public Accounts Committee Report to Legislative Council on the formal sessions held on 29th July, 5th August and 12th August 2019 is adopted by this Council and requests the responsible member of Executive Council, in accordance with section 69 (9) of the Constitution of St Helena, to advise Legislative Council of the action proposed to be taken by Government in respect of these reports.

Question on Motion, put and agreed to.

The Motion is carried.

The Speaker –

Our next item of business, please?

8.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

The Speaker –

The Honourable Chief Secretary?

The Hon. Susan O’Bey –

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn sine die.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Is there a seconder, please?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you. The Motion is that this House do now adjourn sine die. The Motion is now open for debate. The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Before I start my exposition, I wish to declare my interest as the President of the St Helena Chamber of Commerce.

The Speaker –

Thank you.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Mr Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to be able to start by focusing on a very positive sign of progress. Yes, at long last, development of part of the Bottom Woods Comprehensive Development Area is about to start. Planning permission has been obtained and activity will be able to start soon, including construction of much needed additional Government Landlord Housing Units. I wish to pay tribute to those whose dedication and hard work has made this possible, in particular, the Technical Section of the Environment and Natural Resources Directorate, which is already overloaded, but which went the extra mile to ensure that this work stream could move ahead without further delay. This is a classic example of the skill and professionalism of our local workforce. This does not always seem to be reflected in the terms and conditions of service. We all are aware of the financial constraints under which we operate, but this is the reality. The establishment of the cadres in which the attainment of specific competencies lead to career and salary progression is much needed and extremely welcome, but sadly this only targets certain sectors at present. It is arguable that this could be considered discriminatory as those employed in other sectors in capacities which require a similarly high level of specialist skill and responsibility are not afforded the same conditions. As I have stated on many previous occasions within this Honourable House, if the sustainable development of St Helena is to occur we must invest in our own people and demonstrate that their contribution is recognised and valued at all times. Another recent positive that has had a significant impact is the reduction of the Legislative log jam. This is due to the presence of a dedicated legal draftsman as well as more stability within the Attorney General’s Chambers. The post of Legal Draftsman is vital and if it had been put in place earlier much of the key legislation that had been awaiting revision or initial drafting would already be in place and fewer Elected Members would be suffering from high blood pressure exacerbated by the stress of trying to move issues forward only to have these stalled due to lack of the necessary resources. Good progress is now being made and the post-holder is to be commended for her remarkable input. A further step forward has been the engagement of Professor Sarkin to explore what changes to the current political model would strengthen governance and development issues on St Helena. My colleagues are not surprised that I welcome this input as I have campaigned for

Constitutional change for the past six years as I believe strongly that the present Committee system impedes timely decision making and that Elected Members should possess greater autonomy. For St Helena to move on, its people must have a greater say in its affairs. However, Mr Speaker, we seem to be losing ground in other areas, some of which should be within St Helena's capability to address. Why, for example, did mail to/via Ascension by the MV Helena have to close on Thursday, 28th November, over a week before the vessel's departure? We must not lose sight of the current depressed state of St Helena's economy and the negative impact this is continuing to have on the private sector. Sadly, although an Economic Development Investment Programme has finally been approved, this is very slow in translating into work opportunities for the construction and allied sectors. If this situation does not change soon opportunities will come too late as businesses are near collapse already. What is also extremely worrying is the increase in hardship faced by persons on low incomes or pensions who are faced with escalating prices of essential items. Their living standards are falling and this must not be ignored. Disposable incomes are reducing consistently and considerably and this is a cause for great concern.

Mr Speaker, St Helena remains heavily dependent upon Her Majesty's Government for funding and cannot tackle new financial issues without their assistance. I trust that St Helena Government will make the strongest case possible to the Financial Aid Mission team next week and that the outcome will be a favourable settlement. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much indeed. Any other Honourable Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Derek Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I rise in support of the Adjournment Debate. First, Mr Speaker, I will raise, with great concern, the issue of those persons who travel on medical referrals to Pretoria and where there are cases where persons who accompany them to provide general care and support such persons are not able to access the cheaper flight rates due to the fact that there is uncertainty on their return date and by having an open date return on the flight ticket and when deciding on an appropriate return date the cost of the ticket works out to be more expensive than if they had purchased the more expensive ticket in the first place. This is not what was intended. The idea of putting a number of cheaper priced tickets in place was to assist those persons who have to travel at short notice in order to provide support to our medical referrals. I am asking that we take immediate action in addressing this issue with our service provider SA Airlink.

I know, Mr Speaker, that Honourable Members have raised concern about the freight increases on the MV Helena and I know that options are being considered for a level of subsidy. I feel with this budget process we should seriously look at providing some form of subsidy on certain types of items, but we need to work closely with our merchants and importers to ensure that if there is to be provided the level of subsidy it reaches the general public.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you will be aware that we recently had great success in the launch of the Youth Parliament on 22nd November 2019. I will be working in supporting the Youth Parliament in achieving their objectives as set out in creating greater empowerment in our youth.

