

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE MEETING (OPEN SESSION) HELD AT 09:00HRS ON WEDNESDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2020, IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE HEALTH DIRECTORATE

Present:	Hon. Derek Thomas Hon. Anthony Green Hon. Russell Yon Hon. Jeffrey Ellick Dr. Roland Fasol Miss. Janet Lawrence Mrs. Helen Lawrence Mrs. Peta M Henry	Chairman Member " " Chief Medical Officer/Interim Director Interim Director of Health Deputy Director of Health Secretary
Apologies:	Hon. Brian Isaac	Deputy Chairman
Invited:	Miss. Kate Heneghan	HP & Social Marketing Lead (item 36.05)

OPEN AGENDA

37.01 Welcome & Apologies

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming all present and extended apologies on behalf of Cllr Brian Isaac. On behalf of Committee he advised that it had been pleasing to note Cllr Isaac's return to the Island, and eagerness to return to work, following his 14 day period of quarantine.

It was noted that there were no members of the public present for the meeting.

37.02 Declaration(s) of Interest

There were no 'declarations of interest'.

37.03 Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of the 'open' session of the Public Health Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 7 October 2020, were confirmed and signed.

**37.04 Matters Arising
Health & Safety**

The Chairman advised that Council would be responsible for prioritising bids put forward as part of the MTEF process and would essentially decide whether Health & Safety was a priority for St Helena. It was envisaged funding to move this piece of work forward, would emanate from this process.

Primary Care Facility (Sundale)

The Chairman gave an overview of discussion with Baroness Sugg regarding the demand for such a facility in St Helena. He confirmed having highlighted the fact that financial constraints was essentially the biggest issue, hence the need to minimise delays outside of this. Committee therefore agreed the Business Case submitted for the project in 2018, be updated. The need to pull together a concept design was considered advantageous and if approved, would be transformed into a full design. Committee was pleased to note Baroness Sugg's openness to further discussion and in light of this, asked that work be progressed as soon as possible. The IDoH undertook to take this forward.

Action: IDoH

National Health Insurance Scheme

It was noted that TC support was being sought for this project.

Proposed Amendment to Mental Health & Mental Capacity Ordinance

Cllr Green advised that an update from the AG's Chambers was awaited. In light of this, and the various delays in progressing the addition to the Legislation, the Chairman undertook to accompany Cllr Green to a meeting in an effort to take the matter forward.

Action: Chairman/Cllr Green

Update - Visiting Delegation from Mauritius

It was noted that there had been no further progress.

Medical Referrals Data

It was noted that an information paper would be presented in due course.

Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU)

The DDoH informed Committee that the relevant tender would be advertised once documents had been finalised. It was envisaged the time-frame for this would be 1 week. Anti-ligature equipment had already been ordered from the UK; as had a special window from South Africa. Committee was pleased to note this progress.

Drivers Licence for Over 70's

It was noted that it had not been possible for the SMO to provide feedback on the subject matter as scheduled. It was therefore agreed feedback be deferred to the PHC meeting to be held in December 2020.

Action: SMO

Spectacles

Committee was informed that feedback from the Optician had suggested the arrival of spectacles in St Helena was essentially as speedy as possible, given current world conditions. It was hoped this would improve following return to a state of normality.

37.05 Tobacco Control Legislation (Registered Dealers)

The HP&SML was welcomed to the meeting. She gave an overview of progress to date and advised that there was yet much to be done by way of engaging Merchants, to ensure they were aware of practical implications of the legislation once implemented etc. In light of this, the additional work to be done around clarifying composition of the legislation and ensuring all supporting mechanisms were in place, she considered it advantageous to defer implementation from 1 January 2021. In discussing this, Committee considered various options and agreed the legislation be progressed for submission to both Executive and Legislative Councils in January 2021, with a view to implementation at 1 April 2021. On behalf of Committee, the HP&SML was thanked for her attendance and left the meeting the meeting at 11:00hrs.

37.06 Covid-19 Update

The IDoH gave a PowerPoint presentation on Covid-19, which included statistical data and essentially 'what we know thus far'. She commented on what this meant for St Helena, based purely probability. This generated much discussion.

