

ST. HELENA
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

THE SPEAKER

The Honourable Eric William Benjamin

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

The Honourable John Gilbert Cranfield

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

The Honourable Chief Secretary	-	Mr Roy Burke
The Honourable Financial Secretary	-	Mr Dax Richards
The Honourable Attorney General	-	Mr Angelo Berbotto

ELECTED MEMBERS

The Honourable Cruyff Gerard Buckley
The Honourable Wilson Charles Duncan
The Honourable Gavin George Ellick
The Honourable Cyril Robert George
The Honourable Lawson Arthur Henry
The Honourable Brian William Isaac
The Honourable Christine Lilian Scipio O'Dean
The Honourable Bernice Alicia Olsson
The Honourable Dr Corinda Sebastiana Stuart Essex
The Honourable Derek Franklin Thomas
The Honourable Pamela Ward Pearce

CLERK OF COUNCILS

Mrs Carol George

PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Monday, 15th May, 2017

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**
(Clerk of Councils, Mrs Carol George)**3. ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT**

I must apologise to radio listeners for an abrupt ending to the first sitting on Friday afternoon. This was unfortunately caused by a technical fault of our microphone system. We now know that this has been rectified and that the broadcast will not be disrupted today, we hope.

Honourable Members, the business before the House today includes eleven oral Questions, resumed debate on the Appropriation Bill and here let me congratulate the Honourable Financial Secretary on his presentation of his first budget speech which was most informative, thank you very much; and there's the resumed debate on the Elections (amendment) Bill. Additionally, the Employment Rights (Amendment) Bill and the General Amendment (Gender Equality) Bill are to be debated and this, as Honourable Members will know, is to be followed by a Motion and the Adjournment Debate.

Honourable Members, in keeping with the system that I have previously introduced, I will invite the Deputy Speaker to chair the Committee of the whole House for the Appropriation Bill. That will be done at Committee stage. Honourable Members will know that our Constitution provides that the Deputy Speaker cannot take part in the proceedings when the Speaker is present, so to enable him to do so I will have to excuse myself from the sitting at that time, I will therefore retire to the Speaker's Office until Committee stage has been completed. On indication by the Clerk of Councils I will then return for Stage 3 of the Bill. So, Honourable Members, on to the business of the House. I will now call on the Clerk to announce the next item of business.

4. 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 –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the Honourable Chief Secretary provide an update regarding the number of Technical Cooperation posts localised in 2016/17 and those scheduled for localisation within the next three years?

The Speaker –

The Honourable Chief Secretary?

The Hon. Roy Burke –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for her question. As Members know, St Helena Government aims to reduce the number of TC Officers and develop the labour force of the future by identifying and investing in the development and retention of successors. This is a short-term goal and identifying and developing the skills and competencies of the existing workforce so that they can reach their full potential. There are currently seventy-seven TC posts within SHG, a significant proportion of which are in Health. This does not include short-term consultancies. Each year, during the Strategic Planning process, Directorates are required to identify their workforce requirements, including the identification of local counterparts and developing succession plans. In 2016, the number of TC posts localised was seven. For future years, 2017/18, three have been identified, five have been identified for 2018/19 and five have been identified for 2019/20. In addition to the succession planning process outlined, the future leaders programme is currently being developed for St Helena Government to identify staff who have the potential to be the future senior leaders of our organisation over the next decade or so. This process supplements rather than replaces succession planning but is integral to the development of individuals as well as for the future operating model for SHG.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Chief Secretary. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you. Chief Secretary, What measures are in place to ensure that TC Officers pass skills on to suitable members of staff who are serving as counterparts or working closely with them in the Directorates?

The Speaker –

Yes, just kindly remember to put the questions to me, so I can put it to the Chief Secretary, please.

The Hon. Roy Burke –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. All TC Officers' terms of reference include a clause which requires them to train and develop their future successors, that's not just in terms of those people who

are immediately identified as successors, but also for the whole of the section in which they operate.

The Speaker –
Thank you, Chief Secretary.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Thank you.

The Speaker –
Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Have the individuals who are currently working overseas and studying for degrees been taken into account in the succession planning programme?

The Speaker –
Chief Secretary?

The Hon. Roy Burke –
Thank you, Mr Speaker. Yes, indeed, in fact, some of those individuals who are studying overseas are, in fact, nominated as successors.

The Speaker –
Thank you, Chief Secretary. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
So the figures that you gave me include some that hopefully will be returning from overseas?

The Speaker –
Yeah, I'm sorry about that, you're asking questions directly, so the Speaker, the Chief Secretary gave me, I don't want you to be.....

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
I'm sorry, Mr Speaker.....

The Speaker –
No, I'm sorry, the....

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Can I ask you how you would like me to proceed then?

The Speaker –
The Standing Order says that you address the Speaker, so you ask the Speaker, will the Chief Secretary say what's happening, please, so talk to me, ask me the question and I pass it over.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Well, I trust that all my colleagues will do the same thing then.

The Speaker –

Yes, they have been doing that.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Right, Mr Speaker, will the Chief Secretary please state if the numbers that he gave me include those individuals who are returning from overseas training?

The Speaker –

Thank you. Thank you, Chief Secretary?

The Hon. Roy Burke –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Yes, they do include people who are returning from overseas training.

The Speaker –

Thank you.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you.

The Speaker –

Any further questions? Thank you. Clerk?

Question No. 2 – The Honourable Christine Scipio O’Dean to ask the Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Christine Scipio O’Dean?

The Hon. Christine Scipio O’Dean –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, can the Honourable Financial Secretary tell this House what are the costs of the purchases of plant and equipment from Basil Read Limited and from which budget allocation they were from?

The Speaker –

The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I’d like to thank the Honourable Member for her question. Mr Speaker, the St Helena Government has purchased from Basil Read following their demobilisation on island a small number of plant and machinery. Seven items were purchased from Basil Read for the new port facilities in Ruperts which include the Liebherr Crane and spares. These items were purchased at a total cost of £865k and all items were purchased from the Capital Programme for 2016/17. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Financial Secretary. Any further questions? No further questions. Next question, please?

Question No. 3 – The Honourable Gavin Ellick to ask the Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Speaker –
Honourable Gavin Ellick?

The Hon. Gavin Ellick –
Thank you, Sir. Will the Honourable Financial Secretary tell this House since the MV Helena has visited the island whether this ship is suitable for cargo operations in the open waters of St Helena?

The Speaker –
Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –
Mr Speaker, again, I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for his question. It is, indeed, timely, given the recent difficulties experienced offloading the MV Helena. Mr Speaker, a number of concerns have been raised by those stevedores performing the offloading and reloading of cargo onto the MV Helena and we'd like to thank those who have raised the issues and these have been documented and sent to Solomons and AW Ship Management Limited for them to act upon and to make improvements for the next time the MV Helena calls to the island. My Honourable Friend will remember that the vessel was bought with the intention that it would have to be able to use the new jetty in Ruperts and for that purpose the vessel met the specifications as set out in the tender documents for the post-RMS shipping service. It is assumed that unloading will not take place in open waters off St Helena once the service commences but in the shelter of Ruperts jetty. Thank you.

The Speaker –
Thank you, Honourable Financial Secretary. Honourable Gavin Ellick?

The Hon. Gavin Ellick –
Is the Financial Secretary aware that any kind of swell at Ruperts that the ship cannot come up alongside and are there any plans to rectify that problem?

The Speaker –
Yes.

The Hon. Dax Richards –
Mr Speaker, I don't think that's quite correct what my Honourable Friend said that any swell in Ruperts means they cannot come alongside, obviously there'll be a risk assessment carried out as to when the sea conditions are adversely affecting the ability of the vessel to come into port alongside the jetty and then that will be taken into consideration. As I mentioned in one of my answers to a question on Friday, we think that's around about twelve percent time of the year where there might be difficulties getting into the wharf.

The Speaker –
Thank you.

The Hon. Gavin Ellick –
Thank you.

The Speaker –

Any other questions? Next question, please?

Question No. 4 – The Honourable Brian Isaac to ask the Honourable Chairman, Public Health Committee.

The Speaker –

Honourable Brian Isaac?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the Honourable Chairman of the Public Health Committee tell this House what plans are in place to introduce a mammogram screening programme for women on St Helena? Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Chairman of Public Health Committee?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for his question. The mammogram machine, the installation will be completed by the end of May, end of this month, Members would have seen on Friday when they visited the Hospital the Engineer examining and installing the machine. It is planned for June for test runs and the familiarisation by staff will be undertaken during that period. Initial programme will be to run a scheduled series of examinations for patients with previous diagnostics of breast cancer who require annual examination, the initial programme will run between July and September of this year and a clear programme of work for further extension of the service will be instituted in July. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Chairman. The Honourable Brian Isaac?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Mr Speaker, can I rise on a point of information in relation to the question, I don't want to ask a question, I just want to respond?

The Speaker –

Yeah. Points of information are really for debates really, but let's hear it please.

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, when compiling this question for this forum today I was not aware of the work that's been undertaken, I did pick up in the Minutes from Health that this work was ongoing but I didn't realise it was so up to date until we visited the Hospital on Friday and I was very impressed with what I saw, the Technician was, as my colleague said, installing this piece of equipment, testing it, as mentioned, and it is something that is going to be a real benefit to the island, it's been asked of me by other Members, some public funding has gone into the support of this, which I think that the Directorate will recognise when making a formal statement to the public or a Press Release, I would just like to say that. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Any further questions? Next question, please?

Question No. 5 – The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex to ask the Honourable Chief Secretary.

The Speaker –

Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the Honourable Chief Secretary tell this House what contingency measures are in place, or will be put in place, to enable provision of timely passenger access to and from St Helena in the event of future prolonged disruptions to the scheduled service?

The Speaker –

Honourable Chief Secretary?

The Hon. Roy Burke –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for her question, which is, of course, timely in that the measures to be put in place in terms of contingency are very much in the forefront of our minds, but in answering the question I will comment on both sea access and air access; as Members will know, the latter is quite imminent.

Regarding sea access, which is currently provided by RMS St Helena, AW Shipping Management Ltd has responsibility under the contract to ensure minimum disruption to the scheduled service. However, as was demonstrated during the recent disruption, St Helena Line and SHG have to consider the most cost effective solution and close collaboration with stakeholders is a necessary part of the process.

With regard to air access, consideration is being given to provision of backup services in the event of disruption to the planned scheduled service to St Helena. A procurement process is ongoing at the moment and discussions are underway with short-listed bidders and I think it will be inappropriate to make further comment on this issue at this stage. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Chief Secretary. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Mr Speaker, why was AWS unable to source a replacement ship within an acceptable timeframe when the RMS became unserviceable?

The Speaker –

Honourable Chief Secretary?

The Hon. Chief Secretary –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. AWS did, in fact, source a suitable ship; if suitable means that it has the ability to transport passengers to St Helena. One of the issues that has to be considered in those circumstances is the cost associated with that and the other options available to us at that time dictated that the shipping option was the second favourite in those circumstances.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Chief Secretary. Any further questions? Next question, please?

Question No. 6 – The Honourable Christine Scipio O’Dean to ask the Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Christine Scipio O’Dean?

The Hon. Christine Scipio O’Dean –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, will the Honourable Financial Secretary tell this House what monies have been expended thus far on the new Prison project, noting that the proposed site at Sundale has been abandoned?

The Speaker –

The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, I’d like to thank the Honourable Member for her question. Expenditure incurred to date on the new Prison project from 2013 through to 2017 is £437k. £280k has been used for the purchase of materials which include locks, doors, sanitary wear and mattressing for the existing Prison. Items such as these will be needed for the New Prison irrespective of the site and therefore can potentially be used for the new build wherever it is actually built in the end. £48k have been spent on preliminary works at Sundale, these works were undertaken by a local contractor and involved decommissioning the electrical wiring, which was such a health and safety risk at the time, as well as removal of the old furniture and digging of some of the trial pits to establish foundation conditions. Whilst the decision not to use Sundale site for the Prison has been made after these works had been completed, it should be noted that other uses of the building are being considered and these preliminary works would need to be done irrespective of its use. £86k has been paid to Faithful and Gould who were appointed in 2015/16 to undertake a feasibility study and an analysis of the existing design prepared by the ENRD against the Prison NAM standard. Whilst the primary piece of work was to review the designs of the Prison based on Sundale site, establishing the NAM standards as well as Health and Safety requirements of a prison can be used for any prison build. Alongside of this, Faithful and Gould also completed the operational brief which is a pre-requisite for this project and can also be used to progress this project further irrespective of the site and a further £24k on various other components such as software, technical services fees and fees to Turner and Townsend Foresight Analysis. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Financial Secretary. Any further questions, please? No further questions. Next question, please?

Question No. 7 - The Honourable Gavin Ellick to ask the Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Gavin Ellick?

The Hon. Gavin Ellick –

Thank you, Sir. Will the Honourable Financial Secretary tell this House why does St Helena Government still want to claim 10% withholding tax on private bank accounts given that the Bank of St Helena only gives 0.1% interest rate?

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for his question. Mr Speaker, one of the key principles of our tax policies has always been to be fair and equitable with those who have the broadest shoulders carrying the heaviest load and as I mentioned in my budget speech we do not wish to tax those who are the most vulnerable in our society. If you look at those whom are likely to be affected by the withholding tax on interest they are those who have savings in the Bank and hence have the ability to pay. At present we are projecting to collect around £45k based on the 0.1% interest rate. If we do not collect from this revenue source it means that we have to raise this amount from other sources such as tax or Customs duty. Mr Speaker, if interest rates were to rise in the future this would give SHG the ability to raise additional revenues to support essential Government services. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Any other questions, please? No other questions. Next question, please?

Question No. 8 – The Honourable Brian Isaac to ask the Honourable Chairperson, Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Brian Isaac?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, will the Honourable Chairperson of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee tell this Council what plans are in place to improve parking and pedestrian crossings in Jamestown? Thank you.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Chairperson of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee?

The Hon. Pamela Ward Pearce –

Thank you, Mr Speaker and I thank my Honourable Friend for his question. The challenges of parking in Jamestown at certain times are well known, together with issues faced by pedestrians. St Helena has issues with congestion in Jamestown during peak periods. This has a negative effect on residents, commuters, businesses and pedestrians. Currently two major construction projects are underway in Jamestown which also place constraints on parking. Over the years there has been an increase in vehicle ownership on the island resulting in a greater number of vehicle movements. Since 2011 the number of registered

vehicles on island has increased at a rate of approximately 4% per year. Notably there has been a growth in 4 x 4 type vehicles which are larger than conventional cars with over one in three vehicles being of this type. Jamestown is situated in a valley, is surrounded by very steep hills on three sides and the ocean. There has been a call locally to develop areas in Jamestown for car parking, but space for development is very scarce and some options identified cannot be accommodated within budget constraints. Currently Jamestown has free parking available to residents, commuters and shoppers. The commercial sector can also park in available spaces without restriction or fee. Parking spaces are taken up by mobile food outlets and a number of parking spaces are used to store vehicles awaiting parts and by persons who leave their vehicles on public parks while they are overseas or whilst they are awaiting for their cars to be hired by clients. Residents of Jamestown are having trouble parking at peak times due to the use of available spaces by commuters, businesses and visitors. It is also causing a number of parking violations when vehicles are double parking or parking in restricted areas. Illegal parking causes traffic congestion leading to safety concerns for pedestrians, longer journey times and/or air quality. A Working Group was set up by the Environment and Natural Resources Committee to develop a proposal for parking. This Group consisted of an elected member of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, the Roads Manager and a representative each from the Police and Financial Directorates. Public consultation was carried out on the principles of a parking scheme developed by the Working Group in late 2016. The principles of the parking scheme are – the introduction of paid parking in selected areas of Jamestown at set times or days; the introduction of a residents parking scheme in Jamestown at set times or days; the introduction of a designated commercial parking facility; the development of a park and ride scheme in the longer term. The principles of the parking scheme were widely supported by the public during the consultation. Following the public consultation, the Working Group has continued to develop the proposal and a door to door survey in Jamestown to determine the interest in the residents parking scheme was undertaken in March of this year. A detailed technical survey of parking areas in Jamestown is nearing completion. Consideration is also being given to enhancing pedestrian safety. Once the technical survey of parking areas is completed then the proposal will be refined. Before a parking scheme can be introduced, relevant legislation must be in place to support it. This is currently being developed as part of the regulations for the Road Traffic Ordinance 2016. Regulations are required to facilitate parking signage and enable the designation of parking zones, fees and charges and fixed penalty notices. This work is underway with the aim of having the legislative requirements in place during the latter part of 2017. Regulations are also being developed in relation to loading and unloading of vehicles which will avoid congestion at peak times and a review of the location of double yellow and dotted yellow lines will be undertaken to ensure that these are placed in the most effective locations. Thank you, Sir.

The Speaker-

Thank you, Honourable Chairman. Any further questions? The Honourable Brian Isaac?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Thank you, Mr Speaker and I thank my Honourable Friend for that comprehensive reply. My question is, Mr Speaker, will the Honourable Chairman say do the Directorate have a form of business case with all of the recommendations and concerns you have in a sort of document that is a live document and gives the Directorate guidance on the way forward? Thank you.