Mr Speaker, I look forward to our budget negotiations next week with the FAM team and trust that we are able to reach the best financial aid settlement as possible for St Helena and our people.

Mr Speaker, I am also pleased to say that this week we completed the draft Immigration Policy and associated proposed legislation by the Immigration Working Group and I would like to

give credit to the Working Group for their high-level dedication and commitment shown. The Policy will now proceed for the relevant endorsement with a view of conducting extensive public consultation in January of next year.

Mr Speaker, I also join you in welcoming our new member, the Honourable Jeffrey Ellick and I look forward to working with him in terms of going forward.

Mr Speaker, I take this opportunity in wishing you, our Deputy Speaker, Honourable Members and their families, including the general public a Happy and Prosperous New Year. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you. The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise in support of this adjournment debate and wish to place on record the funding given to the people of St Helena under the European Development Fund in the?.... This project, to bring the fibre optic cable to the island, could be of a more significant investment than the airport. The project is huge and the benefits if properly negotiated is unimaginable. In going forward, it is therefore important that the island have a partner that is prepared to give a service to the island that mirrors the milestones that the EDF programme document and beyond. Whilst recognising that telecommunications is a business that need to make a profit, we also need one that put the service and quality offered in?..... focus. I understand the last time the telephone directory was printed by SURE, the current communications provider, was in 2016. Whilst having an e-copy is fine for those of us on island who can access the internet, what about those who cannot? We have an ageing population and being able to communicate by telephone, in many cases, is their only means of contact. They cannot access the internet to be able to find telephone numbers. Why should this be the case in 2019? SURE will be aware of who is online and those who has a telephone that are not. Therefore, why a limited number of telephone directories cannot be printed and made available in a font size for those subscribers who are not?.... One of the weaknesses in the current telecommunications licence for the island is that it lacks a statutory regulator that can properly hold the licence holder to account. In going forward and upon negotiating the new licence and with the cable landed, SHG must in advance review the telecommunications legislation and provision must be made for a regulator as the current system is not working in the best interests of the consumer, or, indeed, the island. When the existing telecommunications licence holder is due for renewal, SHG must put this out to expressions of interest so that St Helena is able to get a provider that can deliver a service that is affordable to all and that the reach of the cable will benefit all of the people of St Helena as set out in the EU milestone. As I understand it, the current owner, SURE, is owned by a company called Batelco, who, as I recall, bought out Cable & Wireless, the former communications provider, in about 2013. As far as I am aware, no member from Batelco has ever visited St Helena, however, I am aware that they have done so to at least one of the South Atlantic territories and on one or more occasion, that is the Falklands. Why is this the case? You could argue that pre airport getting here would be difficult, but that is not the case now. I merely make this point as I feel it is relevant to the best interest of the company that is operating in a monopoly, more importantly, to the interest of their customers. My constituents have complained to me about the roll-out of the set-top boxes and having to pay for them. What negotiations were undertaken with SHG prior to this and why is there no paper brought to ExCo setting out what has been proposed? This is further evidence as to why there needs to be a regulatory authority in going forward, especially if St Helena and its people have to get the full benefits from the cable project. It is my hope in going forward and now that the fibre optic

cable is on the horizon, that this Government will use the opportunity to ensure that not only this project is delivered, but that we have an operator that will be accountable to a regulator and that the licence will create penalties where they fall short.

I would like to mention that for many months now Elected Members and Directorates from SHG have been preparing for the budget. We all know that our economy is struggling. It was disheartening to be told by the forthcoming FAM team that SHG should prepare for a flatline budget. This is even before the evidence of a settlement has even been discussed. I have been for years raising the issue of more openness and transparency in how our partners in DfID reaches the settlement as there is no set criteria or formula as to how the reasonable needs of those territories that are still in receipt of grant-in-aid are met. We have spoken about benchmarking without a small island status, but no move has been made so that we can better understand how the aid is arrived at. These are issues that is fundamental and goes to the core of our partnership with HMG and must be discussed in an open and transparent way so that we can feel that not only does HMG understand our needs but that they likewise understood how a small island with no central government, that has to find all the public services that operates. I also note with interest that the programme for the visit of the FAM has allocated a very short amount of time to actually discuss the budget and whilst I would accept what my friend, the Honourable Dr Essex say that we should be pointing out all these issues about the state of the economy, with the current time allocated I'm afraid I am not convinced that we will be able to do this.

Mr Speaker, I agree with my friend, the Honourable Derek Thomas when he raised the issue of the flight rates, but not only about that, but we should be discussing more about our resilience to climate change and what is HMG's plans to support us. I am concerned about the point that my Honourable Friend, Derek Thomas mentioned about the cost of flights to those who accompany our people on medical referrals. In February 2018, I had the opportunity with the team that went to Jo'burg to discuss business there, to meet with our partners Airlink. We had the opportunity for the Chief Executive Officer to be there and my friend to my immediate right was present and will know that I raised this very issue because on that flight going out with us there was a couple that had to pay over £2,000 to accompany their elderly Mum to Pretoria. This is unacceptable and is not what we signed up to when we signed up for air access. Following those discussions, as I understand it, and I hope the Chief Secretary or the Financial Secretary will confirm this, that this was taken forward and agreed. Clearly, if my friend's information is correct, and I have no reason to doubt him, something has gone wrong. This should not be happening and I will, with him, be following this up, because it is unacceptable.

