

OPEN AGENDA

Copy No:

No: 83/2020

Memorandum for Executive Council

SUBJECT

Draft Water Resource Strategy

Memorandum by Chairman of Environment and Natural Resources
Committee

ADVICE SOUGHT

1. Executive Council is asked to consider and advise whether the final draft of the Water Resource Strategy for St Helena (Annex A) should be endorsed.

**BACKGROUND &
CONSIDERATIONS**

2. As laid out in the 10-Year Plan, St Helena Government (SHG) has an overall vision to ‘make St Helena a wonderful place to live, work, raise children, visit and to do business’. The purpose of this Water Resource Strategy is to contribute to the achievement of this vision, set by the 10-Year Plan, by ensuring that there is sufficient quantity and quality of water to support people to live, work, raise children, visit and do business on St Helena.
3. St Helena’s Climate Change Policy was endorsed in 2019. It outlines objectives to ‘ensure energy and water use per capita is maintained at baseline levels or better’ and to ‘identify and prioritise current and future risks to St Helena from weather related hazards, through consultation and regular environmental monitoring’. An aspect of Climate Change management is to reduce the risks and impacts of droughts on St Helena.
4. In December 2019 Legislative Council resolved: *that water security for St Helena be treated as a key priority, and requests that St Helena Government actively pursues development of an appropriate strategy to address both current water shortages and the likely future impacts of climate change.*
5. A Water Strategy Working Group (WSWG) was established to oversee the delivery of a Water Strategy and Water Resource Management Plan for St Helena.
6. A draft Water Strategy has now been developed by the WSWG, with input from Connect Saint Helena Ltd, SHG’s Emergency Planner, SHG’s Infrastructure Consultant and a member of the ENRC amongst others.
7. The Draft Strategy was taken out for six-week public consultation to gather feedback from the public and stakeholders.

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8. Please see:
 - a. Final Draft Water Resources Strategy (Annex A)
 - b. Water Strategy Consultation Log (Annex B)
9. A summary of the predominant changes are as follows:
 - a. Recognition of the role of the Utilities Regulatory Authority (URA) and how they relate to the targets in the Water Resources Strategy.
 - b. Inclusion of an aim towards ensuring there is sufficient water for environment and ecosystem needs.
 - c. Inclusion of recognition of further water efficiency programmes SHG can do in their own buildings and in incentivising water efficiency across the Island.
 - d. Recognition of the work of the Peaks Implementation Plan.
10. The draft Water Resources Strategy was updated as a result of comments and endorsed by ENRC. Thereafter small changes will need to be made to the Utilities Services Ordinance to recognise the Strategy, and to require the URA to take the targets of the Water Strategy into account in their reporting.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11. The endorsement of the final Water Resource Strategy will lead to the development of the Water Resource Management Plan. It has been identified that this shall require resource to be undertaken, specifically in terms of consultancy support.
12. It is expected that the development of the Water Resource Management Plan will cost around £350k to £500k. The cost will depend on the scope and by requiring a cost per work package through the procurement process, this can help to achieve value for money and assist affordability.

ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

13. The funding will also need to be agreed as part of the budgeting process, and therefore the Policy should be endorsed with the proviso that budget has not yet been agreed.
14. By significantly reducing the likelihood that Connect will need to formally introduce water restrictions as part of the Stage 3: Serious Water Shortage responses, this reduces the impact to business.

CONSISTENCY WITH INVESTMENT POLICY PRINCIPLES

15. N/A

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PUBLIC/SOCIAL IMPACT

16. One of the targets within the draft Water Resources Strategy, recognising the remit of the URA, is to ensure that any price increases are affordable.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

17. During the development of the Water Resource Management Plan, the environmental impacts of actions and activities will be identified and assessed to ensure negative impacts are mitigated and positive impacts enhanced. Overall there is likely to be a net positive impact on the environment because one of the principles of the Strategy is ‘encouraging the sound management and protection of freshwater resources.’

PREVIOUS CONSULTATION/ COMMITTEE INPUT

18. ENRC agreed for public consultation on the draft Strategy to go ahead in their June 2020 meeting.

19. ENRC agreed the final draft Strategy at their November 2020 meeting.

PUBLIC REACTION

20. There is likely to be interest in this item by the public due to the 2019-20 and previous droughts having been a regular news item as well as impacting on the local community.

PUBLICITY

21. If endorsed by ExCo, the decision will be covered in the ExCo Radio Briefing following the meeting.

22. The Strategy will be uploaded to the SHG Website

23. Separate publicity (e.g. a Press Release) should be considered.

SUPPORT TO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

24. This paper supports the ‘Altogether Greener’ goal and Strategic Objective 7.1 Promote the sustainable management and use of natural resources and the environment.

LINK TO SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN GOALS

25. This paper is linked to the following SEDP Goals:

- Improve Infrastructure.
- Sustain and improve our natural capital.

IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY/ LEGISLATION

26. The WSWG had a discussion with the Chair of the URA, and they are aware of how they will need to take the Water Strategy into account when setting their targets.

CGB

OPEN/CLOSED AGENDA ITEM

27. Recommended for the Open Session.

Corporate Support
Corporate Services

4th December 2020

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