The Speaker –

Honourable Chairperson?

The Hon. Pamela Ward Pearce –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, thank you my Honourable Friend. We do have some documentation concerning the work that is done already, but there's no business plan as such. We do have documentation, but as I say, it's still a work in progress. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Brian Isaac?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will my Honourable Friend agree that the information that has been given is very valuable that's been collated over the years and I think that it would be important, nice to have that as a one document for future reference? Thank you.

The Speaker –

Honourable Chairperson, will you agree is the question?

The Hon. Pamela Ward Pearce –

I have no option but to agree, Sir, I wholeheartedly do. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Derek Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, given the fact that there are two major projects currently being carried out in the heart of lower Jamestown, will the Chairperson say what measures have been taken to find additional parking spaces?

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. The Honourable Chairperson?

The Hon. Pamela Ward Pearce –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Before these projects were undertaken, there was some consultation with our Committee and there were a number of mitigation put into place to help to facilitate an improved movement of traffic. This included the park and ride, our Committee also applied for temporary parking in the Duke of Edinburgh car park; this was subsequently refused by the Planning Committee, but there's appeal going ahead now. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Chairperson. Honourable Derek Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Can the Chairperson say when it is likely that the appeal will be heard regarding the parking in Duke of Edinburgh playground?

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Chairperson?

The Hon. Pamela Ward Pearce –

Thank you, Mr Speaker and I thank my Honourable Friend. Unfortunately we have no control over when this is heard, we have put the appeal in and it is down to the Planning people. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Derek Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the Chairperson make an enquiry to find out when the appeal will be heard?

The Speaker –

Honourable Chairperson?

The Hon. Pamela Ward Pearce –

We can certainly ask, Sir, but as I say, we have no control over when it will happen, but I will make enquiries. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much, Honourable Chair. Any other questions? The Honourable Cruyff Buckley?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Would the Honourable Chairman of the ENRC Committee explain if she knows the reasons why the Duke of Edinburgh playground wasn't opened up for parking?

The Speaker –

Honourable Chairperson?

The Hon. Pamela Ward Pearce –

Thank you very much. I refer my Honourable Friend to the decision notice from the Planning Authority. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Cruyff Buckley?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

Does my Honourable Friend acknowledge that there's some elderly residents in Jamestown which have difficulty crossing the street and therefore I would ask her if there are any plans to enable this by creating some pedestrian crossings by the means of zebra crossings?

The Speaker –

Honourable Chairperson?

The Hon. Pamela Ward Pearce –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. As in my initial exposition, my Honourable Friend I refer you to that, I did say that we were considering safe parking and safe crossing measures, not just for the elderly but also for the disabled and for people with young children, people carrying shopping, we all need to be able to cross safely and this is part of what we'll be taking

forward, but we have no concrete plans at the moment, we have other measures that are being consulted on right now. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Yes, I know it's difficult, but give your answer to me, he gets it, alright? Thank you. Any other questions? Next question, please?

Question No. 9 – The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex to ask the Honourable Chairman of the Social and Community Development Committee.

The Speaker –

Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the Honourable Chairperson of the Social and Community Development Committee tell this House when revision of the Liquor Ordinance is scheduled to take place?

The Speaker –

The Honourable Chairperson of Social and Community Development Committee?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Thank you, Mr Speaker and I thank my Honourable Friend for her question, it raises a lot of concerns to myself and my Committee, but unable to say precisely when the Liquor Ordinance will be revisited or revised. Informal discussions have been held with the AG's Chambers about certain aspects of the Ordinance, but the current Council is being dissolved on 20th May, this matter will need to be taken forward by the new Social and Community Development Committee, if, indeed, the Committee consider it to be appropriate to do so. Mr Speaker, this has been an ongoing piece of work, it has been addressed by Social and Community Development Committee, but priorities had to be taken, but I understand this work will be commenced once the new Committee is in place, but unfortunately at this particular time I cannot give any further information unless my colleague has specific questions. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Chairperson. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Mr Speaker, why has this not been given a higher level of priority by the Honourable Member's Committee as he's already acknowledged that he knows there are considerable concerns attached to this issue?

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Chairperson?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Mr Speaker, I don't have with me a list of the legislation that's being proposed that my Committee would undertake to scrutinize and review, but in all cases priorities have to be given and there were some big pieces of legislation being brought through this House

recently, such as the Food and Health Safety legislation, the Road Traffic Ordinance, they've all been a lot of work that the Chamber has been placing on those legislations and we also are aware of the shortage of manpower within the Attorney General's Chambers, if I may say so, because there are other pieces of legislation that sits under the Social and Community Development Committee which has to be de-prioritized for certain reasons. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Chairperson. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Mr Speaker, I wonder if the Attorney General might be able to shed some further light on this issue through the Chair?

The Speaker –

Honourable Attorney General?

The Hon. Angelo Berbotto –

Thank you. Mr Speaker, my Chambers will do a revision of any Ordinance as requested by the Committee. In respect of the Liquor Ordinance, we have in 2015/16 provided advice in respect of certain aspects of the Ordinance, but my Chambers, as far as I can recollect, and I ask any Honourable Member if they have proof otherwise, my Chambers have not been asked to review the Ordinance, my Chambers have been asked to provide advice and we have done so in at least two occasions in relation to certain aspects of this Ordinance. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Attorney General. Honourable Brian Isaac?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Thank you, Mr Speaker and I thank the Honourable Attorney General for his advice. If I can refer back to the comments made, I was at the Attorney General's Office one morning on another issue, speaking to Mrs MacMillan, Mrs Laura MacMillan, on legislation in respect of the employment of young people in public premises such as bars for the purpose of DJ purposes and this topic came around and I understand that this would be tied in with the licensing of bars for young people to work, it also includes employment of young people and I think, if I'm right, I'm not a legal person here and sometimes this is where it's necessary to have legal advice, independent legal advice, that this is all once piece of legislation, she showed it to me, she said it's all drafted here, licensing of these premises and everything else, young people, and it has to take it's process through the system at the moment, but she said that will come within the new Council. I understand it's all sitting there, but I expect that the Attorney General was off island during the time I was in communication with Mrs MacMillan. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much, Honourable Brian Isaac. Honourable Attorney General?

The Hon. Angelo Berbotto –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Indeed, there is a piece of legislation involving the work of children and there is some amendment to the Liquor Licence, but this is different from a request to

revise or review the Ordinance. I don't know whether we are at cross purposes here. The question is as to whether there will be a review of the Ordinance, I have not, to the best of my recollection, I have never been asked to review the Liquor Ordinance. What I have done is provide advice and those that work for me have worked on discreet areas, for example, in the employment of children, and, for example, whether children could be employed and to do what in licensed premises, but that is different, and I emphasise, it is different, Mr Speaker, from doing a systematic review of an Ordinance. That, to the best of my recollection, has not been requested of me. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Okay, thank you. Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

No,?.....thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, alright. Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Mr Speaker, has the issue of occasional licences been raised and addressed?

The Speaker –

Honourable Chairperson?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Mr Speaker, sorry, I do apologise, I do not cater for those forms of licence, I understand that that goes directly through the Police Office to the Courts, I'm not sure of the proceedings. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Honourable Attorney General want to explain?

The Hon. Angelo Berbotto –

Mr Speaker, I do recall providing advice as to the different types of Ordinances and the requirements for certain licenses, especially of those who do not have premises. However, without having, on the strength of just my memory I cannot provide any further details, I do recall having written an advice or an e-mail dealing with this, but being precise again, this is different from being requested to do a systematic review of an Ordinance. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Attorney General for your clarification. Can I ask please that this issue is,,, that the progress that has been made and the advice that has been given to date is shared with all Members? Thank you.

The Speaker –

Honourable Chairman?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Mr Speaker, I thank my Honourable Friend for her request and I see it very appropriate to supply such information, especially for the benefit of the listening public out there, but as we all are aware we'll be slowly moving into purdah on 20th and it's quite difficult for this House to instruct the new Committees and form what work they need to do, but that will be an internal issue for them to do so, but I do hope that if there are candidates out there listening today, which would be a benefit for them if they hope to stand for election, will pick up on this information and there will be a Hansard to support the debate here today. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Chairman. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Mr Speaker, may I rise on a point of information or clarification? I'm afraid I do not accept that this information cannot be given until the new Council has been elected, the Attorney General has indicated that he has given advice, surely that advice is on file somewhere or recorded somewhere and can be supplied to all elected members before the end of this week.

The Speaker –

Point of information noted. Attorney General?

The Hon. Angelo Berbotto –

Mr Speaker, the Honourable Corinda Essex is correct, the advice that the Attorney General provides to one elected member can be shared by that elected member with the other elected members. What would not be in all cases advice is for that advice to leave, be general, especially when there are, there may be in the information provided by the elected members to which I'm answering with my legal advice personal details in relation to specific cases, but otherwise it is within the Committee, the Social and Development Committee to share any advice provided by Chambers with any other elected members. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Honourable Brian Isaac?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Thank you, Mr Speaker and I'm sure that what has been requested can be worked upon. But on a point of information, Mr Speaker, I would just like to make this House aware of, when we come to legislation under the portfolio of the Social and Community Development Committee that this sitting only we have the Elections (Amendment) Bill, we have the Employment Rights (Amendment) Bill, also the Gender Equality Bill, which will be presented later on in this House today, so when it comes to prioritizing, you know, it's quite difficult and I know that there's the need as well, so this work prioritized over the Liquor Ordinance, but that's the way it is sometimes, Mr Speaker. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Yes, I think the last question was can you make the information available to other members during the term of office now?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. As I indicated earlier, I will do so.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Any other questions? Thank you. Next question, please?

Question No. 10 – The Honourable Christine Scipio O’Dean to ask the Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Christine Scipio O’Dean?

The Hon. Christine Scipio O’Dean –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, will the Honourable Financial Secretary tell this House what amount was budgeted in the 2015/16 estimates or subsequent years for compensation payments noting that Special Warrant 2 of 2016/17 was recently signed by the Governor awarding £673k as compensation payments for clinical negligence claims?

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I’d like to thank the Honourable Member for her question. No budget provision was made for any of the cases covered by the Special Warrant No. 2 of 2016/17 in the financial year 15/16. Though SHG knew about these cases and understood the details of each claim a reliable estimate of any award could not be made as this is subject to the judgement given by the Chief Justice in the Supreme Court. Similarly at the start of the 2016/17 financial year, no budget provision could be made for the same reasons. In the last quarter of 2016/17 financial year, the cases were finalised in the Supreme Court and the judgements were given by the Chief Justice. It was at this point that the application was made for a Special Warrant to give authority to draw the necessary funds in compliance with the judgement given. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Financial Secretary. The Honourable Christine Scipio O’Dean?

The Hon. Christine Scipio O’Dean –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, will the Honourable Financial Secretary tell us what financial provision has been made in the current estimates for 2017/18 for any potential claims or lawsuits?

The Speaker –

Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, if I can refer to my previous answer, we cannot make a budget provision unless we know what the financial implications of that budgetary provision would be, so at this time, and as we did in previous times, once a judgement is given and there is no budgetary provisions then we will come with a Special Warrant or address it through the Supplementary Appropriation process later in the year.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Financial Secretary. Honourable Christine Scipio O’Dean?

The Hon. Christine Scipio O’Dean –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, it is my understanding that St Helena Government self insure against any third party claims, can I ask the Financial Secretary, Mr Speaker, what balance should be maintained in the Consolidated Fund to be able to meet such costs which may be imposed by Court settlement in the future?

The Speaker –

Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for her question again. At this point in time, we foresee and we have made provisions for £1.25m to be the minimum balance held in the Consolidated Fund to deal with the day to day operations of SHG. Obviously we do not know the magnitude of the settlements that might be around the corner, but we will review this process to understand whether or not the minimum balance held at this point in time is sufficient to cover future such liabilities.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Honourable Christine Scipio O’Dean?

The Hon. Christine Scipio O’Dean –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, the Financial Secretary stated that it is unknown at the moment for the 2017/18 estimates no provision has been made, but, Mr Speaker, are there any known ongoing cases, I don’t want to breach any confidentiality, Mr Speaker, it would not be appropriate for me to do so, but are there any cases anticipated to fall within the 2017 estimates?

The Speaker –

Yeah, now that’s a question of anticipation, which nobody can answer and you’re not allowed to ask a question for anticipation. Reword your question?

The Hon. Christine Scipio O’Dean –

Yes, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, can the Financial Secretary say if there are any open cases for 2017/18?

The Speaker –

Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, perhaps I can ask my Honourable Friend, the Attorney General to be able to answer this, but according to my knowledge I’m not aware of any specific cases that might be arising.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Honourable Attorney General?

The Hon. Angelo Berbotto –

Mr Speaker, there are at least two new claims, whether those claims have merit and would progress to trial is something to be ascertained in the coming months. For the benefit of the elected members, the process of making a claim then needs to be backed up by evidence, usually expert reports. In the claims that we have received the main evidence supporting those cases hasn't been received, so we are not in a position to be able to assess the likelihood of success or otherwise, but I can confirm there at least two new claims that I am aware of since I've come back from annual leave on 9th May. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Attorney General. Honourable Christine Scipio O'Dean?

The Hon. Christine Scipio O'Dean –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, in the Financial Secretary's speech on Friday he indicated that the balance in the Consolidated Fund as at 31st March 2017 is £1.5m. He also indicated a few seconds ago that the balance that should be maintained in the Consolidated Fund should be £1.5m. Can the Financial Secretary say, Mr Speaker, if any cases does come up, knowing that we only got £1.5m in our Consolidated Fund what other reserves will be drawn on in any case of any settlements?

The Speaker –

Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Just to clarify that the minimum balance on the Consolidated Funding is to be £1.25m, not £1.5m, but in terms of the question of our Honourable Friend, obviously we'll need to understand what the financial implications of any cases that might arise in the year and then we will be having discussions on the best way to finance that with the elected members in post at that time and it will either be through looking at reduced funding in SHG on other services or also possibly talking to our colleagues in the UK Government for additional financial support, but that will all need to be taken into consideration once and if we know what the settlement is likely to be.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Any further questions? No further questions. Thank you. Clerk?

Question No. 11 – The Honourable Brian Isaac to ask the Honourable Chairman, Economic Development Committee.

The Speaker –

The Honourable Brian Isaac?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the Honourable Chairman of the Economic Development Committee tell this Council when will the Pack House and related infrastructure in Longwood be open and operational and what is the overall cost of this project to date? Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Sir. Honourable Chairman of the Economic Development Committee?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Thank you, Mr Speaker and I would like to thank the Honourable Member for his question. However, in order to answer it is necessary for me to provide a brief background to the project as this no longer relates solely to developing a Pack House facility in Longwood. When the concept for the project was first considered by the ESH Board of Directors the intention was to develop the former Slaughterhouse building into a Pack House which would then be operated by the private sector. Alongside developing designs and tender specifications for the new facility, local producers and other key stakeholders were extensively consulted and applications were invited in order to establish operator interests. During this initial application process it became evidence that no individual local operator who had responded to the exercise was in a position to take on the operation of the full building without significant financial subsidy. However, by reducing the scale of the Pack House element and creating a number of clean business units which would then be let for other purposes such as retail outlets it was anticipated that the project would still be commercially viable whilst also providing greater opportunity for business activity in Longwood area. At this point, for clarity, the project was re-titled Longwood Enterprise Park. Revised plans and specifications were produced on the basis that these were approved by the ESH Board in December 2015. The Longwood Enterprise Park concept includes a total of eight clean business units, only one of which is identified specifically as a Pack House. In January 2016, as works were being progressed, a revised invitation was sent out to those parties who had previously expressed an interest in taking on the operation of the Pack House unit and a preferred operator was identified in February 2016. In terms of the revised project, all of the works that were originally specified in the contract and also a number of additional items specified since contract award have been physically completed with the exception of minor items of snagging and final connections being made to the electrical mains. It is worth noting that the additional works undertaken included significant upgrades to the utilities infrastructure, such as the high voltage electrical distribution system and the foul and storm water drainage system, not only to the benefit of the Enterprise Park and Bertram's Cottage, but also to provide scope for future development in the wider Longwood area. As this project is now very close to completion, ESH has commenced the process of attaining building approvals and has started seeking tenants for those units which have not been identified by the preferred operator as being required for their business. At the beginning of this month, ESH commenced work on the outfit of the Pack House by awarding a contract for the installation of the chill storage units which aims for completion in mid June. Alongside of this ESH is also liaising with the preferred Pack House operator to ascertain their exact outfit requirements for the facility in order to establish the timeline and costs associated with bringing the Pack House itself into live operation. ESH hopes to have this process concluded by the end of May with a view to the Pack House becoming operational by the end of August. In relation to the cost of redeveloping the former Slaughterhouse in order to create the Longwood Enterprise Park, to date the total cost of the project is £184k. In relation to the costs, associated infrastructure such as the roads, sewage and high voltage electrical distribution, which has been facilitated to upgrade services in the wider Longwood area, including the Bertram's Cottage project, to date the total cost of the project is £131k. This cost is not directly attributable to the Longwood Enterprise Park project, but has been treated as a separate capital project. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Chairman. Honourable Brian Isaac?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Mr Speaker, I thank my Honourable Friend for his reply and on a point of information I'm sure that the outcome of his speech would benefit the many people, especially in Longwood, who asked about the Pack House and now the information is very clear, when is the opening date, costs and everything else and I thank you, Mr Speaker, for allowing me to speak on a point of information.