Mr Speaker, and finally, I, too, would like to welcome the Honourable Jeffrey Isaac to the House and look forward, Jeffrey Ellick to the House and look forward to working with him in going forward and likewise I would like to wish you, Mr Speaker and the Deputy and all Members of this House a very Merry Christmas and all the best for 2020 and to all our constituents. Thank you.

The Speaker –
Point of information.

The Hon. Derek Thomas –
Mr Speaker, if you will allow me.

The Speaker –
Go ahead.

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Mr Speaker, if you allow me, I can raise a point of information. I can assure my Honourable Friend, Councillor Henry, that the information I provided is correct, I accompanied a constituent to the Shipping Office only last week and was told that because they could not obtain a return ticket, if they were given the cheaper rate the cost would be more, so I can assure that that information is correct and we clearly need to do something about it. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you for your point of information, Honourable Member. The Honourable Tony Green?

The Hon. Anthony Green –

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, I support the adjournment and I, too, welcome Councillor Ellick to this Council. I also wish to extend good wishes to our colleague in South Africa, Brian Isaac.

This morning, we passed the Police and Criminal Evidence (Amendment) Bill and also we ratified the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (Application) Order, 2019. In the New Year, my Committee will be leading on consultation of a proposed piece of legislation about fixed penalties. Information about dates and venues will be issued in the coming weeks. This was another piece of legislation discussed and agreed by the Social and Community Development Committee on 7th November. At present, most offences are dealt with by way of criminal prosecution or a Police caution. Fixed penalties will provide for minor offences to be treated as civil penalties and can be used to avoid a criminal record for the offender. I trust that the public will be able to engage and attend these public consultation meetings.

I heard what my colleague said about the prices about air ticket and how these things should be addressed, but trust in the New Year we will be able to discuss the way forward politically that we will know where authority to make decisions actually lie.

Regarding social care, I am very happy to report that the recruitment problem that has been experienced for years, the Children and Adult Services Social Care Directorate, previously Safeguarding, that this is no longer the case. Also, the Directorate is strengthening and updating its policies, its processes and putting into place a documented approach for dealing with all social issues. This will not only ensure how issues are uniformly processed, but believe that once embedded, we won't have any new incoming Director, hopefully we won't get one for many years to come, but one of the things that St Helena has always suffered from is that incoming new people try and change what is already working well.

Mr Speaker, I just want to wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year and as we know the New Year will continue to be interesting as well as challenging. Mr Speaker, I support the adjournment.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much, Councillor Green. The Honourable Cyril Leo?

The Hon. Cyril Leo –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. The United Kingdom's primary legal responsibilities for St Helena derive from Article 73, Chapter 11 of the Charter of the United Nations. The Charter is binding on the United Kingdom under international law. Accordingly, the United Kingdom has a fundamental obligation to ensure that the people of St Helena achieve political, economic, social and educational advancement and constructive measures of development. The most recent reinstatements of the United Kingdom's obligations were made in the 2012 White Paper on the Overseas Territories. The foreword to the White Paper states – "This Government is

ambitious for our territories as we are ambitious for the United Kingdom. We want our communities to flourish in partnership with strong and sustainable local economies". The Executive summary to the White Paper states – "Each territory has a unique community and it is for the territory to shape the future of its own community". The overview of the 2012 White Paper commits the Government of the United Kingdom to work with the St Helena Government to build a vibrant and flourishing community. Article 73 of the United Nations Charter, the 2012 White Paper, St Helena's Sustainable Economic Development Plan and the recent Independent Economic Review that es....?.....that 2050 Vision for St Helena are all documents of ambitious intent. However, without the necessary sustained associated actions, the long the ambitious intent?.....documents will never provide the social and economic development, advancement and progress required for that vibrant and flourishing community in St Helena. Without sustained, adequate financial support from the United Kingdom to maintain the island's progression to social and economic self-sufficiency, St Helena will continue to find it very difficult to make creditable headway. The St Helena Government Directorates are in the final stages of preparing budget submissions for the next financial year. The central option of a three-year budget provision from the United Kingdom had been removed from the table by DfID. In preparation for the 2021 budget, negotiations that are expected to begin in December between Elected Members and DfID officials, St Helena Government Officers instructed Directorates to provide calculations to Elected Members according to zero base for budgeting. The uplift required for all St Helena Government Directorates totals £7m, one Director introduced his budget for initial consideration at committee stage as a bare bones zero based budget. Just one example of where more funding is necessary in Social Welfare. The recent review of the Social Security Ordinance 2011 has confirmed the flaws of a Social Welfare system that has had ongoing detrimental consequences for many of our vulnerable people over the last eight years. The Review Working Group has established that addressing the flaws in the legislation will require significant funding, some £800k. If the required funding cannot be found then the definition of the household, according to the current legislation, will remain law. Consequently, many of our vulnerable people, particularly our senior citizens, will not be able to access the income related benefits in their own right and the purpose and principle of the Social Security Ordinance should be to protect our vulnerable people. Of course, there is no such thing as a magic money tree, nevertheless the United Kingdom allocated some £13b to the Overseas Aid budget and it is the stated policy of United Kingdom that the reasonable assistance needs of St Helena are a first call on the UK's Aid Programme. The financial assistance St Helena has already received from the United Kingdom is by no means overlooked and I take this opportunity to express gratitude from the heart of the people of St Helena, however, it is a serious concern that before the 2021 budget negotiations between DfID and Elected Members have even started DfID officials have just recently instructed the SHG's Financial Secretary that St Helena will now have to accept a flatline budget. The Financial Secretary has therefore instructed Directorates to further shave the bones of their already bare bones budgeting considerations. Consequently, the Elected Representatives position in the budgeting negotiations on behalf of the people of St Helena have been seriously weakened by the pre-empted conditions and d..?..ings of DfID. Overall, the minimum budget aid offer St Helena requires from the United Kingdom for the 2020/21 budget is £4m and negotiations with DfID are expected to be difficult. Following recent instructions from DfID, SHG Directorates have now been forced to reduce their budget deficit calculations down from £4m to just £1.7m for the next financial year. That flatline budgetary aid package for St Helena with or without the £1.7m uplift from the United Kingdom will mean serious challenges for the people of St Helena. The failure to secure adequate budgetary aid from the United Kingdom will mean a serious, detrimental impact on SHG public services and will increase operational risks. Yes, the United Kingdom has ambitious intent for the

