



Economic Development Committee (EDC) Minutes

Date: 9 July 2020

Venue: Council Chamber

Time: 1.30 pm

Present:	Chairman	Hon Lawson Henry
	Members:	Hon Cruyff Buckley
		Hon Gavin Ellick
		Hon Clint Beard
		Hon Miss Christine Scipio
		Deputy Financial Secretary, Mr Nicholas Yon
		Director of Enterprise, Mr Robert Midwinter
		Director ENRPD, Mr Darren Duncan
	Secretary	Miss Anita Legg
In Attendance:		Hon Cyril Leo
		Senior Economist, Mrs Amanda Curry Brown
		Economic Development and Prosperity Advisor, Mr
		Karan Garcha
		Marine Conservation Officer, Mr Rhys Hobbs (Item 41.3)
		Senior Fisheries Officer, Mr Gerald Benjamin (Item 41.3)
Apologies:		Hon Financial Secretary, Mr Dax Richards
		Chief Economist, Mrs Nicole Shamier

OPEN SESSION

41.1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting. Officers, fishermen and members of the public were present. Apologies were received from the Financial Secretary and the Chief Economist.

41.2 Declaration of Personal Interest

Cllr Ellick declared his interest in relation to his fish retail business hence the Chairman ruled, as previously that Cllr Ellick be allowed to remain and participate in the discussion but not be allowed to vote. No other personal interests were declared.

41.3 Fish Catch Limits to Support Fishing Licencing Policy, ENRPD Memo No 5/2020
– Director ENRPD

The Director of ENRPD provided a brief overview where EDC were asked to endorse the catch limits for those fish species where limits were included on the Fisheries Catch Limits Table. The table had been presented to the Committee on 28th May however there had been issues surrounding the missing figures for Yellow Fin tuna (YFT) and Big Eye tuna (BET); this had now been completed through a proposed paper to ExCo and the table updated.

The Chairman had circulated an email the previous day advising that the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) quota for Yellow Fin and Big Eye Tuna, for the fishing industry, had already been approved by Executive Council, being 300 tonne for Yellow Fin and an exploratory quota of 600 tonne for Big Eye; therefore EDC would only seek endorsement on the remainder of the species on the table at this meeting. Members would look at numbers against sports and recreational fishing for those particular species but not a TAC. A member expressed concern that the tuna quotas would not be discussed that day, as it formed part of the table however the Chairman advised this was not necessary due to ExCo having already made a decision, tuna quotas had only been included on the table at a member's request.

The Director advised that all Elected Members had had sight of the table beforehand and been given an opportunity by the Governor and at Caucus to come up with suggestions on how the table could be improved, particularly in terms of recreational fishing however there had been little feedback.

The Marine Conservation Officer delivered a presentation on the changes in the table and the following key points arose from discussion:

- There is some science on the BET to inform a TAC, which had been carried out as part of the Blue Belt programme but insufficient to form a definitive estimate on biomass. In terms of ground fish, the grouper has far more information to inform catch limits but for the remaining species, this is the best information available.
- An investigation had been carried out on the recent death of grouper and other fish however SHG was unable to send samples off the island to be tested.
- It was confirmed the table has been consulted on in various different forums since September last year.
- A query was raised on the allocation for recreational and sports fishing quotas. It was noted sports fishing does not have quotas, it has numbers of fish across the species due to not having an estimate of the level of effort that goes on in that particular activity, until then, fish caught is monitored under that licence.
- Concern was raised on numbers for sports fishing to encourage visitors to the island thus the Director invited members to put forward suggestions for what an increase could be.
- With regards to engagement and information since September, on spearfishing and such, the Marine Conservation Officer explained the specific targeted consultation with each of the sectors, resulting in the Catch Limits Table being updated with the

comments that could be accommodated. The basic concern had been around numbers coming in that potentially could not be sold, in a sports fishing season. The number had been increased to 4 per day however if EDC wished to give a steer to increase further, this could be considered with justification.

- EDC noted the methodology used was a combination of landings at the Cold Store, estimates of what numbers and days of recreational fishing might be taking place, etc. Members were concerned information was being used from an old survey however noted this was only one of the large pieces of work that had assisted decision making.
- EDC also noted the same methodology was not applied across all of the species, as tuna is different to all other species; the science was available for YFT and BET is exploratory – “exploratory” and tagging was then explained in detail.
- The allocation for wahoo and other species had not yet been decided, as officers were awaiting approval from EDC on the TAC thus the 25mt might not be wholly given to the commercial sector.
- Discussion ensued around the licences that will be issued, currently being 12 for commercial, 6 for sports, which had been increased from 3, and 13 for recreational, plus the scope for other interested licensees to join.
- It was hoped the island’s culture would not be greatly impacted by the catch limits but would help it to continue sustainably.
- Discussion ensued on the specifics in the table, including the use of droppers, catch per person per day, restrictions on recreational fishing, reproduction of fish, economic benefits of spearfishing, spawning of ground species, precautionary limits for dorado, etc.
- EDC noted rockfishing is not regulated and members had previously indicated this should not be part of the policy but officers hoped to provide some advisory limits.
- The Director advised he would circulate the updated Licensing Policy, arising from comments at the January meeting, once the table was approved.
- The Director advised that ExCo had given approval for the work, to establish The St Helena Fishermen’s Cooperative (SHFCO), to proceed and once the composition is known, the commercial quotas can then be allocated, including for those who might not join the SHFCO, as these details was not yet known. Officers would also look at numbers agreed today for sports fishing and recreational, in order to set a tonnage.
- The Director advised the table does not require approval from ExCo, the Governor can delegate responsibility to the Senior Fisheries Officer, under the existing Fisheries Ordinance, if EDC did not approve Catch Limits; this had only been presented to EDC as part of completing the Licensing Policy arrangements.
- A member queried whether there had been sufficient stakeholder engagement, as the table needs to be considered line by line. More work needs to be carried out and some parameters need adjusting.

EDC, in the majority, voted against the revised Fisheries Catch Limits Table. The Director advised he would reconsider whether it should be discussed with stakeholders once again.

Action: Director ENRPD

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone, including the fishermen and other members of the public present. He then closed the meeting at approximately 2.45 pm and the Committee moved to closed session.

Minutes Approved: *CSmy*

Date: 22-10-20

Chairman

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