The Speaker –

Alright. Next item, please. Oh, sorry, first there's Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. What building approvals did my Honourable Friend refer to at this very late stage in the process?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

I thank the Honourable Member for her question, Mr Speaker. These approvals were for change of use and also additional car parking. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you. Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Mr Speaker, why had these been delayed until this point in time?

The Speaker –

Honourable Chairman?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Thank you to the Honourable Member for her question. Originally during the process, Mr Speaker, we were led to believe that these were minor changes, but we were later told that it required planning permission. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Any further questions? No further questions. Okay, thank you. I will call on the Clerk to call the next item of business.

5.

MOTIONS

Motion No. 1 – The Honourable Financial Secretary

THE APPROPRIATION BILL, 2017.

(Resumed Debate)

The Speaker –

The Honourable Financial Secretary, if you'd like to move the Motion please again?

The Hon. Dax Richards (Financial Secretary) –

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Appropriation Bill, 2017, be approved in principle and referred to the Committee of the whole Council.

The Speaker –

Is there a seconder?

The Hon. Roy Burke (Chief Secretary) –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. I put the question that the Appropriation Bill, 2017, be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council. Honourable Members, the question is now open to debate, Members may speak. The Honourable Lawson Henry? This is a resumed debate.

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I rise in support of this Motion, a Bill for an Ordinance, the Appropriation Bill, 2017. I would like first to congratulate the Financial Secretary on his first budget speech before this Honourable House. It has captured the mood of the island and will no doubt be the subject of much comment. I would also to echo most of what he has said and where I differ I will set out my reasons why. I would also like to thank, once again, the British taxpayer for their significant contribution without which we would not have a balanced budget. It is my dearest wish that in the years to come St Helena will be balancing its own budget, have its own Governor and everyone around this table will become homegrown. This is, of course, no disrespect to our TC colleagues on my immediate left around this table, but it is after all our and their ambition and SHG's succession plan that this should be the case.

I agree with the Financial Secretary's opening remarks about the airport. It has been a very long time coming and for the second time in just over a year we are looking forward to regular commercial flights. We, of course, differ slightly, no one more than myself want to see commercial flights landing on a regular basis, however, I do believe it is important to remind ourselves and our partners in HMG that the tender process now underway is for an interim solution. This Government and that of Her Majesty's Government must not allow it to be the solution as if this is the case then we will be selling this island short and future generations of Saints. We need to remind ourselves why we are in this position and some may think when we do this we are being negative. I would argue it is striking the balance because that is important too and we are in this position, I'm afraid, because, and let's not make any bones about this, that the recommendations in the feasibility study was not fully complied with, in particular, in relation to the flyover of aircraft used, and, more importantly, a study of the severe weather conditions that the consultants said in 2005, when the study was carried out, existed at the chosen site. The reports of these two recommendations were to inform each other what alignment the runway was to have taken. It is very unlikely we would have been in this position had this work been carried out as recommended. The fallout of this has caused immeasurable reputational damage to our island at the hands of the international press, in particular, the Daily Mail. Even when the charter flight that brought our people back the Daily Mail wrote a derogatory report about our airport. I fully support the flight that brought home those Saints that were stranded in Cape Town. I even forgot to say anything negative on that day and I can promise I did not either. However, let us not forget that there are still Saints on Ascension Island and, indeed, the Falklands, that are still

experiencing access problems and this Government should be doing all they can to facilitate with HMG, AIG and FIG to find a solution to this matter.

I too recognise the achievements as mentioned by the Financial Secretary during the last twelve months. We have much to be thankful for, I would like, however, to say something about Ruperts Jetty, because while it is complete, it is not operational and if we are honest this is not going to happen anytime soon and not within the life of this Appropriation Bill, if approved by the House today. This Government have no funding to make the Jetty operational, unless HMG steps up to support us then we will have another major project unfit for purpose. I do believe it is well known that it was DfID who wanted the Jetty in Ruperts in the first place to link with airport-related infrastructure there. I hope, therefore, that they will now step up to the mark and support the enabling infrastructure that is needed there, in particular, rockfall protection.

I agree too with the sentiments about our ten-year Plan as too often we have had short-term plans for long-term problems and it has not worked. This Plan was widely consulted upon and is the people's plan.

I agree with the Financial Secretary when he says that this is a dream for everyone, every Saint to want to own their own home. There was a scheme where SHG worked directly with islanders facilitating building family homes, providing affordable plots of land. It was a form of social housing. It was a main contributing factor to 1,334 islanders who own their own homes, 2016 Census. Increased prices in Crown land and other high costs and the changes mandated by the MOU have created a housing crisis, especially for young people not being able any longer to afford the high costs of renting or being able to afford to build a home; many are now staying at home with their parents. Our economy is also losing income from house building. It is estimated that for the last four decades offshore workers and those working on the RMS have been putting about £5m into our economy annually, much of this money going into building family homes. At today's prices, this amounts to somewhere in the region of £140m of private capital investment. This is half of the capital investment of aid for our airport and the largest private capital investment since the East India Company left in the 1830s. By SHG facilitating 72% of islanders to provide their own homes meant that other aid capital for Council housing could be spent in other development. This is no longer the case, the list for social housing is getting bigger and young people can no longer afford to get a loan and one of the contributing factors have been the cost of Crown land and other high costs for construction materials. SHG have not built any social houses since 2013 when three were built in Longwood. There is some forty-eight people on the waiting list for social housing. As a Government, we should be more actively supporting making land available at low cost so that first time buyers can continue this long tradition. However, a direct result of the MOU reforms has played a significant part in almost halting development of house building because of the high costs SHG is charging for Crown land and leases. Whilst I accept that there are reviews being undertaken on cost of land and leases, I do not hear any make mention of a complete review of MOU reforms and this Council have called for or, indeed, the social impact assessment we have been calling for for some time now. Such an assessment has not been carried out since 2012, I would ask the Financial Secretary in his response to update the House on this important work.

I support the assessment of economic growth. However, just want to comment on the cost of diesel and would ask the Financial Secretary if the equalization policy on making diesel the same price as petrol has any impact on the price that fuel is sold to Connect St Helena and if so what plans is there to review fuel charging policy?

I also agree that a weaker pound can present opportunities for our export. However, regard to much of our sought after fish, if we are to benefit from this then we need to invest and until we can do this to enable us to have a new purpose-built factory then we will not have the

means of achieving this objective because to maintain the fish to the quality the Financial Secretary refers to, we must be able to keep it at -60 degrees for export. This is not possible with a twenty-year old plant at the factory.

I agree with the key successes for 2016/17 as highlighted by the Financial Secretary. Please can he tell the House how many businesses have been supported by the Business Support Initiative in partnership with SHG, ESH and the Bank of St Helena?

Under Education I'm extremely proud to have been part of the Government who voted the funding to have sent the highest number of students, seven, to begin their tertiary studies in the UK, the largest scholarship in our history.

I'm equally pleased, and so should the whole island, of the achievement in our Health. This Council right from the start of our tenure have made Health our number one priority, followed by Education and Economic Development and we have the evidence to show and have maintained our stance with funding in these three key areas. It was very pleasing to visit our Hospital last Friday, International Nurses Day, to see the new facilities there and to meet some of the staff. Let me say too, we have invested in our Nurses too and we are already seeing the benefits of this investment.

I welcome the Fisheries Strategy and the investment in the Polytunnel Project at the ex ADA fields at Longwood. I likewise welcome the increased funding in the Safeguarding Directorate for home adaptations and aids to allow elderly to stay and live comfortably in their homes for as long as possible. I am concerned that HMG have extended their existing business case on capital expenditure for the island without any recognition of the huge amount of enabling infrastructure that is still needed if we are to get the best value of the investment in our airport. There are some very urgent projects that need to be done and one of those being Ruperts. Given that we find ourselves in this position because of DfID's insistence that the cargo operations be moved to Ruperts one would have thought they would see this as a key project to complete in the shortest possible time.

I welcome the Prospectus for Change and fully support it; improved communications is key to our economic development, securing the fibre optic cable project to improve our internet connectivity. I would like, however, to see, once the cable is laid and connected to our network, a carefully laid out plan that reduces the existing monopoly on our communications so that the full benefits of this investment reach the homes of every single person living on this island and that the rates are affordable to them, because not only do we have one of the highest electricity charges in the world, so too do we have one of the highest broadband charges and whilst I recognise that our existing provider have been making some attempt to bring down those charges, and we are in a remote location, they are still too high by world standards.

I fully endorse the Energy Strategy and am pleased to see that there will not be an increase in electricity this year and look forward to the benefits to the consumer when other renewable energy projects come on line. It should also be noted that in welcoming the news that there will be no increase in electricity this year, we have seen increases from 2012 year on year.

It is accepted that given the political climate in UK we have been very fortunate to have received the uplift in expenditure and we are grateful to Her Majesty's Government for their continued support. I would like, however, to point out that it was always envisaged by HMG that we would require additional support during the transitional period following air access for important enabling infrastructure. This was confirmed in February this year at a gathering in London where I was present and the former DfID Secretary of State and Chairman of the St Helena All Party Parliamentary Group who signed off the Airport Project reminded a number of MPs and Lords that HMG must keep this promise and provide support for the enabling infrastructure of St Helena during this transitional period.

I also welcome the changes in support of our Green Agenda, a reduction in Customs duties on solar panels, photovoltaic panels, wind turbines and rainwater storage tanks. However, what is important is that the merchants pass this benefit on to the consumer. I would ask the Financial Secretary to consider some form of monitoring to ensure this benefit does in fact go to the consumer although I recognise this might not be easy.

Whilst accepting the principle that SHG must recover sufficient revenues to provide public services, I would at this early stage caution against any new taxes. The economic growth expected from the airport must first happen and start to stimulate our economy and those people who are now struggling to make ends meet must start to reap some benefit. Any broadening of the tax base too quickly would have the reverse effect. I raised earlier about the position with house building on island. If Government implement taxes on empty houses this will likely stop people from wanting to buy their homes. Traditionally many Saints have gone offshore to save money to be able to afford to build a home. This has had a positive impact on our economy and acted in a way as a form of social housing and supported SHG not having to build as many social homes. Why do we want to change this? And it will, if SHG start to introduce taxes on empty properties. This is not how our small economy should develop and whilst this may work in larger economies this is not what we want to see here. Saints have made huge personal sacrifices to build their own homes. Most of us around this table are old enough to remember the disastrous land tax which was introduced in the late seventies, all those years ago, it simply did not work then, it had the opposite effect. Some of the MOU reforms had the opposite effect. Please learn from this, we should be looking for local solutions for local problems, I cannot emphasise more strongly that whilst these changes may work in larger economies we have a small and fragile economy and even smaller tax base, so I strongly believe we are some years away from broadening the tax base as proposed or recommended by the Financial Secretary, I therefore do not support this at this time for the reasons I have stated.

The increased contribution to the running costs of the Fisheries Corporation is very much welcome, but as I have pointed out previously, unless we can provide capital investment into a new factory then we are not going to get the economic growth because of the high running costs of the plant, which is old and outdated. The extension on the Customs duty for fuel to fishermen is very much welcome.

I very much welcome the support and the increase in the Minimum Wage; however, I would like to see this reviewed on an annual basis as required by the legislation. I would also like to see the work completed on the Living Wage and the review of the whole of our benefits systems be given priority during 2017.

Mr Speaker, I move and support this Motion for a Bill for an Ordinance, the Appropriation Bill, 2017 and with your permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to provide a summary of the breakdown of expenditure for economic development during the Committee stage.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I would once again like to pay tribute to our home-grown Financial Secretary and his team for their hard work in bringing this budget before the House today and again like to thank the British taxpayers for their substantial contribution to the budget. I beg to move.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Lawson Henry. The Honourable Brian Isaac?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. The delay in receiving confirmation of the financial aid settlement from DfID has meant that a balanced budget could not be agreed in readiness for the start of this financial year. A rollover budget would effectively be carried forward from the previous

year's budget for four months was agreed by Legislative Council on 30th March 2017 in accordance with section 102 (1) of the Constitution of St Helena to ensure that the public services continued to be delivered during this period. The budget proposal shows a substantive increase in expenditure in comparison to the previous year, the majority is in relation to the cost of maintaining sea access to St Helena until scheduled, commercial air services commence. However, there have been budget increases in other key services, such as the total cost of medical referrals and improving broadband connectivity for schools and the Community College is very welcoming. Local revenue forecasts have been received as part of the M-TECH process and projections based on the current forecasts and economic expectations.

Mr Speaker, the 2017/18 presented is a balanced budget and therefore a withdrawal from the Consolidated Fund is not required and supports the overall objectives of St Helena's Island Ten-Year Plan. As mentioned, making the total amount of £38,238,000 for the services described in Schedule I of the Appropriation Bill 2017. The Financial Secretary said that whilst SHG do not intend to change corporate tax and income rates for the coming financial year but that the tax and revenue Working Group will be exploring options that those who have the ability to pay more will be targeted as opposed to targeting the vulnerable people. The supporting scenario is that any additional revenue generated will be used to finance essential services. Some of these options will be explored over the next twelve to eighteen months, including land tax to encourage the productivity use of land and stimulate the land market. The proposed recommendation announced on Friday for the implementation of property tax or empty property tax, inheritance tax, infrastructure levy tax and a broadening of service tax will be some of the options that will be explored in detail by the new Legislative Council. Mr Speaker, you will be aware of the problems that occurred when a land tax was previously implemented on St Helena and the difficulty it brought to the private sector landowners and members of the public, but overall, St Helena Government were unable to get their own house in order in respect of the major neglect to Crown land and this was a contribution factor to the land tax being withdrawn as the cost of implementation and the proposals outweighed options to achieve the right outcomes. The implementation of this piece of legislation lasted for two to three years and it was very controversial and caused a lot of underlying problems within the community. Government thought best to withdraw it because it was not workable and here we are today, some twenty years later, trying to implement the same piece of legislation.

Empty property tax. Saints who go off island to secure funding to build their own homes is part of our culture and they should not be penalized by taxes. The Financial Secretary said on Friday how difficult it is to obtain a loan from the Bank of St Helena on an income of £7.5k which would be in the region of awarding a loan or mortgage for £26k which will not be adequate to buy or build a house at today's prices. The Financial Secretary also said we need to make the conditions right to encourage people to remain on the island and continue contributing to our economy whilst still allowing them their dreams. It was also said that people should be able to have the opportunity to make sufficient money here on the island which will contribute to an inclusive family life. This could be the case for those Saints who have high position jobs, but as for myself and many others we had to go off island to secure funding to build our own homes, but for any reason after someone has completed their structure of their home, decides to go offshore to further secure funding to furnish their home, they are now or will probably be subjected to tax which is a deterrent that should not be something amongst our people. Maybe the Financial Secretary can further explain the reasons for broadening the tax outlook for the next five years against other proposals which would not impact so heavily on those who would be affected. I am aware that any proposals in the new financial year needs to be announced within the budget speech, but to seek the

approval of this Honourable House on some of these controversial proposals seems not appropriate knowing that this Government only have a few more days in office. The new Government do not have to accept the recommendations of the outgoing Government but could be presented in a way that these proposals have been formally supported in this Honourable House. I understand that any new proposals need to be announced in the Financial Secretary's speech, as mentioned, but I do have some difficulty in supporting the proposed tax stability. Tax proposals for the next five years as presented here in this Honourable House on Friday, as I do not know sufficient of the pros and cons and therefore I do not support the proposal as mentioned. I hope that Members will give serious consideration to the proposals given before this House today as it will place further burden on Saints and it could set a division among the upper paid bracket and those in the lower paid bracket. Taxes is something that has to be implemented as to set good governance and the running of this island, but we must be most careful when doing so. I would ask the Financial Secretary if these proposed tax outlook, proposals for the next five years, can be carefully defined and that other scenarios be explored before any proposals are recommended as there is a thin line between those who can pay and those who are vulnerable and such implementation of tax stability will affect not only those who are vulnerable but also those on low income. If there is one thing I have learned whilst on Council and that is no matter how good a proposal is, there is always a sting in the tail.

Mr Speaker, I support the Financial Secretary's opening remarks on air access, housing, the M-TECH approach, economic outlook, the performance for 2016/17, key successes with all Directorates and all other statements, but as mentioned, I will not support the tax outlook proposal for the next five years, so when giving my vote for the 2017/18 appropriation it will not mean that I fully support the budget, but I support all the other principles.

