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Memorandum for Executive Council

SUBJECT

Trans-Atlantic Slave Memorial – St Helena, Master Plan

Memorandum by the Chief Secretary

ADVICE SOUGHT

Executive Council is asked to:

- 1) Ratify the Trans-Atlantic Slave Memorial – St Helena, Master Plan (Annex A) for adoption by St Helena
- 2) To consider the recommendations proposed within the Master Plan:
 - i. St Helena Government (SHG) to designate the No.1 Building in Rupert's Valley as the Interpretation Centre for the Trans-Atlantic Slave Memorial – St Helena
 - ii. For SHG to formally recognise the Upper and Lower Burial Grounds as such, by designating plot numbers to each site
 - iii. For SHG to designate the Liberated African Establishment in Rupert's Valley as a National Conservation Area
 - iv. For SHG, Education Directorate to incorporate St Helena's slave history, in the first instance the Liberated African Establishment in the National Curriculum
 - v. For St Helena Tourism to develop the Trans-Atlantic Slave Route and Liberated African Establishment product for market

BACKGROUND & CONSIDERATIONS

- 3) SHG is committed to support the reinternment of 325 intact human remains that were unearthed in 2008 during the building of the Island's airport, as per the mitigation planned under the Environmental Statement for the Airport Project.
- 4) In 2018, the Liberated African Advisory Committee (LAAC) formed on the request of the Chief Secretary, presented a report to the Executive Council on '*Options for the Reinternment of the Excavated Liberated African Remains*'. The report recommended:
 - i. The reburial at the site identified in Rupert's Valley
 - ii. No subset of the remains should be retained for further study
 - iii. The artefacts (grave goods) unearthed during the 2008 excavation to form part of the reburial

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- iv. A memorial is created at that site
 - v. An interpretation centre is developed ideally at the No. 1 Building in Rupert's
 - vi. To explore the tourism potential/commercial benefits from telling the story
- 5) Executive Council endorsed the recommendations.
- 6) Following this, funding was provided by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to assist the LAAC to develop a Master Plan and Business Cases using the support of the 2008 Archaeologist, Dr Andrew Pearson and Project Coordinator, Annina Van Neel.
- 7) The 'Trans-Atlantic Slave Memorial' Master Plan was established to guide St Helena in respectfully laying to rest the excavated remains and to achieve a 'proper' memorialization of the cultural heritage sites associated with the Liberated African Establishment on St Helena. The Master Plan also provides guidelines on how the cultural asset should be treated for future development.
- 8) The project in its entirety is a massive task. It also identifies possibilities for further project development outside of Rupert's Valley. However to complete the immediate project, the LAAC broke the project into phases. Phases that can realistically be achieved.

Phase 1 – The immediate term.

- 9) The immediate term will focus on the reburial of the 325 articulated remains and disarticulated remains that were excavated in 2008. It is intended to rebury the remains in coffins, using St Helena's burial traditions. The artefacts found with the remains will also be reburied. The artefacts will be digitally replicated for future story telling.
- 10) The 2018 recommendation proposes that reburial should be carried out on the site identified (immediate south of St Michael's Church). However, it will be a few years before the site becomes available. This would significantly delay the reburial and the Remains will remain in storage. Therefore, the area immediately east of the Lower Burial Grounds has been identified as an alternative and favourable site. This will allow immediate reburial.
- 11) The cost to implement Phase 1 - £95,325

Phase 2 – The short to medium term.

- 12) Phase 2 will focus on the education, interpretation and awareness raising of St Helena being pivotal during the slave trade and the thereafter abolition of slavery; creating the Island's

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wealth of cultural resources. This includes development of the No.1 Building, an original physical asset as an Interpretation Centre.

- 13) The economic and educational opportunities available to St Helena as a result of being part of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Route is vast. St Helena will serve as a hub for global scholarly research, discourse and cultural tourism is achievable.
- 14) The cost to implement Phase 2 - £91,000

Phase 3 – The medium to long term.

- 15) Phase 3 will then concentrate its efforts on creating a memorial which accumulate the story of the Rupert's Valley as a Liberated African Establishment, the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and the Abolishment thereafter. The memorial will be situated on the site proposed by the 2018 recommendation (immediately south of St Michael's Church).
- 16) St Helena will capitalize on holding one of the world's well preserved primary locations for the abolition of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Route.
- 17) The cost to implement Phase 3 - £147,000
- 18) Landscaping will continue throughout the project to ensure these sites are given the appropriate respect due to the community cemeteries.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 19) Executive Council is not being asked to endorse the costings provided in the Report nor is it being asked to allocate or approve funding to implement these recommendations in this decision. The LAAC in collaboration with SHG and other entities will need to develop a fund raising strategy in order to raise the funding required to implement the recommendations.
- 20) The cost to implement phase 1 is estimated to be £95,325, phase 2 to be £91,000 and phase 3 to be £147,000. A review of the costs in the masterplan provided the following comments:
 - i. Due to the costs in the plan being high level estimates, it is recommended that a contingency cost be added to these estimates. We would consider 60% contingency uplift prudent if a survey has not been completed, or a 20% contingency uplift once detailed designs have been completed.
 - ii. The Master Plan authors are encouraged to undertake a survey of Building Number 1. It is unlikely that repointing and roof replacement would add significantly to the costs. It

