



Economic Development Committee (EDC) Minutes

Date: 23 April 2020

Venue: Council Chamber

Time: 09.00 am

Present:

Chairman	Hon Lawson Henry
Members:	Hon Cruyff Buckley
	Hon Clint Beard
	Hon Gavin Ellick
	Hon Miss Christine Scipio
	Hon Financial Secretary, Mr Dax Richards
	Deputy Financial Secretary, Mr Nicholas Yon
	Director of Enterprise, Mr Robert Midwinter
	Director ENRPD, Mr Darren Duncan
	Chief Economist, Mrs Nicole Shamier

Secretary Miss Anita Legg

In Attendance: Senior Economist, Mrs Amanda Curry Brown
Economic Development and Prosperity Advisor, Mr Karan Garcha
Director of Tourism, Mrs Helena Bennett (Item 37.3 & 37.4)
Statistical Commissioner, Mr Neil Fantom (Item 37.3)
Statistician, Miss Justine Joshua (Item 37.3)

OPEN SESSION

37.1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting, including one member of the public who was present. The Chairman informed members that items 9 and 10 on the closed agenda would be deferred until further notice.

37.2 Declaration of Personal Interest

Clr Scipio declared her interest in respect of item 5, her father being a registered part time farmer. No other personal interests were declared.

37.3 Presentation on Tourist Numbers by Statistical Commissioner & Director of Tourism

The Statistical Commissioner delivered a presentation on Visitors to St Helena, a copy of which had been circulated to members; the Director of Tourism followed with a presentation on St Helena Air Visitors Departure Survey and the following key points arose from discussion:

- In response to a query on the majority of passengers that had travelled through Johannesburg in February and how badly was it impacted by Covid-19, the Statistical Commissioner agreed to analyse where passengers were travelling from, although he felt more data was needed. It was deemed there was no impact from Covid-19 during February but a difference had started to show in March.

Action: Chief Economist/ Statistical Commissioner

- Although it seemed that internet and phone expenses were low, it was assumed most of these costs were covered in the overall accommodation fee.
- EDC had stressed previously that the tourism website needs to be linked to other websites. However the DoT advised the site was to be rebranded, taking these comments on board.
- The DoT agreed to circulate information on how people first learn about St Helena.

Action: Director of Enterprise/ Tourism

The Chairman thanked attendees for their presentation and Statistics Officers then left the meeting.

37.4 ESH/Tourism Updates to EDC, March 2020 – Director of Enterprise / Director of Tourism

The March progress and performance report had been circulated for advance reading and following a brief overview, the Director of Enterprise (DoE) invited comments:

- CTO Conference – the DoE recognised the conference was being arranged during the height of summer however advised this was just a provisional date. December and January would not be suitable due to work being carried out on the cable, plus the expected influx of visitors. ESH was also unable to commit to any activities beyond March 2021.
- Dark Skies Legislation – EDC noted there had been snags with the application for dark skies status due to proposed changes with the legislation. The Director of ENRPD explained why it was more appropriate to amend the Land Planning and Development Control Ordinance rather than the Environmental Protection Ordinance as originally planned. A decision was now awaited from the Deputy Chief Secretary, following which this matter would then go back to the ENR Committee for discussion. It was also suggested a joint meeting with EDC should be held.

Action: Deputy Chief Secretary/ Director ENRPD

- Picnic Facilities – the Director of Tourism agreed to check whether any picnic tables were available for the High Peak area.

Action: Director of Enterprise/ Tourism

- Covid-19 – The Director of Tourism explained the impact on the tourism industry and actions being taken. In terms of putting the island up as a virus-free case study, it was noted St Helena would be on the Morning Show TV the next week; Journalists were also interested in St Helena.
- Upgrade on Tourism Website – It was confirmed the ESH website would also receive an upgrade, regardless of the project end in 2021.
- International Photographer – The Director of Tourism explained this was a one off contract as it is difficult to attract local photographers in coming forward, particularly in allowing full user rights to ESH.

The Chairman took the opportunity to thank the Chief Executive for Economic Development, Mrs Dawn Cranswick for her support to EDC, as she had left the island for medical reasons; EDC wished

her well for the future. He thanked the Director of Tourism for her participation and she left the meeting.

37.5 Approval of Change to the Agriculture Water Subsidy Policy – Director ENRPD

The Director of ENRPD presented the memorandum to amend the agricultural water subsidy administered by the Agriculture Division. The aim of the policy was to reduce the impact on agricultural production as a result of increases in Connect St Helena's water tariffs. The policy applies to users of agricultural untreated water and agricultural treated water.

Following discussion, EDC approved the proposal to pay a water subsidy of £0.37 for agricultural untreated water and £0.74 for agricultural treated water, this would be backdated from 1st April 2020.

It was confirmed this was policy and could be accommodated within the ENRPD budget therefore was not necessary to be presented to Executive Council.

Action: Director ENRPD

37.6 Confirmation of Open Minutes held on 26 March 2020

The minutes of the open meeting held on 26th March 2020 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

37.7 Matters Arising

37.7.1 Dark Skies (Joint Meeting with ENRC)

An update had been given by the Director of Tourism (as above).

Action: Deputy Chief Secretary/ Legislative Drafter

37.7.2 Review of Fees and Charges 2020/21

EDC noted, the fees and charges on Trade Marks and Companies would be taken forward to the next Executive Council.

Action: Deputy Financial Secretary

37.7.3 Port Regulations

Action: Deputy Financial Secretary – Ongoing

37.8 Approval of the Policy Statement on the Licensing of Permanent Earth Stations (pes) and Receive Only Earth Stations (roes) Memo 8/2020 – Chief Economist

The Chief Economist advised this document would be presented to Executive Council the next week.

Action: Chief Economist

There being no further business, this session of the Agenda was concluded and the Committee moved to closed session.

Minutes Approved: *L. Kelly*
Chairman

Date: *18-05-20*