community of St Helena to become vibrant and to flourish. However, at this period in time, the reality is St Helena desperately needs sufficient financial aid from the United Kingdom just to help our community move beyond the current debilitating social and economic stagnation and that, Mr Speaker, is our reality message to DfID and to the UK Government. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you. The Honourable Russell Yon?

The Hon. Russell Yon –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I rise in support of the adjournment. I would first like to take this opportunity welcoming our colleague, Jeffrey Ellick, to the realms of the St Helena Legislative Council and also wish Honourable Friends, Gavin Ellick and Brian Isaac, well.

Mr Speaker, I will make my adjournment debate short, but would like to highlight a few issues in doing so. As Chairman of Environmental and Natural Resources Committee, and with oversight of two Directorates, I would like to take this occasion to simply highlight some of the areas where these two Directorates are worth mentioning at this tie.

Staff in particular within the Crown Estates and Technical Services have, since our last meeting, worked tremendously hard to establish a plan and direction in addressing our shortage of housing to support the Government Landlord Housing issue and to make available lands in several areas across the island for suitable housing. The progress on the Bottom Woods West CDA has been given the green light by ExCo and excavation work for the roads and the utilities infrastructure is expected to commence in January next year with the hope that Government Landlord homes under CDA to be turn key ready by late 2020. It will also allow another twenty-plus sites to be made available for first time home builders and market value plots. In all, forty homes and a private business venture will be captured within this CDA. Plans have been submitted for a small development within Half Tree Hollow area and for Alarm Forest, Phase 2. Another development at Bottom Woods, known as Plane View, was submitted to Planning just this week and will, if approved, make provisions for thirty-plus, which will be available to the general public. Other areas have been identified and it is intended that planning permission for all these will be submitted all throughout next year. This will make it possible for the lands to become available for at least two hundred homes and amongst them will be several Government Landlord homes. That will help to ease the burden on the current waiting list of the Housing Office, which now stands at sixty-four as of yesterday. All of this work has been done alongside all the other requests that comes through their office from other SHG Directorates and Councillors.

It was pleasing to learn on the street and in a short meeting yesterday that SHG will accept expressions of interest from individual businesses within the private sector who would like to develop identified CDAs, such as the one in Half Tree Hollow and a proposed one for St Paul's. This, I assume, is on the back of the agreement with Mr Nigel George of NGCPH, for developing Bunkers Hill. It is rather unfortunate that this way forward was not portrayed at an earlier stage as staff within the Technical Services has now wasted almost a month of their time undertaking work to support these two developments on the CDAs, which would have been to submitted to Planning Office in early January of next year. As Chairman of ENRC and a member of the Estates Strategy Panel, I am alarmed as to how this has progressed without being informed.

Mr Speaker, as alluded to earlier today, our Climate Change Policy was approved earlier this year and a specific area in the policy recognises that more must be done with our waste management and recycling of materials that are dumped at the Horse Point landfill. It is here where I must mention that with ingenuity of some staff members at the landfill, who have

converted an old drum crusher into a baler, and are currently crushing aluminium cans and baling them in readiness for export to a recycling company in Cape Town, South Africa. With discussions ongoing with Andrew Weir Shipping Ltd, it might just be possible to have a container shipped off the island at a reduced cost and in turn some much-needed revenue will be generated for the island, whilst also extending the life of the landfill.