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therefore may be more costly than building new, or choosing an alternative building. However, it is appreciated that there are other reasons why Building Number 1 may be preferred, for example its historic significance.

iii. Utility/running costs are unlikely to be negligible.

- 21) The plan states that it is intended for the Interpretation Centre to become the responsibility of the Museum of St Helena, therefore staffing costs will not be a consideration for SHG.
- 22) The team may need to reconsider an entry fee for the project to be economically sustainable. Cape Town's Slave Lodge museum costs R30 (about £2 for adults). Liverpool's international slavery museum does not charge admission (requires donation) but they are largely funded by the UK based Heritage Lottery Fund. Unfortunately the fund is now closed to new applicants, and it was for UK mainland projects only.
- 23) An initial check against the Rupert's Wharf development plans does not show that there would be infringement on the development of the Port Facility and industrial park at Rupert's Valley as a result of the designation of the sites. This cohesion is thanks to consultation on the designs leading to complimentary plans. However, the EDIP project team should be formally consulted.
- 24) It is believed that both conservation of St Helena's history and development for the future can be carried out harmoniously within Rupert's Valley.
- 25) The project itself could deliver economic benefits for St Helena through the offering of cultural research and heritage tourism, enhancing the tourist experience and attracting new visitors. There is an opportunity for St Helena to develop its diaspora tourism further beyond the current St Helenian diaspora. As part of this project there is potential to extend diaspora tourism to the descendant and African communities that are wanting to follow this story through the middle passage.
- 26) The inclusion of a garden may also improve wellbeing of residents and employees in Rupert's Valley.
- 27) It may be prudent for the Master Plan to consider future expansion of exhibit space beyond the small Building Number 1 floor space, if it proposes to be, as the Plan states, 'a world class interpretation centre that addresses the complex issues surrounding slavery and Abolition, ensuring its legacy will never be forgotten'. However, expansion could be undertaken after the first three phases are complete.

ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

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CONSISTENCY WITH INVESTMENT POLICY PRINCIPLES

28) The Trans-Atlantic Slave Memorial, Master Plan is in line with the investment policy principles. The project aims to maximise the economic benefit.

PUBLIC/SOCIAL IMPACT

29) The social impact will be extremely positive.

30) The excavated remains is a highly emotive subject by both the local community, international St Helena diaspora and interested parties. Endorsing this Master Plan will demonstrate SHG's intent for, and commitment to, reburial of the excavated remains and honouring this important historical story.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

31) The impact on the natural environment will be minimal, there will be no scarring of the landscape with the proposed project or adverse impact on endemic flora and fauna.

32) Efforts are currently being made to provide soft landscaping to the burial grounds, which will enhance the visual impact.

33) The overall aim of the Master Plan is to recognise a part of St Helena's cultural environment and to designate and physically demarcate an area of outstanding heritage and cultural value.

PREVIOUS CONSULTATION/ COMMITTEE INPUT

34) The Master Plan draws on the knowledge and skills of the LAAC. Consultation was carried out with Dr Andrew Pearson, the leading archaeologist from the 2008 excavation and cultural expert Mrs Peggy King-Jorde who carried out a similar project with the New York African Burial Grounds.

35) Public engagement sessions were held at St Michael's Church, Rupert's Valley and the Museum, Jamestown to discuss the principles of the Master Plan.

PUBLIC REACTION

36) It is anticipated that this Master Plan will gain a very positive public reaction. As said in public impact, the subject is poignant and the time elapsed since excavation adds to the urgency for which respectful reburial would be welcomed by the public.

PUBLICITY

37) It is anticipated that the decision of the Executive Council will be covered in a media briefing.

38) For fund raising purposes a public launch including the creation of a web portal and promotion on social media to ensure the wide distribution and dissemination of the Master Plan.

SUPPORT TO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

39) This project supports the strategic objective 3 – Altogether wealthier.

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LINK TO SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN GOALS

- 40) This project supports:
1. Increase Exports
 3. Attract Visitors and Increase Tourism; by increasing the product offering to visitors
 6. Sustain and improve our natural capital; by enhancing St Helena's historical and cultural assets.

SOB

OPEN/CLOSED AGENDA ITEM

- 41) Recommended for the Open Session.

Corporate Support
Corporate Services

02nd October 2020

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