In concluding, Mr Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity in congratulating the Financial Secretary in presenting his first Appropriation Bill here today, which would not have been possible without the support of all others involved, including members of Council, Directorates, DfID and SHG officials and all others in the team. I would also like to take this opportunity in thanking all SHG staff and officials for their support provided over the past four years which I've found to be very valuable in my role as a Councillor and representative of the people of this island and wish the new Council well in their endeavours. Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Brian Isaac. The Honourable Financial Secretary would like to raise a point of order?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I'd just like to rise on a point of information, especially for Councillor Isaac, I think he has got his wires crossed in terms of what the tax reforms are all about. My budget speech, if you do refer to it, talks about the outlook for the next five years as to which proposals we would be looking at, not saying that from 1st April or any time in the next year that these will be implemented. As you know, all legislation is passed by this House so if there is to be any changes to tax going forward it is this Honourable House who will actually approve those changes, so just to be clear, My Honourable Friend, those were only proposals that will be looked at. If this House decides, no, that they do not want to support those proposals then that is exactly what will happen, but just to be clear, it is my role as Financial Secretary to make sure we look to broadening our tax base across the island as much as possible to reduce our reliance on the UK Government. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you for that point of information.

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Mr Speaker, could I just reply to the Honourable Financial Secretary, thank him for his input and there is a possibility that I do have my wires crossed, but when proposals are raised they are actually tools to take matters forward and I thought for the benefit of the listening public is to make sure that these questions are raised to give them a broader understanding of what is actually happening when we are debating appropriation bills. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you for that point of information. The Honourable Derek Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I also rise in support of the Appropriation Bill, 2017. I commend the Financial Secretary for delivering what was a comprehensive and detailed budget speech where he quite rightly captured the significant achievements over the past twelve months and outlining the plans for the year ahead. I also congratulate the team in Corporate Finance for all the hard work they have carried out.

As the Financial Secretary alluded to, there were some significant challenges and to name a few, the management of our drought crisis, the Government in support of Connect St Helena has taken measures in addressing similar types of incidents in the identification and drilling of deep water boreholes and a new reservoir at Hutts Gate and plans for additional reservoirs and earth dams depending on funding. During the drought crisis, everyone involved should be congratulated for their hard work, including the public for their cooperation and understanding.

The breakdown of the RMS St Helena caused great disruption, inconvenience and expense to the travelling public. Many people suffered financial loss and we had the situation where Saints were held up in Cape Town.

We have the situation with our new Jetty at Ruperts which needs to be certified and become fully operational. Having the Jetty certified and cargo having to be transported by barges from Ruperts round to Jamestown is not the answer. We need the funding support for the associated facilities at Ruperts, including the funding for Field Road and Sidepath. We must remember in support of economic development it was DfID who recommended we should develop Ruperts for cargo operations and free up the Jamestown wharf and seafront for tourism-related activities. We need DfID's financial support in order to achieve this.

The decision by Executive Council to secure the funding from the EDF 11 programme for a fibre optic cable link into St Helena instead of a new built Hospital, although support funding is needed this project will provide overall benefits to St Helena.

The newly-adopted Energy Strategy report, with the correct level of support, will, over the coming years, prove to be of benefit to the extremely high cost of energy consumers are experiencing on the island. Great focus should be placed on this strategy.

Later this year, we hope to see the commencement of scheduled air services which we all hope will generate some form of economic growth. The Government must not take their eyes off the ball and concentrate our efforts into solving the long-term problems of our airport in order to achieve maximum benefits.

Farming and Fishing, these are hardworking areas and if we are expected for these sectors to develop then we need to be looking at some form of additional incentives.

Mr Speaker, we will see an increase in the minimum wage with effect from 1st August, there will be an increase in Income Related Benefits and Basic Island Pension and although some

of the recommendations from the Sainsbury's Report have been implemented we still have the situation where some of our people have been caught in the crossfire. Those people who are being described as transitionally protected when the system came into effect in 2011 are still not receiving an increase. We are talking about elderly people. This system is causing great frustration to these people; after all, they are expected to face inflationary increases like everyone else. There's also the issue of Income Related Benefits being calculated with money coming into the household. It is still not issued as a personal benefit, therefore, other working members within the household are expected to support and provide for those who are not able to work. This issue is causing great problems and in some cases people are leaving the family home. I will ask that this be given some careful consideration and treated as a priority. Although the Committee has over the months been looking at it, I believe there is a solution to this problem and we should not wait until the service of a consultant to sort this issue out.

Mr Speaker, we have made some good progress in areas such as the upgrading of our Hospital to include modern diagnostic equipment, training and development of our staff, improvements in Education with a Community College, upgrading of Government Landlord housing and development of Safeguarding and the list goes on and on.

Later last year, in November, when Councillor Lawson Henry and myself attended the Joint Ministerial Conference in London, these achievements were made known and to Ministers at high level and St Helena were congratulated for making such progress. However, Mr Speaker, I do feel that Ministers need to visit St Helena for themselves to see the progress that's been made and gain a clear understanding of our immediate requirements if we are to aspire to achieving economic growth through the investment of our airport and as later this year we all expect to see our airport being fully operational such visit will be much more convenient and the Government should be pressing for this to happen.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, let me first declare my interest as President of the Chamber of Commerce.

The Speaker –

Yes.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

First, I wish to congratulate the Honourable Financial Secretary for an excellent budget speech that identified strengths but also some of the challenges relating to St Helena Government's financial package for the current fiscal year. I also wish to congratulate and thank all those who have worked tirelessly to achieve an outcome which, although falling considerably short of the ideal, will enable St Helena Government to maintain physical access with the outside world and continuing to deliver its essential services with modest scope for expansion and/or improvement in certain key areas in the forthcoming year.

Mr Speaker, it is, however, extremely important that the public is made fully aware of the rationale for the allocation of the budget resources. Therefore, it would be helpful if the public were provided with more detailed information, not only in this Honourable House today, but over the next few weeks regarding precisely how it is intended that increases totaling over three quarters of a million pounds for Health, Education and Safeguarding are to

be spent and what impact it would have had on delivery by these Directorates if this additional funding had not been forthcoming. I trust that the respective Directorates will be able to take this forward.

It would also be in the interests of good governance if the substance of the requirements and expectations of the Department for International Development, DfID, as set out in the recently updated version of the 2016 St Helena Financial Aid Statement – Memorandum of Understanding and recent communications from the Secretary of State for International Development are made known. It is understandable that DfID wishes to set parameters and conditions for the disbursement of its aid, but in order to achieve openness and transparency these should be placed in the public domain so that a full picture is given of the operational context of the financial aid settlement.

The Honourable Financial Secretary highlighted some key actions for which elected members have pressed hard and which will either be able to be continued or introduced this fiscal year. This is very good news and provides proof to constituents that their concerns have been taken forward and addressed. The ongoing support for fishing and farming is particularly welcome as is the funding being made available to supplement the Darwin Project in order to tackle invasive species. Invasive weeds increasingly threaten the productive and sustainable use of our lands and the resources to control these and implement the already developed Weed Action Plan were long overdue.

Another key step forward is that annual rents for Crown land will be able to be offset against the final sale price. This will definitely assist many home builders, but there is still an urgent need to develop some mechanisms to help current tenants of Crown land whose rentals have increased massively with little warning and some of whom are facing financial hardship as a result.

Additional funding for home adaptations to allow the elderly to remain in their own homes is also very welcome. However, consideration should be given also to contributing to the cost of structural repairs of homes owned by the elderly, particularly those in which no younger family members are resident. There is little point in installing hand rails or other safety devices in a dwelling that has cracked walls and/or a leaking roof. Persons over the age of sixty-five cannot normally obtain bank loans and very few elderly persons have significant savings. In many cases there are also limitations on the extent to which family members can assist because these family members themselves are on low incomes. A way forward in these circumstances needs to be agreed without delay and the new Council will need to address this early in their term of office.

Mr Speaker, a very major concern is the absence of a capital programme beyond September 2017. The necessity of spending £1.4m within a six-month period has been a blessing in disguise in some respects as it has enabled some small projects to surface, such as upgrading of rural, multi-use roads, which elected members have been struggling to find funding for for years, but it has had a serious negative impact upon delivery of major, key projects. This situation is exacerbated by the current uncertainty regarding the start date and value of the next capital programme which makes meaningful forward planning virtually impossible. This is extremely worrying as outcomes of the highest importance, such as provision of port and cargo facilities at Ruperts Valley will not be able to be achieved on schedule. The recent difficulties encountered when unloading the MV Helena in James Bay is testament to the problems caused when key pieces of the infrastructure jigsaw are missing. These problems place further strain on already stretched resources and prevent value for money being realised from the very significant investments that have already been made. Unless timely agreement is reached regarding the next capital programme, St Helena's ability to meet its short to medium-term goals in a wide spectrum of areas will be severely compromised and unacceptable risks will result. As examples, the need for additional rockfall protection in key

areas of both Jamestown and Ruperts Valley has been identified and verified by specialists, as has the pressing need for a new Prison that is compliant with best practice. The longer we have to leave these and other issues unresolved the greater is the risk of something serious occurring the fallout of which could be far more detrimental than the events leading to the WASS Enquiry. I remain deeply concerned about St Helena's financial condition during the transition period in which costs associated with the operation of the airport and maintenance of associated infrastructure are beginning to kick in without any new substantial revenue streams to help offset these and I still believe that if the island is to be serviced by smaller aircraft in the interim the projected economic benefits, including income directly derived, should be reassessed in order that realistic assumptions can be made and goals set. I wish the Honourable Financial Secretary the very best of luck in his search for additional external funding sources and trust that he does not encounter the same difficulties that I did when this formed part of my duties. St Helena tends to fail to meet the eligibility criteria of most donor agencies. In some cases, this is simply because it is a British Overseas Territory, in others, because we are not the poorest of the poor and also because many donors will only give support within specific geographical areas that do not include the South Atlantic. Let us hope that new sources of funding can be identified.

Improved physical communications and the fibre optic link may open doors to commercial partnerships that would have been out of the question without air access.

Turning briefly to the potential sources of revenue that were identified, I would just like to state that when I was first elected to Council in the 1990s we were dealing with the aftermath of Land Tax and, in fact, I think we were the Government that quashed it and the idea of re-introducing anything on the same lines quite frankly makes my hair stand on end, so I'll ask if that can please be taken off the list of potential sources unless it's re-examined in a very different way and from a very different angle.

Although I share the Honourable Financial Secretary's optimism for a brighter future, it is clear that the current fiscal year will be a challenging one that will be very unlikely to give the new Council any easy induction. There are likely to be increasing demands on limited funding with a depleted Consolidated Fund and continuing need for very difficult choices to be made.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, I support the Bill.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. I'm looking at the time; I think we'll go on with one more. Honourable Pamela Ward Pearce?

The Hon. Pamela Ward Pearce –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I rise in support of this Appropriation Bill, 2017, it was, indeed, a very proud moment when our very own Financial Secretary rose to deliver his first budget. It was impressive to note he never once stopped, even for a sip of water. This budget reflects this Council's values and priorities with support for Health, both for new personnel and equipment, training and development; with support for Education, for the new Community College, increased numbers in the Scholarship Scheme and the expanded Apprenticeship Scheme; with support for the vulnerable, with more investment for the elderly to help keep them in their own homes; an increase in the Minimum Wage and an uplift in the Minimum Income Standard, although this is a small improvement, it represents a move in the right direction; with ongoing support for the fishermen and farmers to help them provide sustainable food for our people; with funds to continue to support the RMS, there is also no increase in electricity or income tax rates, but there is the perennial increase in Customs duty

for alcohol and tobacco with a decrease for renewable energy systems and tanks and it is hoped that this benefit will be passed on to consumers.

It is very disappointing that the Capital Programme will be limited in its ability to support some key projects like that of Ruperts development, which also includes Sidepath and Field Roads, the Prison and the Rockfall Protection. As the Financial Secretary said, we must continue to invest in our infrastructure to support the development of the island. However, this and the maintenance programme to support it is vital to its success, so we need to have more money to do so. It was disappointing that there was no extra funding available for the upkeep and maintenance of the current network, the funding for which has been reduced drastically by over 50% over the years which means we have to continue to struggle to keep the roads safe and we also will soon have the addition of the 14 kilometres of the Haul Road with no additional money for this. This will increase the current network by some 13%. Roads will continue to decline if there's no additional new source of funding is found, the R1 Project comes to an end in August of 2017. An investment made during this R1 Project will be negatively affected. However, the future is not all gloom; we have two very important and ambitious projects on the horizon – a fibre optic cable that will improve internet connectivity and increasing our target for renewable energy which will significantly reduce the cost of electricity.

Mr Speaker, I would like to thank Her Majesty's Government for the provision of funding and also to thank the Financial Secretary and his team as we appreciate the difficulties and uncertainty experienced over these past few weeks with the scramble to produce a rollover budget and now a full budget. I'd like to end by echoing something the Financial Secretary said about more taxes allowing additional support to the most vulnerable members of our society to ensure that they are not left behind. Mr Speaker, we need to ensure that we take all of our people forward with us and share whatever success and prosperity we have. Mr Speaker, I support this Appropriation Bill. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. It looks to me like this might be a convenient time to adjourn and we'll come back at 1 o'clock this afternoon and continue with the debate and the other matters that we have on the Order Paper, so Members agree we suspend sitting right now? Thank you.

Council Adjourned.

Council Resumed.

(Resumed Debate)

THE APPROPRIATION BILL, 2017

The Hon. Christine Scipio O'Dean –

Mr Speaker, firstly, I would like to congratulate the Honourable Financial Secretary for his positive budget speech and we hope that if we stick to the plan we will achieve more and hopefully we'll have a more positive speech next year.

Mr Speaker, the budget is based on the ten-year plan endorsed by all members of the Executive Council and Legislative Council, aiming to lay the foundation of change to build on for the longer term. The overall aim is to achieve self sustainability through a reduction in our reliance on the UK Government in the future. The Financial Secretary presents a positive

view and speaks of many significant achievements but also accepts that the challenges the island faced have been great. I would like to support this and say that we are still facing challenges at this present time. Mr Speaker, one of the biggest challenges, as pointed out in the budget, is how to pay for all the various services. These services for this financial year will cost an estimated £42.1m. DfID has increased its contribution by £6.2m to £28m which amounts to 68% of our overall costs for this year. The difficulty of increasing revenue at the start of the ten-year plan is being highlighted due to the significant reduction in Basil Read expatriate workers and a 50% reduction in the total project workforce since April 2016. Mr Speaker, this has impacted on the various local businesses and this benefit shall continue to reduce over the next year as the immigrant workforce continues to decrease. It is suggested that this will be migrated through tourism and commercial services. I raise this, Honourable Members, as a parliamentary inquiry about the airport has shown that the business case put forward for the income derived from having an airport appears to be flawed as that the projected number of tourists coming to the island is unrealistic and so would be the income. There will be difficulty in meeting the aim of reducing budgetary aid with the considerable reduction in funding for capital infrastructure for airport-related projects and an unknown but reduced income from tourism, the key driver for the economy. It is also noted that the level of other capital aid programmes is not what we had hoped, as stated by the Financial Secretary. Mr Speaker, though it has been pointed out that 72% of islanders are home owners, one of the highest ownership in the world, it does not show how significant this has been to social and economic development of our island. Saints have provided their own homes; without this commitment, St Helena would be in a different place because St Helena Government has not been able to contribute significantly in this area. Most of the five million remittances sent by islanders working offshore went into housing, but it was at a social cost to the people involved, having to leave their families. With over 1300 island homes at today's value, it is the private capital investment of over £135m, half the capital aid put up for the airport. The contribution by islanders, Mr Speaker, working offshore, has been one of the major sources of the island's economy over the last four decades and should not be undervalued.

Mr Speaker, the introduction of property taxes must be carefully considered, due to the fact that St Helena Government owns the biggest portion of the land which practice poor husbandry and penalizes Saints when we have been praised for our investment in home ownership. We need to be careful as to how we intend to raise more taxes as we should not place further burden on our small island community of 4,500 people. It will only increase the social problems and cost more. 4,500 residents would only be a village or a small town in the UK and could not deliver all the various services of its national government that people here are being asked to do.

Mr Speaker, careful thought must also be given to the broadening of service tax so as not to brand St Helena as the most expensive destination in the world. Given that the current lending and borrowing resources at the Bank of St Helena is approximately £26k for an average £7,500 per annum income I wholeheartedly support the Financial Secretary's statement that we need to make the conditions right to encourage Saints to remain on island and continue contributing to our economy whilst also allowing them to achieve their dream. Mr Speaker, can the Financial Secretary say what these conditions are likely to be to encourage Saints to remain on the island? It is important that we do give priority to the timely dissemination of statistical data as we do need real time information for forward planning and decision making.

Mr Speaker, we must not lose sight that the civil society organisations play an important role to the island's development, both economically and socially, especially in tourism. For example, Mr Speaker, National Trust with various conservation projects, including Endemics

and the Wirebird, NASAS with sports, the Heritage Society with the Museum and the development of a Culture Centre attracting both inward capital and expertise, SHAPE providing a range of opportunities for disabled persons and other disadvantaged groups to realise their potential and New Horizons, Mr Speaker, providing the enabling environment for our young people.