Mr Speaker, the Eden Project has now kicked in and in January we will see the arrival of the Canne SA team to undertake rockfall protection work on several areas in Ruperts and Jamestown. This is welcome news as we try to once again generate spending to grow our economy and to assist the employment. Several other projects will begin soon which will allow the private sector to become involved once again. As we all know, this sector has been stagnant over the past two years, which, in turn, saw many Saints leave our shores to take up employment elsewhere.

Back to the rockfall protection, the work carried out by this professional team will eventually allow full operation of Ruperts Jetty and secure other areas within Jamestown. However, we cannot become complacent that this protection will save and protect every rockfall from being destructive. As recent as last week, a rockfall occurred on the North-eastern side of Jamestown and although no-one was injured some damage to property occurred. Most of all, it is believed that one of these rocks breached the retaining fences. After an inspection of the area, the Rockguards team and the Roads Section will remove the remainder of this outcrop soon.

Mr Speaker, two issues have been on the lips of everyone's tongue and that has been our current water situation and the freight costs to get goods here to St Helena. The water situation has become an issue for the past few months and although the CEO and his team from Connect have been doing all in their powers to ensure that we have enough of this precious commodity from within the remaining stock that we have, it is difficult to say the least as to where the next drop will come from. Our supposed rainy season has come and gone with no signs of the much needed rain to replenish our stock and the few drops we are currently seeing is just that, blink and you won't see it. I do believe that it is time for our authorities to look at other alternatives to provide our water stock as climate change is having its impact the world over. No amount of storage will compensate for the lack of rain, we must do all in our power to ensure we exhaust all the possibilities as to how we can mitigate this problem for the future. It is key to our development and growth and most of all to our survivability.

Mr Speaker, my last gr... for today is about the ever increasing cost of our freight and although we cannot do anything about the latest increase to be applied at the beginning of the incoming year, it will have profound impact on our way of living. The additional cost to be incurred in January will hit the shipping worldwide trade, especially those who will not conform to the changed legislation. For St Helena though, it will be one increase too many. I understand that this Government will be looking at ways to assist with the continuous increase, but it is always a question to be to ...?.....as to why we have a ship operating to support St Helena only. We have fooled ourselves into believing that we are maker rich when we are living out of someone else's pocket.

In closing, Mr Speaker, I would like to wish everyone the best of seasonal greetings. I support the adjournment.

The Speaker –

Thank you. The Honourable Jeffrey Ellick?

The Hon. Jeffrey Ellick –

Mr Speaker, I rise in support of the adjournment. I would like to thank you, the other Honourable Members for the words of welcome. I would also like to thank the public for their support to all candidates during the bye-election. I am grateful for the support given to me and

will endeavour to do my best in serving the community of St Helena. However, Mr Speaker, I am concerned about the overall turnout on the day to Polling Stations by those voters. Out of approximately, 2, 400 people who are eligible to vote, 481 made the effort and we had 22%. In my opinion, there is something seriously wrong. Does this demonstrate people are not interested, are they fed up, are there administrative issues, can we as a Government turn this around? There are issues within the community, such as rising costs, that affects everyone. Unified Saints, of which I am a member, will be holding a meeting at Half Tree Hollow Community Centre on Thursday, 12th December at 7.30 pm to gather the views of the community on reasons for low turnout at elections and constituency meetings, difficulties being faced and likely to be faced within the near future and improving communications with elected members. Mr Speaker, in order to move forward as an island, it is imperative that we have our community on side, therefore, we as a Government, should be helping to identify the issues, engaging and listening to our community when sourcing practical solutions together. We all have a part to play, let's hope for the better good of St Helena we can all come together and strive towards creating a better future for all. Mr Speaker, I support the adjournment.

The Speaker –

Thank you. The Honourable Cruyff Buckley?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, the job of an Elected Member is becoming more and more challenging within this political arena, although I do feel confident with a New Year Members will strive to find effective and bestow solutions that are well suited to St Helena's needs. There is some good work that has been outlined quite effectively today by Members during their adjournment debate speeches. Sitting on three of the five major committees, Mr Speaker, I am well abreast of the good work that's been happening in ENRD in relation to our social housing development, I think it is much needed and long overdue, it will open up opportunities for first time house builders to purchase land at an affordable rate to enable them to live and reside on St Helena and contribute to our economy. Waste management has come a long way, Mr Speaker, and we're pleased to say now we are recycling aluminium cans. Climate change policies have also been put in place. I feel this Government has really demonstrated its commitment to an international cause that is of utmost importance and one which always tend to come on the agenda when we visit overseas conferences, and for the right reasons.

There's brilliant work being done in the Economic Development Committee around our Labour Market Strategy which seeks to address many gaps that are in St Helena's labour market and to assist private sector businesses when they seek to employ skilful people in the right jobs in the right areas.

Mr Speaker, we continue to promote St Helena internationally and we sell ourselves as an exemplar of a green and blue island destination, which I believe St Helena truly is and we seek to add to this with our cable which is on the horizon, which I think is a huge step for St Helena for driving our digital economy.