Committee was informed that all had essentially gone well following the October flight, which included voluntary testing of passengers upon arrival, initially to test resources, processes and procedures etc. The IDoH advised, however, that it was envisaged such testing would become mandatory moving forward. Committee supported this, having discussed the benefits to St Helena previously. The IDoH gave an overview of arrangements in place for arrival of passengers on the flight in November 2020, and advised that travel requests were being considered. The criteria for exemption from quarantine at Bradleys was discussed at length, as was concern from the public in relation to a recent case. It was clarified that each case was considered on a case-by-case basis and would have to meet at least one of the criteria for exemption, to qualify for such. Committee was given an overview of preparatory work for upcoming 'bubbles' (i.e. calibration flight) and the processes in place for these. The IDoH undertook to look at some form of publicity

37.07 Chairman's Update

The Chairman confirmed having been contacted by a number of patients awaiting orthopaedic surgery; and advised that he had subsequently spoken with the relevant Surgeon to determine cause of the delay(s). The surgeon had clarified the fact that surgical kit had been awaited and could not be transported as air-freight. The Chairman advised that in light of this, it would be advantageous to inform the public of the situation and the fact that Orthopaedic Surgeries were scheduled to recommence in January 2020. The IDoH undertook to arrange this.

Action: IDoH

37.08 Director's Update

The IDoH gave a comprehensive overview of staff-related issues within various areas of the within the Directorate, which included the following:

- Departure of Dr Charles on completion of contract. A replacement yet to be identified and unlikely to be available for travel on November's Charter flight;
- Dr Kamar had agreed to resume Clinical duties with assistance from Dr Roland on covid-related work;
- The Hospital Nursing Officer (HNO) had returned from a period of overseas leave and was scheduled to return to work following a 14 day period of quarantine; The Acting HNO would subsequently depart on overseas leave and return in January 2021;
- Charmaine Buckley had completed her studies abroad and had returned to St Helena as a qualified Dental Therapist;
- The Clinical Governance & Consumer Engagement Lead Practitioner (CG&CELP) had also returned from a period of overseas leave and was scheduled to return to work shortly;
- Locum Laboratory Manager was in place and would likely overlap return of the substantive Senior Biomedical Scientist in December 2020. Recruitment of a Haematologist was underway as the contract of Locum, Steve Dwyer, would expire shortly;
- Kyle Francis had joined the Pathology Department, following successful completion of his studies in the UK. Justine Yon had commenced her studies via distance learning and had been wished every success.
- The Environmental Health Section had been extremely busy, due to the core team having to double as Proper Officers, which included its own workload. Much training was underway.
- Recruitment was underway for an addition to the Mental Health team, due to upcoming departure of Clinical Psychologist, Tara Murphy in January 2021.
- The Pharmacy was in need of additional resources due to an increase in workload. Much discussion followed.

Additional bids for new posts put forward as part of the MTEF process were noted. Ongoing projects (i.e. weather protection for Ambulance) and the requirement for maintenance of various assets (i.e. clinics) was discussed at length.

37.09 Any Other Urgent Business

Covid-19 Staff

The IDoH confirmed the departure of two members of staff, recruited as part of the Island's covid-preparedness and advised that the recruitment of replacement staff was proving difficult. In discussing this, Committee was informed that recruitment efforts would continue, despite this. It was clarified that these resources were being used to fill gaps within the Medical Service whilst the Island remained covid-free; and in a number of cases, had included the transfer of skills to local staff.

Visiting Specialists (Ophthalmic Surgeon)

A Member sought confirmation as to whether there were plans for an Ophthalmic Surgeon to visit the Island shortly. In discussing this, the DDoH clarified that such specialists were not prepared to travel amidst uncertain times, due to the need to quarantine and subsequent need to be away from their day-to-day for an extended period of time. It was noted that whilst such a specialist would be required on island for a period of approximately two weeks, they would now be required for a period of +/- two months (including 14 days quarantine upon arrival in St Helena and on return to their country of residence). Committee was advised that irrespective of this, however, recruitment efforts would continue.

There being no further business for discussion, the Chairman thanked all for attending and closed the 'open' session of the meeting at 11:10hrs.

Signed: _____



Date: _____

16 Dec 2020