Mr Speaker, the reduction in Customs tariffs for green energy items and water storage tanks is most welcomed. I also welcome and support the investment to assist with adaptation and aids to allow our elderly to stay and live comfortably in their homes for as long as possible, but, Mr Speaker, can the Financial Secretary confirm that these aids will include humanitarian assistance in terms of health and social care visits and carers? Mr Speaker, we are in debt to our senior citizens as it is their legacy that we are building on.

Mr Speaker, I would like to thank my Honourable Colleagues for their support in maintaining Education as a high priority thus gaining the Directorate an increase of £270k in this budget. The St Helena Community College will be officially launched on Wednesday of this week. Huge thanks to elected members and the staff of the Education Directorate for their input for making this happen and we look forward to its success and results.

Mr Speaker, I have highlighted some of the difficulties that face us in this House today and which ultimately will be faced by the new Council and the people who live here. We have not only to make ourselves aware of the magnitude of what we face, but we have also to make others aware of it. We are in challenging times and we're extremely grateful to Her Majesty's Government for their continued support and the increases provided in this budget.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. The Honourable Cyril George?

The Hon. Cyril George –

Mr Speaker, I rise in support of this Motion. I will be brief so as not to get my wires crossed. I'd like to start by congratulating Dax on his recent appointment as Financial Secretary and his excellent budget speech that he presented on Friday. I wish also to thank all SHG staff and elected members for their contribution in preparing this increased budget presented to the House this week.

Mr Speaker, it is pleasing to note the successes over the past year. Unfortunately one of the disappointments was not seeing the official opening of our airport that was planned around this time last year. However, we must look forward to commercial flights arriving when the tender process is completed.

I would just like to touch on a few of the successes throughout the year and I'll start with Health. At our site visit to the General Hospital last Friday afternoon it was a pleasure to see the vast improvements to our Hospital following the recent redevelopment project, including modern equipment and dedicated staff training, compared to our previous visit in 2013 when we were elected to Legislative Council. We must pay credit to all our staff working at the Hospital having to carry out their normal duties with patients during the construction period, having to deal with the inconvenience of dust, noise, whilst contractors were working at the Hospital.

The projects carried out by ESH is most welcoming and they will create much employment and economy for the future of St Helena.

We look forward to the review of our Development Control Plan that will hopefully identify land for house building which is much needed amongst our community.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I would like to thank all the members of this House for the support during the last four years and I wish them luck in the future. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Yes, Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, can I indulge and ask for permission to remove our jackets, it's very warm in the Chamber?

The Speaker –

Yes, of course. Thank you very much indeed, you may remove your jackets now, Honourable Members, if you wish.

Right, Honourable Wilson Duncan?

The Hon. Wilson Duncan –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, for getting my name right.

The Speaker –

Yes, at the last meeting.

The Hon. Wilson Duncan –

Mr Speaker, I rise to speak to the Appropriation Bill, 2017. Mr Speaker, in the main, the budget speech was a good one, but I wish to pick up on three points as most have been captured by previous speakers.

Mr Speaker, the Honourable Financial Secretary in his budget speech, on page 2, recognised that land for building homes in the private sector are on the increase and more affordable Crown land should be made available for Saints who want to build their own homes. However, on page 10, the Honourable Financial Secretary goes on to say that the Tax and Revenue Working Group will be exploring options for broadening the tax base, three of which is land tax, property or empty property tax and infrastructure levy. (1) Now on the one hand on page 2, the Honourable Financial Secretary wants more affordable Crown land to be made available for house building, but then on page 10 indicated that the Working Group will be exploring looking into introduce land tax. How will this encourage Saints to build their own homes? I see this as a discouragement, resulting in St Helena Government having to build more social housing. (2) Property or empty property tax – to increase the availability of homes to rent. May I remind the Honourable Financial Secretary that the majority of Saints went abroad in order to earn money to build their home and why should they be taxed to force them to rent their homes? It is said that an Englishman's house is his Castle and this equally applies to Saints also. (3) Infrastructure levy – to help fund infrastructure growth. May I ask the Honourable Financial Secretary to give an indication as how would this work? Mr Speaker, all in all the budget speech was a good speech apart from the three highlighted items which I am sure will be met with disapproval should they be introduced. Therefore, I cannot support these future proposals.

To conclude, I would like to thank the Financial Secretary and his team for presenting this budget, which in the main I support, with the exception to the three items on land, empty homes and infrastructure levy taxes. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Any other Honourable Member wishes to speak? The Honourable Cruyff Buckley?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I thank the Financial Secretary for his budget speech this year and for highlighting some of the major achievements we have made over the past few months. I would like to congratulate him and wish him well for his future in his new role.

Mr Speaker, I would like to pick out a few points from this year's budget speech. With regards to the newly developed Ten-Year Plan. Yes, it is an ambitious one, yet it is achievable and, yes, it is the people's vision and they have had a lot of input into this final document. It is now our collective responsibility to ensure we try to fulfil these visions defined within this plan.

Mr Speaker, the Honourable Financial Secretary in his speech talks about the island suffering from short-term thinking and planning. Mr Speaker, I find this ironic as the current Government budget is done on a yearly basis and it is this duration in itself which is hindering the ability to facilitate longer term planning. I understand the Financial Secretary is to have further discussions in the year to be able to get a three-year settlement to be able to provide what he calls 'additional certainty' for the island. I agree with him when he states 'a timely investment sooner will accelerate a reduction in our reliance on the UK Government in the future'.

Mr Speaker, I have concerns about our capital programme as these investments lack support in our recurrent budget. We have had major infrastructural developments and projects, such as a new jetty and haul road, but without subsequent funding to maintain or, indeed, to progress these assets. The more capital investment we acquire the more strain it places on our recurrent budget. With a population that is not steadily increasing how can we realistically expand our tax base to service and maintain these assets?

On the topic of home ownership, it is an extremely important factor to be considered as it is, indeed, a key driver with around £10m being remitted every year from Saints working abroad, namely Ascension Island and the Falkland Islands. This effort contributes tremendously to our economy by supporting our construction industry. However, we must bear in mind that the ultimate goal should be to give Saints the opportunity to remain here on the island to make a decent salary and ultimately be able to build their own home. If we can achieve this goal we will retain our workforce which is vital to the development of this economy and of any economy.

Mr Speaker, I'm pleased that this Government has recognised the information of information technology in this modern age by means of this proposed fibre optic cable. We have seen real support given to Education to enhance the services they can provide. Broadband connectivity for all schools as well as the newly-formed Community College will enable students access to a mountain of knowledge on the world wide web and St Helena is set to benefit from innovation and exchange of information.

Within the Health Directorate, this connectivity will facilitate telemedicine which will no doubt improve diagnosis and treatment of a range of health issues in a more timely, accurate and cost effective way given St Helena's isolation issues.

Mr Speaker, there were many challenges presented to this Council in the past few months and there were many tough decisions that had to be made which have far reaching financial implications. It is not an easy job being the money man on a place like St Helena, so I will again thank the Financial Secretary for his contributions and wish him all the best for the future. Mr Speaker, I support the Bill.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Is there any other Honourable Member? The Honourable Gavin Ellick?

The Hon. Gavin Ellick –

Yes, Sir, it go be short and sweet I think so, and they may tar and feather me after I finish. I would like to congratulate the Financial Secretary on his speech. We have moved in the right direction in the last four years and we might argue that St Helena Government should be doing more in conjunction with the private sector. I agree to a point, but we as our people still need to take some more responsibility for our actions and at times can be our own worse enemy and take for granted that St Helena Government must do everything. After all, it is our island. Thank you, Sir.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Does any other Honourable Member wish to speak? Alright, then can I call on the Financial Secretary to reply, please?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I'd like to extend my thanks to all members for their support and in summing up I'll pull out some of the few key points and I will apologise in advance if I don't cover everyone's questions that they asked.

The Honourable Lawson Henry made mention of the long-term options for providing access to the island and they shouldn't be the same as the medium term. Whilst I agree with the principles, I think we need to understand what the benefits of any service will bring to the island. In terms of the MOU social impact assessment, to my knowledge, Mr Henry, at the moment that hasn't started but it will do so during this year. In terms of the business support initiative, to date, no one has made an application for any support. We've had two enquiries, but there's been no formal applications for support. A number of members have referred to the further investment in our infrastructure and this is fully supported by everyone, including officers. We will need to address this issue by building a strong business case for funding from the UK Government and from other potential donors. The Honourable Corinda Essex requested more information be made available in the public domain on the budget settlement, conditions attached to that and the implications for the services and especially if they haven't been supported, so we'll endeavour to do this, but members will be aware that Directorates operational plans already exist and are available on the SHG website for anybody who is interested in the activities of each Directorate.

Moving now to the tax reforms and obviously that's been a very interesting subject to be talked about throughout this budget speech, so I think it's important to highlight a few issues with this so that the public do understand also that these are just proposals to be looked at at this time and we do this every year just so we're absolutely clear. We need to assess our revenue streams and if there needs to be policy or legislative changes then that's what we do. However, that is for this Council to decide what those policy changes are and you also approve the legislation that goes with that. This is good fiscal practice and we should be doing this on an annual basis.

I fully support that we benefit from those going off island to earn savings to put back into our island, but surely the long term vision for the island should be that our people don't need to go offshore to make a good wage to allow them to save. As I said in my speech, we need to make the conditions right and Councillor Scipio O'Dean, although I can't tell you exactly what every one of those conditions is today I sure, working alongside the next Government, we're going to be able to do something to actually start making those conditions right. When reviewing any proposals for tax legislation changes, it is important that we must learn from the past, as Councillor Essex mentioned. I fully support what she said when she mentioned looking into doing things differently to what we've done in the past and that is one of the

challenges that we as a Government need to take into consideration when we're looking at any future policy or tax changes. Lesson learning is a very important part of that process. The Honourable Christine Scipio O'Dean also asked about whether or not there'll be additional funding to be supporting the Safeguarding. Yes, you will be aware that there's a additional £267k that's gone into Safeguarding this year, including particularly support for respite care, which I think will compliment some of the work around adaption, so Mr Speaker, I'd just like to reiterate my thanks to all members for their support and hopefully we'll be able to get this budget passed here today. Thank you.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Member.

Question that the Appropriation Bill, 2017, be approved in principle and referred to a Committee of the whole Council, 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 –

Is there a seconder, please?

The Hon. Roy Burke –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much.

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

Council in Committee.

The Speaker –

Thank you, Honourable Members. At this stage I will pass the meeting over to the Chair and as suggested by the Honourable Tony Duncan, I will replace that with his Chairman's plaque so that you have the right person you're speaking to and I wish you well Deputy Speaker, I will now leave the forum. Thank you.

Chairman/Deputy Speaker (The Hon. John Cranfield) –

Good afternoon, Honourable Members and I thank the Honourable Speaker for giving me the opportunity to chair the debate on the Appropriation Bill and Estimates at Committee stage to consider the detailed provisions of the Bill. I'd also like to remind members that as this is an Appropriation Bill the Schedules are considered before the Clauses and that special rules of procedure are set out in Standing Order 13, Rule 2. So I take it all Honourable Members have their Appropriation Bill and Estimates at their disposal.

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Chair?

The Chairman –
Yes?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Chair, can I request that Mr Nicholas Yon, the Assistant Financial Secretary joins us at the table, please?

The Chairman –

Yes, you have my permission. Okay, Honourable Members, we've got the Head of Expenditure and you'll find the appropriate page in the Estimates on page 24, that will coincide with the actual Appropriation Bill, Schedule I.

So first of all, we'll take Head 12 – Corporate Services - Support, Policy and Planning, standing in the sum of £1,389m. Financial Secretary, you want to talk on that?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Thank you, Mr Chair. Can I just propose a format for this session, if that's okay?

The Chair –

Okay.

The Hon. Dax Richards –

We have the Assistant Financial Secretary who will give a brief intro for those Directorates who do not have a direct Council Committee responsible for them and for those who do have a Council Committee the respective Chairmen will actually give an introduction to those Committees and then if there's any other specific questions that are raised as we go throughout then Nicholas will be able to provide answers where possible. Thank you.

The Chairman –

Okay.

Mr Nicholas Yon (Assistant Financial Secretary) –

Okay, Mr chair, thank you, Sir. In terms of the number, it is £1,389m for Head 12 – Corporate Services – Support, Policy and Planning. Corporate Support, Policy and Planning is responsible for leading and facilitating and co-ordinating the effective and efficient conduct of Government business and also for providing administrative support to Corporate Services. It also includes the budgets for Governor's Office, the Attorney General's Chambers and the Internal Audit Office as well.

The Chairman –

Does any member have any questions on Head 12? You will find a breakdown of each Department or each Directorate in the Estimates, in your pink sheets. If you have any questions, I'm sure that the Assistant Financial Secretary will give you support. Councillor Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Thank you, Mr Chairman. Can it be explained, the difference in the supporting Executive and Legislative Council, it's £253k compared to £331k?

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Yes, in terms of that particular output, additional funding was allocated to this line for funding any remuneration changes to Councillors' remuneration packages that might be agreed later in the year, so an amount of £78k was added to that budget line in the event that there may be some changes to the remuneration package.

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Thank you, Mr Chairman. Can I also ask, under Public Relations, it was £86k and now it is, for this coming year £55k? Why the significant decrease?

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Yes, in the previous two financial years we allocated additional funding of £30k for the opening of St Helena Airport, so that was in the previous two budgets and this year we haven't got those costs, 17/18, so that is why that budget has been reduced.

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Yeah, and as I'm speaking there's one more point, Mr Chairman, under Corporate Policy and Planning it's £55k 2016/17 and now it is £99k, can that be explained?

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Yes, this line is for an additional staff member for that particular cost centre.

The Chairman –

Councillor O'Dean?, Scipio O'Dean?

The Hon. Christine Scipio O'Dean –

Scipio, thank you, Mr Chair. May I ask the question, Mr Chairman, the Assistant Financial Secretary mentioned that £30k was provided in the previous years for the grand opening of the Airport, so does this mean that we are not expecting a grand opening of the Airport during this financial year?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Perhaps I can answer that, Mr Chairman. Of course we are expecting the start of commercial services later this year, I think we've said that throughout the budget session, but in terms of the budgetary provisions we had assumed previously that activities would have started last year and we had the official opening in 16/17, so a lot of the expenses incurred for the official opening had been, happened in the previous two years, so as we still don't know when the official opening will be of the Airport there's no budget provision in for this year.

The Chairman –

Any other member have any questions on Head 12?

Head 12 – Corporate Services – Support, Policy and Planning (£1,389m) –

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Head 13 – Corporate Services – Human Resources, standing in the sum of £9,220m.

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Thank you, Sir. Members can find that on page 25 of the Estimates book. Corporate Human Resources deal with the ongoing development of the Public Service through developing and improving policies and procedures in line with modern human resources practices. They also work with other SHG Directorates in relation to recruitment, training and re-training of skilled staff for essential services. In the Corporate Human Resources budget this year, members will note that there is an increase in the Technical Cooperation posts budget line, that increase is basically the movement of TC posts that had previously been budgeted under Safeguarding and it is actually moving that budget from out of Safeguarding into the central TC budget under Corporate Human Resources as the main change in the budget this year.

The Chairman –

Any questions, Honourable Members? Honourable Christine Scipio O’Dean?

The Hon. Christine Scipio O’Dean –

Thank you, Mr Chairman. Can I ask if he can give a breakdown of the Directorate of how is this TC posts are made up, summary, like, for instance, etc, as a example, as Education so many thousands and if he has that information in front of him?

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Thank you. I haven’t got that information to hand as to how the whole budget breaks down per Directorate, but if members turn to page 8 of the Estimates book it does show you how the TC budget is broken down for just that amount, but it shows, the pie chart actually shows how TC is spread across each of the Directorates and how Directorate budgets relate to one another in proportion with TC costs included, but I haven’t actually got the amount of that TC budget for each Directorate specifically.

The Chairman –

Honourable Christine Dunc...Scipio O’Dean, sorry?

The Hon. Christine Scipio O’Dean –

I’m sure with practice, Mr Chair, you will get it right. Can I ask, for the benefit of our listeners, if the Assistant Financial Secretary could read out the pie chart that is in front of us with the percentage, for the benefit of our listeners, please?

Mr Nicholas Yon –

I can do, Sir, no problem. So basically, if I could just explain that the pie chart and the percentages that I’ll read basically means how the whole of SHG budget is proportioned out among the different Directorates, but for the whole budget, including TC expenditure. So for Corporate Services – 22% of the budget, Police – 5% of the budget, Economic Development – 3%, Shipping – 10%, Education – 9%, Health – 23%, Environment and Natural Resources – 9%, Pensions and Benefits – 9%, Safeguarding – 9% and Trading Accounts – 1%.

The Chairman –

Honourable Christine Scipio O’Dean?

The Hon. Christine Scipio O’Dean –

Thank you, Mr Chairman. Can the Assistant Financial Secretary say what are the main components of the TC budget, such as salaries, benefits, allowances, not in any detail, because I do not want to breach confidentiality here?