The Social and Community Development Committee having now performed our Social and Community Review, seeks to address a much-needed gap with recognition to the definition of our 'household' status. This amendment will come at a tremendous cost and this Council will have to acknowledge that we will have to take that step and invest serious money into improving care for our elderly and vulnerable people of St Helena.

Mr Speaker, I will make special mention to the Public Health Committee for some very brave decision making with regard to our patient referrals in Pretoria. It has been a rocky road and caused much resentment in the public during the early stages when it was questioned why

should we move to Pretoria. I can stand here and say now that I feel the Committee made the right decision and it is pleased to be announced that the saving was around some £380k, which will now enable the Health Directorate to send more patients if need be.

There's also good progress being made and suggestions to use, reopen Sundale up at Half Tree Hollow to provide palliative care, to house Dentistry, to house the Pharmacy, Physiotherapy and all different areas within the Health Directorate that need much space to be able to operate. Mr Speaker, also of particular note is the launch of the Youth Parliament, which I feel is a very good step to promote the youth of our island and to involve them at a very early stage in political decision making. I think this can only drive to benefit their cause and I can tell already from the last session we have a bright future ahead of us.

Mr Speaker, I would just now take this opportunity to wish all my colleagues a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Christine Scipio?

The Hon. Christine Scipio –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I'm pleased that recognition has been given to staff in the St Helena Government who have developed their skills and achieved professional qualifications that are recognised internationally. A successful Career Fair was held this year where a range of careers were showcased that are likely to be both needed and available on our island over the next few years. Keeping our young people informed of possible career development is important in their lives which makes the Career Fair such a significant event. Staff has been instrumental in creating awareness of using the internet safely, International Youth Day, International Day for Older Persons, World Mental Health Day, Sexual Health, Violence Against Women, which is known as White Ribbon Day, celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the rights of the Child and International Day of Persons with Disabilities. St Helena Government staff should be awarded for creating this awareness in the community, so well done to them.

Mr Speaker, during the district clean up in 2016, Longwood Avenue residents were consulted on installing a pathway from Longwood House to the entrance to Harford Primary School. Permission was given by Crown Estates for this to take place with the understanding that a walkway will be installed at a later date hence at that time permission was made for it. Residents have been very understanding over the last few years in the absence of a capital programme. I have now been informed by the Capital Programme Manager that this walkway is not considered to be a priority by my colleagues hence will not be chosen as a moderate project for the remainder of the funding for this financial year. Mr Speaker, I am baffled as to why the safety of the elderly and young people are not considered a priority, but when Napoleonic bicentenary celebrations are. I have also been advised that development permission will need to be applied for to create this walkway which will require detailed designs. Only when these detailed designs are submitted to Chief Planning Officer he will be able to determine if development permission is required. Mr Speaker, would a site visit to Longwood Avenue by the Chief Planning Officer simplify matters whereby he would be able to determine on the spot if a development application is required to create a walkway on a patch of green grass?

Mr Speaker, as you are aware, Elected Members meet every Friday, alternating as Elected Members or Informal Legislative Council. We have been encouraged to submit agenda items for Informal Legislative Council meetings where officials are required to attend. On 4th October, I did provide a list of topics to be updated upon, such as the Ten-Year Plan, Ruperts Development Plan, the Legislative Programme and progress on the development of ex PWD

Store where it was agreed that SHG Archives and the Public Library be relocated to as part of the lease with the Heritage Society. Mr Speaker, as the Chair of the Informal Legislative Council Meetings, you have advised that you would allow two topics to be updated upon for each Informal Legislative Council Meeting. The Secretary followed up on this matter with the administration who either advised that officials were not available to provide update or the update was not readily available. Eight weeks later I am still waiting. I have served as an Elected Member for the past six years, but must confess that I am constantly trying to understand the word 'progress' in relation to St Helena. In July 2018, I have stated in this House, Mr Speaker, that this transitional period has been extremely challenging. We try to give our constituents words of encouragement, hope and optimism, but even I am currently struggling with this concept and cannot help wondering how soon the branch of the tree will crack, break and fall. It appears that the roots of this tree is beginning to lose its grip. The standard of living has fallen and the morale of the people is at an all-time low. Mr Speaker, compliments of the season.

The Speaker –

Thank you. The Honourable Clint Beard?

The Hon. Clint Beard –

Mr Speaker, this has been a very interesting formal LegCo and you can see lots of work has been done, but for me one of the issues highlighted was the water situation and I think for me it highlights a major effect on the sustainability of St Helena going forward. Lots hinges on that, the economy, the social impacts that its having, it could even hamper the tourism numbers that we're going to attract, so I think this, as was mentioned in the Motion, needs to be addressed urgently.

There are other issues going on with regards to freight and the unavoidable increases that will happen in January 2020, but we still, I feel, have to look at ways of intervening in those costs and getting some sort of subsidy to alleviate the burdens that will?.....

The cable is coming, the main wish it will mean will be affordability and making sure that we can have a broader spectrum of people being able to use that service and not only those that have it.

