

Minutes of the Meeting of Executive Council held on Thursday, 11th June 2020 at 9.30am in the Council Chamber

Present: His Excellency the Governor (Dr Philip Rushbrook)
The Hon Chief Secretary (Mrs S O'Bey)
The Hon Financial Secretary (Mr D L Richards)
The Hon Attorney General (Mr A T Cansick)
The Hon C R Beard
The Hon A A Green
The Hon L A Henry
The Hon D F Thomas

In attendance: Clerk of Councils (Mrs C C Johnson)
Head of Corporate Support (Mrs C A George)
Head of News (Mrs K Yon)
Head of Governor's Office (Mr Greg Gibson)
Senior Press Officer (Mr Liam Yon)

Apologies: The Hon R K Yon

OPEN SESSION

79.1 Welcome

The Governor welcomed all to the meeting.

79.2 Appropriation Bill 2020, St Helena Government Budget for the Financial Year 20320/21 (ExCo Memo 46/2020)

The Financial Secretary introduced the Memorandum asking Council to consider and advise whether the Appropriation Bill, 2020 should be printed, published and presented as Government business at the next Legislative Council meeting.

The Financial Secretary explained that the budget settlement had been made known to SHG on 26 March 2020, which was too late to allow the formal procedures necessary to allow the budget to come into force on 1st April 2020; as a result, a rollover budget had been required for the period 1st April – 31st July 2020. The overall budget total was £49m for the 2020-21 financial year, with an additional £2.5m provided for COVID-19 related expenditure. Members noted that £750k had been earmarked from within the Consolidated Fund to enable a contribution of £250k towards essential IT infrastructure and up to £500k for Fisheries related expenditure.

Members expressed their disappointment that once again, SHG had been required to operate under a rollover budget scenario and were of the view that the detrimental effects of such

should be made known to the FCO, as they had initially been made aware of the disruption caused by rollover budget scenarios during the 2018 joint DFID/FCO visit. Members were informed that a three-year spending review of UK Government Departments would be taking place in September/October this year; such reviews usually take around 3 months to complete and as such, SHG may wish to brace itself for a further rollover budget scenario in 2021-22.

Other comments made about the process included late notification of the TC allocation in the budget submission, noting that this had been brought to the attention of the Chief Secretary who would address this going forward. The inclusion of £200k allocation of funding for possible changes to the Social Security system was welcomed. The difficulties in allocating adequate funding for demand led services within a given budget ceiling, such as those provided by the Adults and Social Care Directorate, were noted and it was hoped that the Population Census planned for early 2021 would result in more up-to-date information, enabling demand led services to plan ahead. It was also noted that efficiencies that might be identified as a result of the planned restructure of SHG Directorates could fund service areas that might currently be under-resourced in the future.

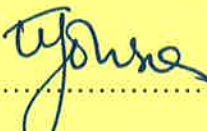
Members noted that it would be important to closely monitor revenue received throughout the year, as the COVID-19 pandemic would, for example, impact the level of Customs duties received during the year and impacts of reductions in revenue collections would make an impact.

Following discussion, Council advised and the Governor agreed, that the Appropriation Bill, 2020 should be printed, published and presented as Government business at the Legislative Council meeting being held on 26 June 2020.

(Action: Clerk of Councils)

79.3 Any Other Business

There was no other business to discuss in Open Session.


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Clerk of Councils
28.07.20


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Governor


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Date