The Chairman –

Can you provide that?

Mr Nicholas Yon –

I can provide some of them from the top of my head, I wouldn't say it was a comprehensive list but I do know that included in those costs are salary costs, there's also allowances or a cost of living allowance, there's also contributions towards pensions, included in there there's also rent and utility allowances as well and also travel to and from the island, including, sort of, storage costs if necessary.

The Chairman –

Honourable Christine Scipio O'Dean?

The Hon. Christine Scipio O'Dean –

Thank you, Mr Chairman. So would the Assistant Financial Secretary be able to say if a family arrives here, if child allowance is included as a component for this package?

Mr Nicholas Yon –

There is no specific child allowance within the package.

The Chairman –

The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Chair, I'd also like to point out that the budget document is available also on the Government website so if anyone is really keen to find out any of the details around these pie charts then they're welcome to view it on the Government website as well.

The Chairman –

That would be useful.

The Hon. Dax Richards –

It is already up on the Government website.

The Chairman –

Thank you. Councillor Christine Scipio O'Dean?

The Hon. Christine Scipio O'Dean –

Just a comment. Mr Chairman, not everyone has access to internet, some people just have problems with obtaining information via St Helena Government website, because I know I experienced difficulties myself, so it is hoped, Mr Chairman, that some hard copies are made available to our constituents who are very interested in the makeup of our budget.

The Chairman –

Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, if I can add, sorry, I should have mentioned, but there are also hard copies available in the Library.

The Chairman –

Okay, thank you. Any further questions? Honourable Derek Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Thank you, Mr Chairman. Can the Deputy Financial Secretary say if car hire is included in this amount?

Mr Nicholas Yon –

So within the package, yes, there would be an element for hiring a car or a vehicle for them to be able to transport around the island, yes.

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Can you say how much?

Mr Nicholas Yon –

No, I wouldn't be able to say, not here today, how much that would be. What I can say in terms of a vehicle, a car hire, it is only provided at the beginning and the end of a contract while they're waiting on a person's vehicle to arrive on the island.

The Chairman –

Any other member have any questions on this particular.....Honourable Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Chair. The Chief Secretary indicated this morning that there are 77 TC posts on island, that did not include short term consultancies and so on, are short term consultancies included in this figure here as well and if so approximately how many?

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Yes, short term consultancies included within this overall figure, so it is included, but we don't have the exact number here today, I could provide that at a later date, but it is somewhere between 15 and 20 as a top figure, but if you want a specific number then I'd be able to provide that at a later date.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

But this would make provision for approximately 15 to 20?

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Yes.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you. Also, Mr Chair, I'm a little confused to be told in this Honourable House today that rental and utility allowances are still in place. Is that for all TC posts, because I had been informed previously that those were being phased out?

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Yes, this is included within each of those packages.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you.

The Chairman –

Honourable Pamela Ward Pearce?

The Hon. Pamela Ward Pearce –

Can you say if there's a cap to these allowances?

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Yes, there is a cap to those allowances, yes.

The Hon. Pamela Ward Pearce –

Can you say what the level of the cap is?

The Chairman –

The Honourable Chief Secretary?

The Hon. Roy Burke –

Could I, if I could help assist here. The various allowances we're talking about, the COLA, the Cost of Living Allowance is a set amount of money, which is fixed in conjunction with the Department for International Development to advise us of the levels which should be paid based on, I think, an international comparison of baskets of goods, so that is a fixed amount, which is not variable, paid every month. As far as the allowances for utilities is concerned, that also is capped, so in terms of the amount of money that a TC can claim back in terms of actual spends rather than estimated spends, that is capped at a figure which is, escaped from me at the moment, it's £500 a quarter, so up to £500 for a quarter so if somebody spends less than that they get less, if they spend more they don't get any more. Other allowances, such as car hire, for example, which is offered at the beginning and end of the contract, that's based on £18 a day, up to the maximum a month at the beginning or the end of the contract.

The Chairman –

Honourable Pamela Ward Pearce?

The Hon. Pamela Ward Pearce –

Thank you, Chief Secretary. Can you say if the utilities cap, is that dependent if it's a single person or if they're accompanied by a family or what?

The Hon. Roy Burke –

No, it's not, there's no, it doesn't matter if you're on your own or if you've got a family of fifteen.

The Hon. Pamela Ward Pearce –

Thank you.

The Chairman –

Any other Honourable Member wishes to speak on this particular Head?

Head 13 – Corporate Services – Human Resources (£9,220m).

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Right, we'll move on now to Head 15 – Police, page 26 in the Estimates. Head 15 – Police, standing in the sum of £1,378m.

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Thank you. Head 15 – Police, covers services such as the Police, Immigration, Prison, Fire and Rescue, Sea Rescue, Vehicle Inspection and Driver Competence tests and Emergency Planning and Resilience included all within Police. Members will note that the top line on page 26 – Management and Admin is a new cost centre. Previously those costs were covered under Police Operations, but in this year we've tried to take it out so that it is clearer for people what are Management Administration costs, so those are separate line in the budget book and then in terms of the other specific lines, I'd be happy to take any questions.

The Chairman –

Honourable Derek Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Thank you, Mr Chairman. Can the Deputy Financial Secretary, Assistant Financial Secretary explain under Fire and Rescue the difference - £223k compared to now £271k, what does that represent?

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Okay, thank you. In Fire and Rescue, there is an amount of money set aside for personal protective equipment for the staff and the team there and that is replacement equipment for some of the equipment now that needs replacing this year. In addition to that, there's also the increased costs of the vehicle hire charges from the Pool for those specific vehicles that they have for Fire and Rescue.

The Chairman –

Honourable Derek Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Mr Chairman, thank you for that and can it be explained, Assistant Financial Secretary, under the Prison, £277k and now there's a budget of £310k?

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Thank you. Included within here is the cost of localizing a TC post, sorry, no, not this one, sorry, I apologise, wrong line, reading off my notes. Included in here is the cost of an additional staff member and some other smaller costs in relation to the running of the Prison. I apologise.

The Chairman –

Any other member have any questions? Honourable Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Chair. I know we're not appropriating revenue obviously, but the revenue figures do have a bearing on the figures that we are appropriating and I would like an explanation please as to why the total revenue anticipated for Immigration and Licensing is, in fact, decreasing, when we are hoping that the airport will become operational within this fiscal year?

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Thank you. In relation to these particular revenues, the decrease is in relation to the Immigration and those Landing Fees when we previously put the budget together we anticipated a full year where we had Landing Fees for aircrafts coming in and passengers coming through and this year, after some careful consideration by the Department, it was thought to be more prudent to lower those numbers knowing that we hadn't got commercial flights from 1st April.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

What was the anticipated outturn for 16/17 for that subhead?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

In terms of revenue, Councillor?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

In terms of revenue.

The Hon. Dax Richards –

I don't think we have that level of detail here with us today, but we can find out and let you know.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you very much, Financial Secretary, because I note the increase in the actual recurrent expenditure anticipated for that same budget line, the increase has not been mirrored by impact of the revenue going in the same direction.

Mr Nicholas Yon –

That particular increase is in relation to the localization of a TC post and there's other smaller costs as well included within that increase.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, but that still doesn't mean it would'nt help if more revenue could be raised to help offset it. Thank you.

The Chairman –

Any other member have any questions?

Head 15 – Police (£1,378k).

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Right, we'll move on to Head 17 – Corporate Services, Corporate Finance, standing in the sum of £5,666k. Assistant Financial Secretary?

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Thank you, Sir. Corporate Finance is responsible for ensuring the effective management of St Helena Government finances and including raising revenues through Customs duties and Income Taxes and it also covers the Port Management services as well as Licensing and Registrar services, Procurement services, Social Security payments and also management of

the Capital Programme included all within Corporate Finance. In terms of the actual budget, turning to page 27 of the Estimates book, Members will note Revenue Services line has gone down to zero and that's basically what we've done is we've split out those three areas that once came under the one section called Revenue Services, so now there's a separate budget line for Customs and Excise and for Income Tax and also for Port Management, so that was all previously Revenue Services and now we've split it down into those three individual cost centres.

The Chairman –

Are there any questions, Honourable Members? Honourable Wilson Duncan?

The Hon. Wilson Duncan –

Yes, Port Management, for 2016 nothing, but now it's £172k.

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Yes, so basically, like I said, we previously had Port Management, Customs and Income Tax as one whole cost centre called Revenue Services, but what we've done now is we've split those out for this new financial year so that you'll be able to see the cost of running each of those different services separately.

The Chairman –

The Honourable Christine Scipio O'Dean?

The Hon. Christine Scipio O'Dean –

Thank you, Mr Chairman. Mr Chairman, in my response to the budget speech I made an emphasis on how important that the NGOs play a very vital role in the development of the island, and, Mr Chairman, I note that we do have a line here stating payments on behalf of the Crown, I do have in front of me, Mr Chairman, the breakdown of the payments on behalf of the Crown, that includes the NGOs, but for the benefit of our listeners, Mr Chairman, can the Assistant Financial Secretary say what amounts these NGOs hopefully will be receiving once this budget is approved, so like I said, Mr Chairman, this is for the benefit of our listeners and people who are unable to access the internet.

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Thank you. Okay, so within the Estimates book, if Members would like to turn to pages 17 and 18, in the detailed expenditure lines I can give an overview of those different organisations, so the first one would be St Helena Fisheries Corporation where the amount is £180k, there's also the Public Solicitor's Office, the amount of £79k, there's also Media Services in the amount of £75k, there's the National Trust, St Helena National Trust, sorry, in the amount of £48k, there's a subsidy to Connect St Helena of £595k, Human Rights Office - £56k, Community Development Organisation - £23k, Heritage Society - £19k, New Horizons - £46k, SHAPE is £75k, Creative St Helena - £31k, the Community Grant Scheme - £50k.

The Chairman –

Honourable Christine Scipio O'Dean?

The Hon. Christine Scipio O'Dean –

Thank you, Mr Chairman. Can the Assistant Financial Secretary say about the Swimming Pool Contract and the Public Transport System and also Enterprise St Helena, for the benefit of our listeners?

The Chairman -
Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Chair, can I just comment, just to say that we will be discussing Enterprise St Helena under Head 19 – Economic Development, so maybe perhaps we can leave that for then. Just for the listening public's interest and what we're looking at now is the overall summary of expenditure by different lines within the budget and so in terms of what actually sits under payments on behalf of the Crown for Civil Society organisations and the Assistant Financial Secretary has already outlined those, the rest are for specific contracts that are actually in place, so we're happy to still tell the public what those amounts are, Councillor Scipio O'Dean, if you like, but they're not contributions for a Civil Society organisation, they're contractual payments.

The Hon. Christine Scipio O'Dean –

Okay, so do they fall under Headon page 17?

The Hon. Financial Secretary –

Yes, they do.

The Hon. Christine Scipio O'Dean –

So can I proceed with this?

The Chairman –

You may proceed, yes.

The Hon. Christine Scipio O'Dean –

Yes, thank you, Sir.

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Okay, thank you. So Swimming Pool contract is in the amount of £83k and the Public Transport System in the amount of £71k.

The Chairman –

Are there any other questions from Honourable Members concerning this particular Head?

Head 17 – Corporate Services, Corporate Finance (£5,666m).

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Head 19 – Economic Development, standing in the sum of £1,200m. Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Chairman, the Honourable Chairman who is responsible for Economic Development will take the floor.

The Chairman –

Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Thank you, Mr Chairman. First of all I can say that there is £100k provided which should be match funded by Enterprise St Helena for a sports facility in Longwood, but I should say that the match funding is subject to ESH's Board approval. I can also say, Mr Chairman, that under the other part of the ESH programme Fisheries, so sector support, Fisheries is £20k, Agricultural Small Producers, that's house, £120k includes the fit out of the Pack House and ANRD Public and Private Partnerships - £50k, Training, that's Agricultural Training - £30k, Maritime Training - £30k and Business Training - £30k and finally, under Other Support, Recycling - £10k, Civil Society - £20k and Grants, that's Private Sector and Fishing - £187,500. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

The Chairman –

Thank you. Any questions? Honourable Gavin Ellick?

The Hon. Gavin Ellick –

Under the £200k combined for the sports field in Longwood, will any of this money go towards the rehab of Francis Plain playing field?

The Chairman –

Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Chair, at this point in time the funding that's being allocated is for the new build only in Bottom Woods.

The Chairman –

Honourable Gavin Ellick?

The Hon. Gavin Ellick –

Just to say that seem quite harsh because Francis Plain is in need of a facelift as well and that is our mother field, will the Financial Secretary give an undertaking that some monies will be provided for the sports field over there?

The Chairman –

Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, as much as I understand the sentiment expressed by my fellow colleague across the table, it is the responsibility of Council to allocate funding to priority areas, so I can't allocate the budget to support Francis Plain, that's up to you.

The Hon. Gavin Ellick –

Thank you, Sir.

The Chairman –

Any other member have any questions? Councillor Wilson Duncan?

The Hon. Wilson Duncan –

Yes, you mentioned £10k for recycling, who is this paid to?

The Chairman –
Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –
Apologies, I missed the question.

The Hon. Wilson Duncan –
You said that £10k is being paid for recycling, I'd like to know who receives this?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –
That will be the private sector through grants and loans in relation to recycling.

The Chairman –
Any other questions?

Head 19 – Economic Development (£1,200m).

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –
We move down to Head 21 now – Shipping, standing in the sum of £4,157m. Assistant Financial Secretary?

Mr Nicholas Yon –
Members can find this on page 30 of the Budget book. Shipping is responsible for the operations of the RMS St Helena through administering the shipping subsidy, payments are made to St Helena Line who then in turn oversees the payment of the subsidy to the contractor. The Head also covers the contractual costs for sea freight services after the start of commercial air services eventually. Included in there is, like I say, just a reminder of what's included in here is the shipping subsidy, is any of those dry dock costs is the St Helena Line management fees as well as the contractual delay damages fees that be included as part of the current contract that is delayed for operation, we have to pay a delayed fee and that's included in there as well, so it's the full cost of shipping to maintain access to the island.

The Chairman –
Are there any questions, Honourable Members? Honourable Derek Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –
Thank you, Mr Chairman. Probably the Assistant Financial Secretary has covered it, but does this include the delay, damages being paid to the MV Helena?

Mr Nicholas Yon –
Yes, this is included, those costs as well.

The Chairman –
Any other Member has any questions? The Honourable Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Mr Chair. Does it also include any additional costs relating to the difficulty of unloading the MV Helena in the open sea?

Mr Nicholas Yon –

No, it doesn't include any of those costs.

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Chair, perhaps I can say that at this point in time we don't anticipate any additional costs associated with offloading of the MV Helena.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, I'm reassured to hear that, Honourable Financial Secretary.

The Chairman –

Any other Member? Honourable Derek Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Can I ask, for the benefit of the listening public as well, the MV Helena spent some considerable amount of days offloading cargo when it last visited, more days than perhaps one would have anticipated, who's gonna pay for these costs?

The Chairman –

Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Sorry, Mr Chair, I just gave that answer that time, Councillor Thomas, I've said that we don't anticipate any additional costs as a result of the delayed unloading of the MV Helena.

The Chairman –

Any other Honourable Member have any questions?

Head 21 – Shipping (£4,157m).

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Head 22 – Education, standing in the sum of £3,291m. The Honourable Christine Scipio O'Dean?