One thing that I think hasn't been mentioned or has been slightly mentioned today was we need to look after the aged, but not only the aged, those with disabilities as well. We need to start planning ourselves and looking at those things. Our funding has been stretched to the limit and for me I feel when it comes down to funding we need to be very consistent and very fair when we look at funding and how we allocate those funding streams, be it to the different sectors. We have the SEDP and I think fair funding should give fair results.

The social impacts are becoming more and more prevalent, people are battling to put food on the table, unfortunate to say we have health initiatives to be held, but again, people can hardly afford to do that, so those are the impacts that we will need to look at.

On a lighter note, we have the first flight from Cape Town, well done, but what from here??.....people are booking six months or up to a year in advance, what happens next year? Are we attracting the right numbers from Cape Town? Let's see. Only after this scheduled flight will we know exactly if it was a good move or how much was Cape Town marketed, was it fairly marketed?

Another impacting factor was the Youth Parliament, I think it was a great initiative, it's a way and a conduit to listen to the youth that will be here in years to come.

And then, finally, congratulations to our Councillor Ellick for gaining the numbers to get elected and also to the Clerk of Councils for her first meeting today and also well wishes go out to Brian and to Gavin. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much indeed. Would the Honourable Mover wish to respond?

The Hon. Susan O’Bey –

Thank you, Mr Speaker and I’d like to thank all of my Honourable Friends around the table for their contributions to this adjournment debate. I have to say that I think you’ve done an excellent job in terms of highlighting the positives and all that has been achieved this year, but also flagging, very importantly, the challenges which are still to come.

As we were talking and as Members were providing their views as a part of the debate, I saw three things emerging, which I’d like to draw on as I respond to your contributions to the debate.

First of all, I’m going to add my congratulations both to our Clerk of Councils for taking on this very important role, I’d also like to congratulate my colleague on my second right here, the Attorney General for taking on the substantive role of Attorney General and I would also like to congratulate Councillor Jeffrey Ellick on winning the election and becoming our newest member of Legislative Council. I’m particularly pleased to welcome Jeffrey Ellick because having had my first one to one discussion with Mr Ellick earlier this week I’m hoping that, he’s nailed his **colours**...? to the mast in terms of stating he’s a member of Unified Saints and I’m hoping that this is going to be the beginning, if you like, of party politics on St Helena and who knows in the next General Election we see more members coming forward with a shared agenda, which I think will help to shape how we intend to go forward as an island, so welcome Councillor and good luck.

If I can talk about opportunities. Councillor Essex referred to the political governance reform as an opportunity and I have to say I wholeheartedly agree with that, because I think that is going to be a significant opportunity for us going forward. I think we all recognise the frustrations and I think in your various expositions this afternoon you’ve highlighted those frustrations that you feel. Frustrations in terms of the current system, the lack of teeth that appear to you as individuals, the lack of accountability that you have, and I’m not saying that we’re not accountable, but the lack of accountability or responsibility, if you like, for your own agenda because you don’t have the political teeth or the constitutional, the legal teeth, to be able to carry it through. I think political governance reform is important and I hope now that the report from Dr Jeremy Sarkin has arrived, and I believe it’s now publicly available, will actually encourage people to come forward and to have a good debate and a good discussion about what kind of system will best suit St Helena as we go forward, so it’s an opportunity that I urge everybody to participate in.

We spoke at length about opportunities that Cable Project would bring, that the Energy Strategy would give us, but I’m also going to talk about another opportunity which was mentioned today, which is the Youth Parliament. Now, first of all, I’d like to commend those of you who worked with our youth to be able to make this their first parliament a success, their first meeting I should say, I was particularly impressed by the way in which the young people participated in that particular event. I think we had strong debate, we heard good, solid views being put forward and I hope that we will be able to nurture that and see more of our young people becoming involved, because I think that is something that is going to help to address the issue which Councillor Ellick raised, which is about the apathy or the current apathy of the island electorate in terms of taking advantage of our right to vote, which a lot of people across the world are still not in the position that we’re in and I hope that this will encourage more people to take an interest in politics, take an interest in the affairs of our island and to come out and to vote for the kind of people that you want to represent you.

