

OPEN AGENDA

Copy No:

No: 1/2021

Memorandum for Executive Council

SUBJECT

SHG Archives Lending Policy

Memorandum by the Chairman of the Social and Community
Development Committee

ADVICE SOUGHT

1. Council is asked to advise whether the attached SHG Archives Lending Policy (Annex A) including forms, should be approved for implementation.

**BACKGROUND &
CONSIDERATIONS**

2. The St Helena Government Archives “the Archives” was established in 1962 and houses an important collection of records, detailing the events in the history of the island.

3. The earliest collections are the:

- i. St Helena Records, also referred to as the ‘Consultations’, which dates from 1678 and comprises of 136 volumes.
- ii. Letters from England dates from 1804 and comprises of 31 volumes.
- iii. Letters to England dates from 1706 and comprises of 34 volumes.
- iv. Court Books dates from 1762 and comprises of 11 volumes.
- v. In-Letters from India, China & Cape of Good Hope dates from 1813 and comprises of 9 volumes.
- vi. Entry Books: Letters from England dates from 1673 and comprises of 16 volumes.

4. All of the above mentioned books are very important as they are the originals and hold the historical information relating to the daily life / decisions made during the time the island was under the East India Company rule.

5. The Archives collection includes also documents such as local newspapers, Gazette Notices, Legal Notices, Ordinances, Orders in Council, information about ships arriving at St Helena, Zulu Correspondence, Government reports, Hansards etc. The Archives also holds Registers of Births, Deaths and Marriages on behalf of the Diocese of St Helena.

6. Early last year the SHG Archives was approached to loan items from the collection for display as part of the Sir Hudson Lowe exhibition at Plantation House. This request highlighted the need for a formal lending policy to be developed by the Archives, as up until then, it was the informal non-written policy that no items in the collection were to leave the Archives once deposited in the

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Repository.

7. The attached Lending Policy was presented for consideration to SCDC on 9 December 2020 and approved subject to it being referred to Executive Council given the nature and importance of the various documents. The policy seeks to enable items from the Archives collections to be loaned for on-island exhibitions, subject to various conditions being met by the borrower. The policy covers matters relating to:

- i. Lending procedure
- ii. Costs to be met by the borrower
- iii. Security of premises where the exhibition is to be held
- iv. Environmental conditions of the premises where the items will be displayed
- v. Termination of loan and reasons for such
- vi. Acknowledgement of SHG Archives in exhibition material

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8. There are no financial implications associated with the implementation of the policy, as it would be administered by existing Archives staff.

ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

9. There are no significant economic implications associated with the implementation of this policy. However, the loan of historic documents for exhibition might have a spin-off effect by raising the profile of St Helena by any visitors to the island who might attend any exhibitions, possibly encouraging other visitors with specific historic interests to visit and see original documents. Whilst the policy stipulates that loans might be considered for on-island exhibitions only, Members might wish to consider potential economic benefits that might result from the loan of items outside of St Helena which might be of significant historical or cultural interest should such requests be forthcoming at any time.

CONSISTENCY WITH INVESTMENT POLICY PRINCIPLES

10. Not applicable.

PUBLIC/SOCIAL IMPACT

11. No impacts.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

12. No impacts.

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PREVIOUS CONSULTATION/ COMMITTEE INPUT

13. The policy was considered by the Social and Community Development Committee at its meeting held on 9th December 2020. It was agreed that the policy should be submitted to Executive Council for endorsement subject to a check being undertaken as to whether or not any of the Archives material was permitted under local law to be permitted to leave the Island. This has been looked into and the Customs and Excise Ordinance, 1997 provides that:

“PROHIBITED EXPORTS

1. Any article made in or imported into St Helena before 1st January, 1910, or any part of such an article, except with the prior written approval of the Governor in Council.”

14. The advice for the Attorney General’s Chambers as to whether or not this provision includes documents from the St Helena Archives is as follows:

“Neither the Interpretation Ordinance, 1968 nor the Customs (Export and Import Control) Regulations, 1988 - paragraph 1 of the Second Schedule [as per the extract above] - define what is meant by the word “article”. Regulations are not debated by the Legislative Counsel so reference cannot be made to Hansard to understand what was intended to be covered by the use of the word “article”. For interpretation in such a circumstance especially since the use of the word “article” is neither preceded nor succeeded by other words which could aid the interpretation of “article” by association, one would have to rely on the dictionary meaning of the word “article” and in this case, the meaning of the word “article” is wide enough to include archived documents which pursuant to the regulation cited would require the approval of the Governor in Council for export.”

15. It follows therefore that any request for a loan of material which pre-dates 1st January 1910, for overseas exhibitions, would require the approval of the Governor-in Council.

16. The SHG Custodian of Records, who is responsible for the day-to-day management of the SHG Archives service and maintenance of the historical records held there, drafted the lending policy and is therefore aware of the content; the Custodian of Records was present also at the Social and Community Development Committee meeting on 9th December when the policy was discussed.

PUBLIC REACTION 17. No adverse public reaction anticipated.

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PUBLICITY

18. Council's decision will be covered in the radio briefing following the meeting.

SUPPORT TO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

19. Links to strategic objective 6.1 "Ensure effective governance through efficient and effective systems and processes" and policy priority 6.1.2 "Protect SHG including employees and assets".

LINK TO SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN GOALS

20. No direct links to the Sustainable Economic Development Plan.

IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY/ LEGISLATION

21. This is not applicable for this Memorandum.

OPEN/CLOSED AGENDA ITEM

22. For discussion in the Open Session.

AAG

Corporate Support
Corporate Services

13th January 2021

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