The Hon. Christine Scipio O'Dean –

Thank you, Mr Chairman. Mr Chairman, the Education Directorate's role is to ensure that education services are provided to meet the needs of the people of St Helena and to support the economic and human capital development of the island. As part of core education provision, four schools provide full-time, compulsory schooling for persons 5 to 16 years of age and with the Primary School also offering early years provision for children from the age of 3. Prince Andrew School also offers sixth form provision for years 12 and 13 and in addition the Directorate operates the St Helena Community College and the St Helena Public Library Service, so Mr Chairman, Members will note that there has been an increase in the management and admin costs because we haveorganize the Directorate and also with

the establishment of the St Helena Community College. In addition, we had to provide additional staffing to support Special Education Needs and Safeguarding guidance for all schools, inclusion services that provides additional support for seven children with significant challenges in the Primary School as well as alternative education provision for two students. Under Vocational Education, in the period from September 2016 to March 2017, the St Helena Community College supported 426 individuals who registered, in total 515 courses. In going forward, Mr Chairman, we hope that we'll be able to increase those numbers. The Community College Apprentice Programme provided opportunity for 54 apprentices including 12 students who has been enrolled on the Academic Apprenticeship Scheme. For Members benefit, that was known as a student allowance a few years ago which was decided to take it away because of untargeted subsidy, so the Education Directorate has implemented that through the Academic Apprentice Scheme to encourage and provide an incentive to our students to remain and continue their education. You will note that there has been an increase in the Pilling School, Harford School, or I should say the Primary and Secondary School because, Mr Chairman, we need to take in account any increases in utilities, any increases in the IT recharges, although we're always looking for efficiency savings. In the Teacher Training Sector, there is a slight increase of £1k. For the benefit of our listeners, there are currently four young Saints undertaking international accredited training locally for the new initial teacher training programme which, hopefully, Mr Chairman, will see them qualified at Teacher 3 grade at the end of a three-year period and also one additional Teacher Trainee is completing qualifications in the UK. Under Tertiary Education, there is an increase of £37k as we require additional funding to cover additional scholarship students. For the benefit of our listeners, from 2017 this funding will support nine students who are overseas studying, so one began their studies in 2015, six began their studies in 2016 and two will be beginning their studies in 2017 and also, for the benefit of our listeners, Mr Chairman, we have received six applications just recently for students who are applying for scholarships which will begin next year, so this is a really positive story for St Helena as previously only two students were able, due to financial constraints, to be able to go overseas to study, so like I said, last year we sent six students and we're hoping that we will send a further six students next year. So, like I said in my response to the Financial Secretary's budget speech, there has been an increase in the Education Directorate of £270k for this financial year and so that £270k reflects three major changes, an additional £19k has been provided, like I said, to cover the costs of the additional scholarship students. We did try to find efficiency savings within the existing budget that would compliment the £19k. We also have received additional funding of £61k to support inclusion services which support the education of children with additional learning needs allowing them to access compulsory education as in their legal right. I think Members has highlighted also in their response to the budget speech about the upgrade of Broadband access so the Education Directorate has also received an additional funding of £190k to upgrade the Broadband access for the three Primary schools, Prince Andrew School and, of course, the St Helena Community College as I said earlier which will be launched this Wednesday. So the funding for the Broadband for the year as well as providing services and support is to create an efficient and integrated education network that shares resources and provides much improved access to all teachers and learners while importantly for all our learning institutions, this will offer the most dramatic improvements for the Primary Schools. The Honourable Gavin Ellick mentioned about the grounds maintenance at Francis Plain. The Education Directorate has provided a funding of £6k for the maintenance of Francis Plain, but we must remember that we don't know exactly how much we need, because it depends on the weather and everything else, but we have provided £6k in the budget for that and as you know, Honourable Gavin Ellick, that any money that is received for renting Francis Plain, for example, if you go and play football that

money goes into the Consolidated Fund for our revenue streams. I don't know if there's any further questions, Mr Chairman?

The Chairman –

Thank you very much indeed, Honourable Councillor Scipio O'Dean. Any other Members have any questions for the Chairman?

The Hon. Gavin Ellick –

I'd just like to thank the Member for making £6k available, it's small but nevertheless it will help.

The Chairman –

Any other Member have any questions?

Head 22 – Education (£3,291m).

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Right, we'll now take Head 23 – Health, standing in the sum of £6,141m and we'll ask the Honourable Derek Thomas, please?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Thank you, Mr Chairman. The Health Directorate is responsible for health promotion, pre hospital emergency care, acute care, primary, secondary and tertiary care, community health care and associated health care services, including mental health, environmental health, pharmacy services, dental services, health care governance, supported by administrative services dealing with staff recruitment, budgeting and accounting, procurement and overall support to sections of the Directorate.

In the Health Service budget, Mr Chairman, under Management and Admin, there is a slight increase from £526k to £544k and that takes account of the cost of maintaining the **EMES** system. Under Medical there is an increase from £3,215m to £3,486m and that takes account of additional £1.2m for the overseas medical referrals, yes, and Members will know that the additional £200k was put there for the overseas medical referrals making the amount for medical overseas referrals £1.200m. This is nowhere the realistic cost, because over the five-year period we have experienced medical referrals in the region of £1.5m. However, the £200k do go some way in supporting the overseas medical referrals budget. It also takes account of £50k for two posts, which was localized and that represents value for money, two posts that was previously under TC now being localized, £50k and like I say it represents value for money. Under the Mental Health, this is a new Head, Members will know that previously mental health was with Safeguarding, that has now been moved to Public Health, so the £320k represents the Mental Health Unit and under the Revenue output there is a reduction from £161k to £151k and that represents realistic charges, so Members will see that the focus on Health is primary health care. What I can say that with the Community Health Care Section that we've seen development in that area within the community health, more and more health visits are expanded into the community, which I know is well received. When the visit was carried out at the Hospital on Friday, Members would have seen the refurbishment of the Hospital where there's much more sophisticated, new equipment, they would have seen the equipment, this means earlier diagnostics on medical illness which will have impact, probably will have impact on the health budget in terms of identification of

early interventions and having to treat such causes. We also, there's the aerial medical evacuation and that is £1.200m for that and last year we had five, there were five cases whereby the aerial medical evacuation which I have to say has proved to be a good value when it comes to saving lives, so unless Members got any specific questions I think that is a summary on the various differences within the Health Service budget. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

The Chairman –

Thank you, Honourable Derek Thomas. The Assistant Financial Secretary?

Mr Nicholas Yon –

I'd just like to clarify it is £1.4m for aero medical evacuation costs.

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

You are correct, £1.4m and not £1.2m, thank you.

The Chairman –

Thank you. Are there any other Members wish to speak? Honourable Gavin Ellick?

The Hon. Gavin Ellick –

With all this new equipment up at the hospital, will we see a drop in the overseas referrals or we still got a long way to go yet?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Mr Chairman, it will be difficult to say a drop in overseas medical referrals, you will identify more cases, but I know we have a new Directorate in place and we have to look at how we can do things differently and with regular air access it might be possible to bring specialists in as opposed to having to keep referring patients to South Africa for medical referrals.

The Chairman –

Thank you, Honourable Derek Thomas. Honourable Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Chair. Is DfID still stipulating that the funding for medical referrals should be ring fenced?

The Chairman –

Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Chair, yes, you are correct. The funding for the aero medical evacuation budget, the £1.4m is still to be ring fenced.

The Chairman –

Honourable Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Just on a point of clarification, is it the Aero Medical element that they wish to have ring fenced or the cost of the actual referrals themselves?

The Chairman –
Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –
For clarity, it is both, in terms of overseas medical referrals and the medical evacuation budget.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Thank you for that.

The Chairman –
The Honourable Wilson Duncan?

The Hon. Wilson Duncan –
You got down in notes at the bottom, you got two, included in the medical output above is £1,400k, is that right?

The Hon. Dax Richards –
That's equivalent to £1.4m.

The Hon. Wilson Duncan –
Alright, thank you.

The Chairman –
Are there any other questions for the Honourable Derek Thomas? Honourable Cruyff Buckley?

The Hon. Cruyff Buckley –
Thank you, Mr Chair. In the event of a shortfall in the overseas medical referrals budget, which is most likely to happen and it's been happening in the last few years, how is this shortfall intended to be financed?

The Chairman –
Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –
Mr Speaker, at this point in time if there is a case where the overseas medical referrals budget does exceed that budget line or is projected to exceed the budget line it's the Accounting Officer's responsibility in year to find alternative measures to finance that gap, so the first thing the Accounting Officer will do is to look at other areas within his budget to be able to contain any over expenditure.

The Chairman –
Okay, thank you very much. Are there any other questions, Honourable Members?

Head 23 – Health (£6,141m).

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Head 26 – Environment and Natural Resources, standing in the sum of £3,338m. Over to the Honourable Pamela Ward Pearce.

The Hon. Pamela Ward Pearce –

Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. The Environment and Natural Resources Directorate's mission is to manage and protect St Helena's natural and built environment and contribute towards achieving a successful, sustainable economy and a healthy community. The Directorate is responsible for a range of business areas, including environmental management, agriculture and natural resources, property and housing, planning and development control and government transport. There are in total twenty-one cost centres in the ENRD budget. Additionally, the Directorate also has responsibility for two trading accounts which are for Housing and Transport and manages externally funded environmental projects valued this financial year at £510k. ENRD also has an oversight of the Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Programme set up under the Airport Project. This is a stand alone project with its own dedicated funding. The Environmental Management budget makes provision for terrestrial and marine conservation activities, environmental protection and waste management. Environmental protection will focus chiefly on the delivery of the Environmental Protection Ordinance 2016. Met forecasting services for the airport are also included under this budget area but managed on a day to day basis by the Airport Directorate. One of our key targets over this year is to formally adopt at least 80% of the secondary legislation and supporting policies, guidelines and procedures to facilitate implementation of the Environmental Protection Ordinance of 2016. The budget for Agriculture comprises of outputs for forestry, fisheries administration, protection and policy advice, bio security services, agricultural support to farmers, including veterinary services and grounds maintenance of specific locations, such as Castle Gardens. This year, our focus is to continue to develop our forest estate sustainably and to provide a range of services and products to the community. We will also aim to continue to protect St Helena's borders to reduce the risk of new pests, agricultural diseases and weeds becoming established. We also aim to implement the National Weeds Management Action Plan and a Weeds Management Project that has been funded by Darwin Plus. The property portfolio has a budget for the maintenance of the island's road network, provision and maintenance of the island's street lights and rockfall protection, the provision of technical services and geographical information services, support land registry and property disposal and the management and maintenance of Crown properties. Over this year we aim to make more land available and improve accessibility to land for development. We will continue to improve the condition of the Crown estate, increase and better manage the stock of Government Landlord housing and improve public facilities and infrastructure as far as the budget will allow. The Planning and Development Control Budget provides for the delivery of the statutory function essential to the ongoing development of the island. The Directorate aim to ensure as far as funding will allow that St Helena's natural and built assets are managed in a sustainable manner for the needs of the island now and into the future. We support an increase on island food production and an increase in food security, that a sustainable fishing industry is developed and that the development of our natural and built environment remains central to the future economic development of the island. Members will note that under the Provision and Maintenance of Roads there's been a slight increase, that takes up an additional £10k for community roads and the remainder is for the Road Maintenance network. Under Building Maintenance, funding has, sorry, beg your pardon, the Building Maintenance funding placed under Contracts this year. Last year there was additional funding to upgrade buildings and this year some additional funding has been secured. Under the Upkeep of Public Facilities and Areas funding has been relocated from various budgets to upkeep public areas and facilities, such as

the Castle Gardens, the Run, military graves and cemeteries, also tree maintenance in Jamestown and under the Environmental Risk Management, this code basically accommodates the environmental risk manager's salary and contract for the Met Forecasting Services now relocated to Waste Management Services and Met Forecasting Services Airport respectively. I think that's it. Any questions?

The Chairman –

Just on a point of information, you did say under Building Maintenance that you had an increase, but it's showing a decrease here of one pound.

The Hon. Pamela Ward Pearce –

Oh, I do beg your pardon, yes. Sorry, that's just the change of contracts, I beg your pardon. Building Maintenance Funding is now placed under Contracts this year, so I do beg your pardon, yes, it has shown a decrease.

The Chairman –

Anybody wish to speak? Honourable Derek Thomas?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Thank you, Mr Chairman. Mr Chairman, can the Chairperson of ENRD say, there's been an additional £10k to community roads, what will be the total budget for community roads now?

The Hon. Pamela Ward Pearce –

That brings it up to the grand sum of £25k.

The Chairman –

Any other Member wishes to speak? I beg your pardon, I didn't see your hand.

The Hon. Gavin Ellick –

Can I ask if in the Environment and Natural Resources will this here take into consideration pay rises for technical services, local technical services?

The Hon. Pamela Ward Pearce –

That has not been built into this budget, no.

The Hon. Gavin Ellick –

Could you say where, if any, where would it come from, payments on behalf of the Crown or...

The Hon. Pamela Ward Pearce –

It's not built into this budget.

The Hon. Gavin Ellick –

Okay, thank you.

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Chair, maybe I can help with that, as has been mentioned by my Honourable Friend, any increases that are approved during the year is financed from the central pot which sits in Payments on behalf of the Crown.

The Chairman –
Okay, thank you.

The Hon. Gavin Ellick –
Sorry about that, Mr Speaker, thank you, Sir.

The Chairman –
Honourable Christine Scipio O’Dean, since you missed part of the debate, do you have any questions for the Honourable Member?

The Hon. Christine Scipio O’Dean –
Mr Chairman, I sit on the Committee, so I’m aware of the budget figures that’s why I thought it was appropriate to use the Ladies at this time.

The Chairman –
Okay. Honourable Members, no further questions?

Head 26 – Environment and Natural Resources (£3,338m).

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –
Head 29 – Safeguarding, standing in the sum of £2,458m. Honourable Brian Isaac?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –
Thank you, Mr Chairman. The overall trajectory for the Safeguarding Directorate has continued to increase over the last three years. The 2017/18 budget envelope for this year stands at £2,448m. In comparison, the budget envelope last year was £3,492m. The difference can be explained under two categories. The Mental Health budget of £321k now sits with the Health Directorate and these monies have been transferred. The TC posts, there were numerous TC posts sitting within the Directorate budget line, including posts in the Police, Health and Legal Services, therefore the cost of these TC posts has been moved into Corporate Human Resources budget. This is £990k. Additional funding included in the 2017/18 budget envelope are – home improvements and adaptations - £35k, salary costs for respite provisions at Barn View - £35k, increase in running costs for the Adult Services, additional funding from 16/17 is £197k. It is extremely positive that the elected members have prioritized additional fundings for home improvements and adaptation to homes, these monies are in line to the Directorate’s priorities of supporting people to remain living in their homes in the community. This will remain a significant challenge and the Directorate working with the Occupational Therapist will be bringing the disabled facility grant policy to the newly-formed Social and Community Board when it is reformed, Committee really. The policy will ensure monies are prioritized to the neediest in a fair and transparent manner. Barn View has remained closed for some time, there is a significant need within the community for the Directorate to provide respite for carers and to have a facility which enables intermediary care for patients leaving hospital but who are not ready to return to their homes. Therefore, it is very positive that elected members have been able to prioritise funding to support the reopening of this facility. The community need for Adult Social Services increases. There is an increased demand on our home care provisions, there is a need to upskill local staff and the financial impacts of implementing a cadre review within the Directorate has seen improved pay and creates a competency based career progressing

system. Vital TC posts were recruited to the last year and the above monies allow for the continuation of these posts. Challenges. A number of vital posts within the Directorate are yearly fixed term contracts due to being linked to project money. This creates instability due to the lack of job security and restricts the benefits afforded for those staff. In order to make these posts permanent we require financial stability to move these posts to the main establishment. Staffing levels at the CCC are stretched as the needs and demands of the residents increase. Staffing levels will need to be reviewed which will have financial implication. Vital TC posts are concluded. Clinical-led expertise within the Adult Service and residential needs to create additional local posts to fill these roles and ensure we have a safe service implemented. Implementation of the cadre review will place demands upon staff budget as staff move through the competency framework. Vital works are required to prepare the CCC and Ebony View, capital funding is needed to increase the capacity of our supported living facilities at Cape Villa, residential homes are in much need of their own vehicle in order to transport vulnerable adults to day care and activities within the community, this is both Ebony View and the CCC. The monies identified for home improvement and adaptations was hugely appreciated, will be extremely challenging as there has already been £50k allocated for essential works to be completed that was agreed in the last year's financial year but work were not started. Home care has increased significantly in the last year and continues to place high demands upon the budget. There is significant risk that there will not have the monies available to fund all the home care requirement to support people who remain living in their own homes in the community. Agreed work is for the sensory room being built at Ebony View will not complete in the 16/17 budget and this is not budgeted in the 17/18 budget. As the expectation of local staff increases and their desire to take up vital roles within the Directorate development, there is a need to invest in these people via training and potentially overseas exposure visits. The training budget will be under significant demands to support staff to continue in their development.

The WASS Enquiry recommended that a fostering service is developed in St Helena, a fostering Social Worker is currently on island and is developing the policies. There are no monies allocated to fund and pay for the foster carers. There is no Child in Need budget, this places strain upon the children's team when supporting families in the community who are experiencing significant financial pressures and strains. It would be beneficial to have a CIN budget for emergency support such as food vouchers, emergency clothing for children, essential household items etc. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

The Chairman –

Thank you, Honourable Brian Isaac. Any Member wishes to put any questions to the Honourable Member? The Honourable Christine Scipio O'Dean?

The Hon. Christine Scipio O'Dean –

Thank you, Mr Chairman. I note that there is a significant decrease under the section Community Care, it's only £689k. Can the Honourable Chairperson of the Social and Community Development Committee advise what is the components of this £689k?

The Chairman –

The Honourable Brian Isaac?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Thank you, Mr Chairman. I think that was mentioned earlier, but I will check with the Directorate to confirm. I wonder if the Assistant Financial Secretary could assist in this one or the Financial Secretary?

The Chairman –
Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Chair, I don't think we have that level of detail here with us unfortunately. I would assume though, given the types of votes that are being talked about, this would have been moving of the TC officers in a different sectors centrally into the Corporate HR budget line, which we've discussed earlier.

The Hon. Brian Isaac –
Thank you.

The Hon. Christine Scipio O'Dean –

But I thought the Chairman mentioned that the Community Care was made up of Ebony View and the Community Care Complex, I'm looking at the revised current budget of 2016/17 which is £964k and the estimates for the 17/18 is £689k which to me is a rather significant decrease, but if it's only TC officers, I'm not aware that that amount of TC officers are in Ebony View and the Community Care Complex that would amount to that difference.