Another theme that has come through is resilience and, again, I'm going to refer, as a number of you have done, to the very eloquent Motion raised by Councillor Essex in relation to water. Resilience is important, across the piece, particularly when you are a small island in the middle of a huge ocean, thousands of miles away from land, huge land masses. It means that we have to be reliant on our own resources, it means that we have to build resilience into what we do in order to be able to sometimes get from one hurdle to the next and it also means that as a small island state we are often at the mercy, if you like, of global challenges that are outside of our immediate control and so when I said some of you have highlighted those challenges you have. We are impacted upon, challenges such as climate change, fluctuations in currency, political agendas, I mean, our airport I would have to say is the subject of political agendas when, you know, in 2004 we had the green light that there was going to be an airport, a new government came in in 2008 and that changed and then all of a sudden in 2010 we found ourselves in the situation where potentially the airport was back on the agenda again, so we are at the vehemence and the mercy sometimes of those agendas. Fuel prices another one, that we have no control over, so I think it is absolutely important that we try to build resilience into what we do as much as we possibly can and one of the things that I'd like to share with you this afternoon, there's what I describe as our, how we're going to do that and Members will have received a copy of a draft strategy, and I know we talk about strategies all the time, but the draft SHG Strategy, which I see as being the glue that pulls all of these various plans and visions and aspirations and strategies together, because it sets out how we're going to actually go about achieving this and you, as Elected Members, have been very clear about what you see as your priorities, so you have decided that effective infrastructure is a priority where people can live in well designed, sustainable places where they are able to access amenities and services which are needed. Under the Ten-Year Plan goals altogether better for children and young people we want our children and young people in St Helena to get the best start in life, to be better educated, more skilled and more successful. In terms of economic development, we want inclusive development which means that everybody is able to participate, our communities are able to feel the benefit of economic growth by being in work and enjoying a good quality of life. We want to be safe; we want to be altogether healthier. We speak about our aspirations in terms of being altogether greener, valuing and enjoying our natural and built environment and at the same time ensuring that there is something there for our younger generations in the future, those of our young people who are still to be born. Underpinning all of that, we want to have an efficient, effective and accountable administration. Now, those are aspirations, but I thought it might be helpful if I could just show today the work that Directors have been doing to put those aspirations, those policy objectives which you have articulated to us, into actions and to just give a flavour of some of the things that will be focused on over the next three-year planning period. We heard today about freight costs and the impact that that is having. Well, one of the actions is that SHG will work to look at ensuring that costs associated with port and cargo operations are reduced. We will seek to ensure that our physical infrastructure, including utilities and telecoms, is developed and maintained. We will look to ensure that educational attainments and learning outcomes are enhanced for all, investing in our people, because as you've all pointed out, our people provide the resilience in that they are here and they are a sustainable resource, so we need to nurture them. We will continue to ensure that we have a reliable and affordable air access and sea freight service in place. The island will benefit, we hope, from an overarching housing strategy that will not just look at making land available for housebuilding and development, but will also look at ensuring that first time homeowners have the wherewithal, if you like, to be able to own and build their first home. We will continue to ensure that we reduce the prevalence of non-communicable chronic disease through our wellbeing programmes that we have established and we will continue to ensure that all people have access to affordable health care and associated support services.

We will maintain our efforts to develop, protect and conserve and ensure the use of our environment is enhanced and sustained and underpinning all of that we will look at the way the administration or the public service operates so that we increasingly put you, the public, the listening public, at the forefront. Now, Dr Essex, sorry, Dr Essex, I seem to be drawing on you quite a lot today, you mentioned something that struck a chord with me, the closure date for mail one week before the vessel departs. Such a small thing. Now, perhaps again, we just need to look at the small things, some of the small things that we do, the quick pins that we can put in place that will show that we put the customer at the front and, of course, I think we all recognise that whilst there have been significant improvements there are still further improvements that we can do that will make St Helena Government or St Helena administration or the public service or whatever we call ourselves an easier place to do business with and this is the kind of thing that we'll be seeking to address as we go forward with this three-year strategy. Words, you might say, but I hope that we're going to be able to nail our **colours**? to the mast with this strategy by publishing it, but not just publishing the strategy, also publishing the indicators that will demonstrate whether we've achieved what we said we were going to do, so we're putting that out in the public domain, it's still a work in progress, it's being refined as part of the MTEC process, but we hope to be able to demonstrate what we mean when we say that we're going to be looking at ensuring that there are affordable services and utilities, for example, so what does that actually translate into? Hopefully, once we've refined this you will be able to see exactly how many kilometres of road we plan to resurface on an annual basis and then you can hold us to account if we haven't achieved that and if we don't have a valid reason as to why we haven't done so and similarly we've developed indicators across the piece for each of our actions, so I hope, Mr Speaker, that that will help to demonstrate that we are trying to do the best that we can, that we are moving. I wrote a word down here, ...?...t of motion, and I think that's important. Whilst we look back at what we haven't done, we need to also recognise that we need to be moving forward, so, yes, things aren't perfect, there is still a lot that we need to do, but we need to have a plan of how we do it, not just words, but a plan that we can be held to account and I hope, Mr Speaker, that this time next year I'll be able to stand here and say to you, it's not quite the end of the year yet, but these are the things that we have in place.

So, Mr Speaker, I would also like to echo my colleagues' good wishes to everybody and I hope that you all have a really good festive season, and, more importantly, that you have a healthy and prosperous 2020. Mr Speaker, thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much indeed. Honourable Members, I would also like to pass on my congratulations to Connie as our new Clerk of Councils, I'm sure she will serve us well and likewise I'd also like to congratulate Allen on his appointment as our new Attorney General and I wish you well in your Department.

Right, Honourable Members, that concludes our business for this session. There's been an interesting debate and I thank you all for your participation and contributions. I now put the question that this Council do adjourn sine die.

Question that Council do adjourn sine die, put and agreed to.

Council adjourned sine die.

The Speaker –

Honourable Members, I take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Prosperous, Peaceful New Year. Thank you.

Council adjourned sine die.

Honourable Speaker

Date