

OPEN AGENDA

Copy No:

No: 6/2021

Memorandum for Executive Council

SUBJECT

St Helena World Heritage Status

Memorandum by the Chief Secretary

ADVICE SOUGHT

1. Executive Council is asked
 - i) To consider the recommendations presented in the Business Case whether to continue the application for nomination for World Heritage Status;
 - ii) To consider the draft Terms of Reference for the World Heritage Steering Committee; and
 - iii) To advise whether, or not, to proceed with the next phase in the process of exploring St Helena's full application for World Heritage Status (WHS).

BACKGROUND & CONSIDERATIONS

2. In 2019, a Scoping Group was established to review St Helena's current position in relation to the Island's 2012 UK Tentative Listing for World Heritage Status (WHS) with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). UK Tentative Listing is the first step to designation of WHS.
3. The World Heritage Status Scoping Group Report, July 2019 was presented to Executive Council in February 2020.
4. The Report highlighted the potential Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of St Helena as a mixed site. The Group proposed that the most appropriate next step is to develop a full analysis of the implications and costs of WHS designation. Whilst designation is likely to bring additional benefits, the potential costs may also be high. Commitment to a full application should only progress with the full support of the community once there is a clear understanding of any obligations that WHS designation would involve. This next stage to be led by a World Heritage Status (WHS) Steering Committee.
5. Funding will be required to support the next steps in the process of developing a full analysis of the implications and obligations. The Scoping Group proposed that the WHS Steering Committee should take advice in the first instance on how the feasibility work may be funded (although early indications to the Group have been that World Heritage Status may be an area of interest

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for the Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office, as well as the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

6. The Group considered that specific expertise is needed to assist the WHS Steering Committee in determining social, economic and environmental impacts of World Heritage Site Status for St Helena.
7. Executive Council expressed interest to proceed with the process of developing the WHS application process and because funding will be required to support the next step in the process: developing a full analysis of the implications and obligations of the options, requested additional information from the Scoping Group about the costs involved and the requirements of a Consultant.
8. The Business Case: St Helena World Heritage develops the rationale and provide indicative costs for the recommended option to enable a WHS Steering Committee to be established and investigate the feasibility of proceeding with the process of developing a full application for nomination for WHS.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9. The Business Case presents the estimated costs of creating a World Heritage Status Steering Committee and the employment of an expert consultant. The costs are estimated to be £41k.
10. There is no budget provision for these expenses neither in this current financial year (2020/21) nor within the draft for the next 3 year budget (2021/22-2023/24), which is still subject to change. Funding will need to be identified before this work can be progressed. At this time the 2021/22 financial aid settlement it still unknown. The funding bid will need to be prioritised against other funding requirements identified through the MTEF process for this year, unless alternative project funding can be secured
11. The Scoping Group proposed that the WHS Steering Committee should take advice in the first instance on how the feasibility work may be funded although early indications to the Group have been that World Heritage Status may be an area of interest for the Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office, as well as the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

12. The economic impacts of World Heritage Site Status for St Helena are uncertain. In an assessment of the socio-economic impacts of World Heritage Site Status, UNESCO found 'directly attributing socio-economic impacts to the UNESCO World Heritage designation is complex. It has been demonstrated that it is rarely the designation itself which

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achieves the impacts, but particularly the actions and investments of the local stakeholders.’ The assessment includes examples of both positive and negative impacts of World Heritage designation.

13. The investment of £41k would provide Executive Council with a clear understanding of the social and economic impacts of progressing a full application for World Heritage Status. The process may stop there, depending on the findings and outcome of the work of the WHS Steering Committee, or continue if the evidence and opinion supported the continuation of the process to a full application.

CONSISTENCY WITH INVESTMENT POLICY PRINCIPLES

14. The investment supports:

4. Promote fair, consistent, timely and transparent decision making.

PUBLIC/SOCIAL IMPACT

15. Not known at this stage in the process. An SIA should be undertaken for the full application. This is fundamental to understanding whether or not progressing a full application is in St Helena’s best interest and will be determined by the work of the World Heritage Status Steering Committee with support from specific expertise.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

16. To be determined by the WHS Steering Committee with support from specific expertise, as a minimum this should include opportunities and obligations around preservation, conservation, planning, costs, and environmental benefits, resources needed, any legislative, regulatory or management changes required.

PREVIOUS CONSULTATION/ COMMITTEE INPUT

17. The Group presented the findings of the Scoping Group Report in February 2020.

18. In the preparation of the Report, the Group collated and synthesised the available information and knowledge; this included consulting experts both on and off-island to establish St Helena’s current potential OUV. Specific questions around the criteria for WHS were framed, and posed to individuals with expert knowledge of the Island, both local and international. A meeting was arranged with the expert’s on-Island to gather information, with the focus on fact-finding. Electronic communications facilitated the contact with international experts, and those based on-Island but unable to attend the meeting. The Group’s work of fact-finding around St Helena’s potential OUV, and stress-testing of the options now available to the island, has not led to a complete understanding. However, the process has synthesised and collated the available information and

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knowledge; and, has established or re-kindled dialogue with experts and interested parties who are ready to provide support, as necessary.

PUBLIC REACTION 19. There is likely to be public interest in understanding the implications and obligations that a World Heritage Status designation would involve.

PUBLICITY 20. In February 2020 it was intended that Executive Council's decision should be covered in a media briefing for the public. This did not take place as further information was required but will be covered following the decision of this meeting.

SUPPORT TO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 21. This paper supports the Altogether Greener goal and Strategic Objective 7.1 - Promote the sustainable management and use of natural resources and the environment, in that it focuses on the preservation of land, wildlife, marine and built heritage, as well as advancements in renewable power, utilising technology to deliver improved green social economic outcomes.

LINK TO SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN GOALS 22. While the impacts are uncertain, World Heritage Site Status for St Helena has the potential to support the SEDP goals to 3. 'Attract Visitors and Increase Tourism' and 6. 'Sustain and improve our natural capital'.

IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY/ LEGISLATION 23. N/A

SO'B

OPEN/CLOSED AGENDA ITEM 24. This memo is recommended for the Open Agenda.

Corporate Support
Corporate Services

2nd February 2021

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