The Chairman –
Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

I'm not able to give you a full explanation of that at this stage, but can it be researched and we give all members something in writing on that question?

The Chairman –
Honourable Christine Scipio O'Dean?

The Hon. Christine Scipio O'Dean –

Thank you, Mr Chair. I'm disappointed that this information isn't available because I am 81K.

The Hon. Brian Isaac –
Nicholas, you got anything to share at this time?

The Chairman –

Did you say that you didn't have that information to hand and that you would give it to the Honourable Member in writing?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –
That was the second question.

The Chairman –
Oh, that was the second question.

The Hon. Brian Isaac –
And I can do likewise.

The Chairman –
Are you happy with

The Hon. Christine Scipio O’Dean –
No, Mr Chairman, not happy, because, I mean, I’m asking questions and I want information to get out in the public domain, but I think it would be pointless me asking any further questions.

The Chairman –
Okay. The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –
Mr Speaker, if there’s going to be a number of questions then I would suggest we recess for ten minutes and then it would give us time to go away and look for the information that we might be able to provide to the Honourable Member?

The Chairman –
Okay, thank you very much indeed. We’ll adjourn for five minutes or ten, we’ll adjourn for ten minutes.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Mr Chair, I’ve got some detailed questions as well, so should we take them before we adjourn so that we can then clarify them and adjourn at the end of the question session here rather than going away and finding answers to half the questions and then returning?

The Hon. Dax Richards –
Can I suggest then, Mr Speaker, that the Honourable Member provides us with those questions during the break and we can go away and have a look?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
With all due respect, Honourable Financial Secretary, I would prefer to provide them over the air for public hearing.

The Hon. Dax Richards –
Yes, you can still do that over the air, Councillor, what I was suggesting is that we’ll be able to get the answers for you to your questions, so that we can give you a sensible answer over the air for the listening public.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
So I will still then ask the questions when we return?

The Chairman –
Yes.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –
Thank you.

The Chairman –
Okay, Honourable Members, we’ll adjourn for ten minutes.

Council Adjourned.**Council Resumed.**

The Hon. Dax Richards –

We will try to provide as comprehensive an answer as we possibly can.

The Chairman –

Thank you very much indeed.

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Chair, can I ask the Honourable Member if she can just repeat her questions so we can provide those answers?

The Chairman –

Yes. Honourable Member, Christine Scipio O’Dean, can you repeat your question, please?

The Hon. Christine Scipio O’Dean –

Okay, Mr Chairman, I will try my best. Under Community Care there is a significant drop, decrease in the estimate for 17/18. Previously the Honourable Brian Isaac mentioned that the Community Care was made up of the Ebony View and the Community Care Complex, so I’m asking what proportion of the £689k is for Community Care Complex and I did ask about the components, how is that made up? I see Assistant Financial Secretary shaking his head there, so whatever information you can give us then I would appreciate.

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Right, thank you. So one of the things that you queried was why there is such a decrease from 16/17 budget into the 17/18 budget and basically that decreased is the movement of the Home Helpers Allowance from out of the CCC budget line into a separate line, so you will see the line directly below is the Community Care line, it says Occupational Therapy and Better Life Allowance. Included in there as well is now all of the other benefits and allowances that are issued by Safeguarding and that includes the Home Helpers Allowance and also the Carer’s Allowance as well. That will explain why that budget line is increased in comparison to 16/17.

The Hon. Christine Scipio O’Dean –

Okay, thank you.

The Chairman –

Thank you very much indeed, Assistant Financial Secretary.

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member also asked a question around Children’s Services as well?

The Chairman –

Honourable Christine Scipio O’Dean?

The Hon. Christine Scipio O’Dean –

Yes, Mr Chairman. In front of me I have the Children's Services budget of £81k and I had asked what components that was made up and the Honourable Chairperson of Social and Community and Development Committee stated was salaries, purely salaries and hence then my follow-up question was how many staff, because taking into account that the TC Officers has been removed from the Safeguarding budget, their salaries have been removed, how many staff makes up that £81k?

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Thank you. Included in that £81k is, yes, it is staffing costs, but it also includes other running costs as well, so transport and other costs for running the office, there are four members of staff budgeted under Children's Services.

The Hon. Christine Scipio O'Dean –

Thank you.

The Chairman –

Honourable Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Chair. I notice that one of the expenditure items relates to repairs to Ebony View, can you give me some details about these repairs and, indeed, what types of repairs they are, given that Ebony View was only very recently upgraded?

The Chairman –

Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Thank you, Mr Chair. So just to clarify, I have checked the Honourable Member's speech that time and he actually says works that he would like to be done in the coming year basically, so those repairs aren't budgeted repairs, but they're repairs that they would like to be carried out in the year, which I believe is a wall that has fallen down in that area, but they're not actually included in this budget.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

I'm sorry, Mr Chair, I'm confused, I thought the items that we were spoken about by the Honourable Chair were actually the items that had already been identified for expenditure this year.

The Hon. Dax Richards –

In this case, Mr Chair, this isn't included in the expenditure for this year. These are areas of, that will present challenges for the Directorate in the coming year.

The chairman –

Thank you.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Mr Chair, I have got other questions I'll be asking in a moment and I do appreciate the fact that the Honourable Financial Secretary allowed recess to try and clarify the situation, but I would sincerely suggest that we get a written statement from the Safeguarding Directorate actually outlining precisely what their expenditure, that is included in this actual estimate

covers, because at the moment, from the feedback that we have had it is not clear as to what's actually included, what's aspirational, what the background to some of the items is, so although I'm not suggesting that we hold up the appropriation process for that purpose, I think it would be very helpful if we were given a clear, written summary, which we can then refer to, if, indeed, we are questioned, you know, about it in the future, because at the moment I'm certainly not at all clear on exactly, you know, the status of what's being proposed.

The Chairman –

Yeah. The Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Chair, we will work with the Honourable Chairman and the Director of Safeguarding to provide such a response. I think one of the complications that you will see is that things have been moved around significantly in the year and maybe it's more about outlining what movements have taken place rather than where there's been major different changes in terms of the amount of expenditure. Going to, I think, one of the other questions that was mentioned previously is around the er where did the additional resources go for the additional £267k that was approved for Safeguarding and so we also can provide that detail, but we can give a brief overview if the Members would like that now?

The Chairman –

Okay, if you can undertake to give that information that would be great.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you, Honourable Financial Secretary. Mr Chair, I would be grateful if we could have the overview of the specific areas that have been targeted with the new money that's been allocated to the Directorate for the current fiscal year, please.

The Chairman –

Thank you very much, Honourable Corinda Essex, I'm sure that will be forthcoming and....

The Hon. Dax Richards –

We've got that(*inaudible*)

The Chairman –

You've got that level already, okay, go ahead.

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Thank you. So the amount of £267k is broken down as follows:- there was additional £35k provided for salary costs for Nurses and Carers for respite care provision; there was another £35k for additional funds allocated for home improvements and adaptations budgets; and then, finally, there was an amount of £197k for the cost of running the Adult Safeguarding, sort of, project. If I just can explain that last financial year, 16/17, we received additional funding for Adult Safeguarding, but because we weren't bringing in certain services or even staff until later in the year the full year wasn't budgeted for, so what we've done in 17/18 now is provided for the whole twelve months where previously it was a shorter period.

The Chairman –

Do you still need that information then, Honourable Member?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Yes, Mr Chair, I most certainly do, because that summary will go beyond these key issues, they will go to cover the issues that my colleague, the Honourable Christine Scipio O’Dean has been trying to elucidate as well and a general overview of the budget provision within the Safeguarding Directorate. I also have a further question relating to the training budget. Reference was made to cost of training local staff, there isn’t a separate subhead here, so I would like to have an indication of what proportion of the other budget lines is allocated for training purposes, please?

The Chairman –

Assistant Financial Secretary?

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Yes, so training is included in both the Safeguarding Project cost centre and the Adult Safeguarding cost centre and is to a total of £31k.

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Thank you very much for that. Thank you.

The Chairman –

Anything further, Honourable Member? The Honourable Lawson Henry?

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Thank you, Mr Chairman. As I understand it, in the design of this year’s settlement in relation to Safeguarding some lines were ringfenced by the Secretary of State, I think it’s worth if we can be told what those lines was because I’m sure the listening public will be interested in those lines. Thank you.

The Chairman –

Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Thank you, Mr Chair. Yes, the Honourable Lawson Henry is absolutely correct, so we’ve mentioned one of those lines already which is for the aero medical and the overseas medical referrals and the other one is for the whole of the Safeguarding budget and in addition to that is the shipping budget which will remain ringfenced.

The Hon. Lawson Henry –

Thank you.

The Chairman –

Are there any other questions, Honourable Members? Honourable Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Just a question in response to the statement that the Honourable Financial Secretary has just made which is that you mentioned that the whole of the shipping budget is ring-fenced, what’s happened then to the concept of the new deal?

The Chairman –

Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

My Honourable Friend poses a very good question there, Mr Chair. So, yes, we are having discussions with UK Government around the new deal principles, Members will be aware that a number of years ago SHG and DfID signed up to the new deal principles which allow us to recognise and save efficiencies, so any years where there was a surplus that arised out of Consolidated Fund through either increased revenues or achieving efficiencies we was allowed to use that funding to put towards potential capital projects in the future with the permission of the UK Government. The latest correspondence that we've received on the signing of the revised MOU suggests that the new deal principles will be withdrawn as part of this process, however, we have requested that it is to be reviewed within this current financial year.

The Chairman –

Okay. Honourable Corinda Essex?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Mr Chair, do I take it then that it's very unlikely that it will be reinstated within this financial year?

The Chairman –

Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Chair, I think that will be part of the discussion that we'll need to have so I wouldn't like to say yes or no in terms of whether it would be reinstated within this financial year.

The Chairman –

Okay, thank you. Any other Member have anything.....the Honourable Brian Isaac?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Thank you, Mr Chairman, I would just like to thank my two colleagues, the Financial Secretary and the Assistant Financial Secretary in supplying that responses to the questions of my colleagues here. Unfortunately some of those questions go right into operational, which I'm not, sort of, privileged to, but I'm pleased that we will be getting together to also compile a report to the questions raised. Thank you all very much, thank you, colleagues.

The Chairman –

Thank you, Honourable Member. Are there any other questions, Honourable Members?

Head 29 – Safeguarding (£2,458m).

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Right, now I'll put the question that the overall recurrent expenditure, standing in the sum of £38,238m do stand part of the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

There is another Head 20, but I'm not sure if that is part of the budget, so if the Assistant Financial Secretary wishes to elaborate on it, or.....

Mr Nicholas Yon –

Yes, thank you. What I can say is that Pensions and this is the St Helena Government Defined Benefit Pension Scheme payments, are covered by the Pensions Ordinance 2012, so in that Ordinance it says that it needs no further appropriation for funds and also Benefits, which is covered by the Social Security Ordinance 2011, that also has the same line which says it doesn't need further appropriation. The line that we have here of £3.874m is for completeness so that Members can see how it relates directly back to the budget book.

The Chairman –

Okay, so Honourable Members, we move on to the Clauses. I put the question that the Title, the Enactment Clause and Clause 1 do stand part of the Bill.

Title, Enactment Clause and Clause 1.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

I put the question that Clause 2 do stand part of the Bill. Anyone wishes to, Financial Secretary, Assistant Financial Secretary, wishes to speak on that?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Chair, this is again just to reconfirm the total amount that we're being asked to be expended from the Consolidated Fund is £38.238m, that combined with the cost for Pensions and Benefits as outlined by the Assistant Financial Secretary comes back to the total estimate within the pink book, but in terms of the appropriation from the Consolidated Fund, it's £38,238m that we're actually appropriating.

The Chairman –

Okay, good.

Clause 2.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

I say thank you very much indeed and at this stage I will ask the Clerk of Council to re-admit the Speaker, please?

The Speaker –

Well, good afternoon again, switch my mic on as well, good afternoon everybody. I guess you must have had quite an interesting session this afternoon and that's the way I like to see it, so we're now at the stage where we're back into formal forum again. The Bill is now to be reported. Honourable Financial Secretary?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, I beg to report that the Appropriation Bill, 2017, 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 –

Thank you. There is no need for a seconder at this time and there's no further debate.

Question that Council approves the Bill and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted, put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Thank you, Honourable Members. I'm looking at the time and looking at the amount of work that we have to do, but I think we will go on for the next item which is a resumed debate on the Election Bill and I'll ask the Clerk to call the next item.

Motion No. 2 – The Honourable Brian Isaac.

Resumed Debate

THE ELECTIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2017

Council in Committee.

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Thank you, Mr Speaker, we're at Clause 3, we left off there and I propose an amendment to Clause 3.

The Chairman –

You propose an amendment to Clause 3, what is the amendment, please?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Could I read it in its fullest or you would like me just to, I think it would be better.....

The Chairman –

I need to know what the amendment is. You have some words there already, do you have the amendment to go with it?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

“Notwithstanding the amendments of section 4 (1) (a) of the Elections Ordinance 2009, by section 2(a) of this Ordinance, any spouse or life partner whose name is included in the”, I would like to add “provisional Register of Electors on the date of commencing of this Ordinance” and to include “who applies on or before 24th May 2017 to have his or her name added to the Register” that is the amendment and I'll continue “remains entitled to be so registered as an elector until 30th June 2020 providing that such spouse or life partner continues to comply with the other requirements of section 4 of the Elections Ordinance 2009. Mr Chairman, the reason for including this amendment in the Ordinance is that this Bill was to come to formal LegCo at an earlier date which didn't happen and during that transitional period people have registered to be included on that Register and it's only fair

and transparent that they will be included, the reasons for including the amendment in the provisional Register and who has applied on or before 24th May 2017 to have his or her name added to the Register, so it's that transitional period that people registered, had the Bill went to the House when it was proposed we wouldn't have to make that amendment, but because it didn't go to the House we have that period of time when people registered and we're now giving the opportunity for those people to be included on the Register.

The Chairman –

Okay. Attorney General would like to put that into legal terms?

The Hon. Angelo Berbotto –

Yes, sure. So the amendment is that in clause 3, line number 3, after the word “the” add the word “Provisional” and following on the same line, after the word “Ordinance” the following text is included, is added, inserted, a comma and then “or who applies on or before 24th May 2017 to have his or her name added to the Register,” that's the extent of the insertion, the rest of the text remains as it is.

The Chairman –

Thank you very much for that, okay, we all understand that. Anybody wishes to make any comment on that? It's an alteration; it's the insertion of the word “Provisional” after the word “the” in the third line and the insertion of other words and a comma after the word, “Ordinance”. Any questions, any comments?

The Hon. Dr Corinda Essex –

Does the amendment require a seconder?

The Chairman –

Yes, I just wanted to know if there are any comments first before we get a seconder. No comments? Is there a seconder to the amendment? Yes?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Mr Chairman, I beg to second.

The Chairman –

Thank you very much.

Question on amendment, put and agreed to.

The Chairman –

Back to you, is there anything else you wish to make here?

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Thank you, Mr Chairman, not at this stage.

Council Resumed.

The Speaker –

Okay. Right, then can you report it, the Bill is to be reported to the Council, we're back now in full Council.

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

Mr Speaker, I beg to report that the Elections (Amendment) Bill, 2017, passed the Committee with two amendments and to move that this Council approves the said Bill and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted.

The Speaker –

Is there a seconder, please?

The Hon. Christine Scipio O’Dean –

Is it three amendments, Mr Speaker?

The Speaker –

Two amendments, I understand it’s two amendments.

The Hon. Brian Isaac –

It’s two amendments.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much for that. Was there a seconder, is there a seconder to the amendments?

The Hon. Derek Thomas –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much indeed, Sir. I put the question that this Council approves the Elections (Amendment) Bill, 2017, as amended, and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted. The time is open for a further debate on the Bill. Anybody wish to speak to the Bill? Nobody wishes to speak to the Bill and so the Mover doesn’t need to respond. So I put the question in its totality that this Council approves the Elections (Amendment) Bill, 2017, as amended, and recommends to the Governor that it should be enacted.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker –

Honourable Members, I’m in your hands. Are you ready to proceed with another Bill or shall we leave it until tomorrow morning? It’s gonna be a whole day tomorrow, if you want that, or I can continue? Those in favour of continuing, put up your hands, please? One, two, three, the others are not in favour. Alright. Okay, it’s a quarter to four now, so look for a long day tomorrow, because you’re gonna have the other Bills.

I want to say thank you very much to the Deputy Speaker for taking you through the Committee, that’s his first maiden journey through, thank you very much indeed, I think everything went well.

So. Honourable Members, do have a restful evening, come back full of spice tomorrow morning and we’ll have a lot of stuff, yes, you have to do the Motions and the Adjournment Motion. You’ll move, Sir?

The Hon. Roy Burke –

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the House does now adjourn until tomorrow morning at 10.00 am.

The Speaker –

Thank you very much. Is there a seconder?

The Hon. Dax Richards –

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

The Speaker –

The Motion is that this House adjourns until tomorrow morning at 10.00 o'clock.

Question put and agreed to.

Council Adjourned.