

Minutes of the Meeting of Executive Council held on Tuesday, 2nd March 2021 at 9.30am in the Council Chamber

Present: Governor's Deputy (Mr Greg Gibson)
His Excellency the Governor (Dr Philip Rushbrook) - via Zoom
The Hon Chief Secretary (Mrs S O'Bey)
The Hon Financial Secretary (Mr D L Richards)
The Hon Attorney General (Mr A T Cansick)
The Hon C R Beard
The Hon C G Buckley
The Hon A A Green
The Hon L A Henry
The Hon D F Thomas

In attendance: Clerk of Councils (Mrs C C Johnson)
Head of Corporate Support (Mrs C A George)
Acting Head of News (Mr L Yon)

OPEN SESSION

97.1 Welcome

The Governor's Deputy opened the meeting by welcoming all present and advising that Governor Rushbrook would be dialling in from Plantation House on Teams.

97.2 St Helena World Heritage Status (ExCo Memo 6/2021)

Dr Rebecca Cairnswicks, who led the World Heritage Status Scoping Group, was in attendance for this item of business.

The Chief Secretary presented the Memorandum asking Executive Council:-

- 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).

The Chief Secretary provided Members with some background advising that this was a continuation of work that had started a few years ago and a scoping report was produced in 2020 and Members had requested additional information. The Options were listed in Annex A of the Memorandum and Option 3 was the preferred option; the Chief Secretary highlighted that the expert advice would come at a cost and no finances had been allocated so Members were asked to note that if endorsed, this would be subject to SHG's normal prioritisation procedures but there was a possibility that other funding sources could be

pursued. The Chief Secretary also drew Members' attention to the Business Case and economic implications in the Memorandum pointing out that there were likely to be some benefits and also costs.

Dr Rebecca Cairnswicks apologised for the time it took to bring the matter back to Executive Council but pointed out that the working group was a small voluntary one and she also clarified some additional details to Members.

Members also thanked the working group for their input and was supportive of Option 3, one Member expressed the view that if unsuccessful this matter should be brought back to Executive Council with another Member stating that he did not want the cost to be open ended; the Chief Secretary replied that the figures were based on current market rates. Members also voiced contentment that this matter was not rushed into and emphasised that St Helena does have quite a lot to offer on the Heritage side and the burial of the Liberated African remains is a pre-requisite.

One Member questioned whether we were time-bound and if the opportunity would be lost if a decision was delayed; Dr Rebecca Cairnswicks confirmed this was the case, advising that questions would be asked at a political level and the route progressed methodically stressing also the importance of local buy-in.

The Chief Secretary thanked and acknowledged the steering group's work and tenacity.

Following discussion, Council advised and the Governor's Deputy agreed, that the next phase in the process of exploring St Helena's full application for World Heritage Status (WHS) should progress with Option 3 as the preferred option but if funding for this proved difficult, then the matter should be brought back to Executive Council for further debate.

(Action: Hon Chief Secretary/Clerk of Councils)

97.3 Second Supplementary Appropriation 2020/21 Bill, 2021 (ExCo Memo 9/2021)

The Head of Finance Services, Miss Connie Stevens, was in attendance for the item of business.

The Chairman of the Finance Committee presented the Memorandum asking Executive Council to note the draft Supplementary Estimates and to consider and advise whether the Second Supplementary Appropriation (2020/21) Bill, 2021, should be printed, published and presented as Government Business at the next formal meeting of Legislative Council to be held on 19 March 2021; and Subject to Legislative Council approving the Second Supplementary Appropriation (2020/21) Bill, 2021, to consider and advise whether the Governor should approve the Withdrawal Warrant to fund the Supplementary Estimates for 2020/21.

The Chairman of the Finance Committee also provided some additional background for Members and explained in detail the financial implications.

Members were content to give their support noting that this had been discussed at various meetings and were pleased to note that this would be financed from existing budget allocation but raised concerns that there still appeared to be some weaknesses in the system because some Directorates were spending funds in excess of their budget allocation. They also

mentioned the overspends on the Information Technology Recharges and in particular Members felt that the budget for Children and Adult Social Care Directorate did not reflect the true cost of living expenses, they also noted the problems with staffing in that Directorate and the issues with the laundry services contract were also raised.

The Chairman of the Social and Community Development Committee (SCDC) pointed out that going forward with a Rollover budget would not resolve current problems because this particular Directorate needed more support and was a demand led service; the Financial Secretary replied that there was a need to recognise the ageing demographics and confirmed that the Rollover budget would come with some challenges for demand led services but he gave assurances to the Chairman of SCDC that he would address the shortfall.

(Action: Hon Financial Secretary)

One Member also raised the importance of having consistency with regard to layouts and templates of financial reports so that there is some synergy along with the way as financial information is communicated to Committee Members; the Financial Secretary gave a commitment that with effect from the 1st April all Directorates would use the same reporting templates.

(Action: Hon Financial Secretary)

Following discussion, Council advised and the Governor's Deputy agreed, that the Second Supplementary Appropriation (2020/21) Bill, 2021, should be printed, published and presented as Government Business at the next formal meeting of Legislative Council to be held on 19 March 2021 and that the Governor should approve the attached Withdrawal Warrant to fund the Supplementary Estimates for 2020/21.

(Action: Hon Financial Secretary/Clerk of Councils)

97.4 Confirmation of Open Session Minutes of 19 January 2021

The minutes of the open session of the 19th January 2021 were confirmed.

97.5 Matters Arising from the Open Session Minutes

97.5.1 (94.2) SHG Archives Lending Policy (ExCo Memo 1/2021)

The Chairman of the Social Community Development Committee (SCDC) confirmed that the item was referred back to his committee and various points debated following which, agreement was made to strengthen the Policy and also to conduct limited consultation with those who had made objections/recommendations. This would then be incorporated in an updated memorandum which would be re-presented to SCDC and brought back to Executive Council.

97.6 Confirmation of Open Session Minutes of 26 January 2021

The minutes of the open session of the 26th January 2021 were confirmed.

97.7 Matters Arising from the Open Session Minutes

There were no Matters Arising from the Open Minutes.

97.8 Any Other Business

97.8.1 Closure of Fish processing plant

The Hon Lawson Henry raised the issue of the closure of the fish processing plant for one week which would now mean that one could only sell whole fish, he highlighted that there should have been an opportunity to allow fish to be processed 2 – 3 times a week and also mentioned the lack of dialogue with Members on the issue. The Chief Secretary responded and advised that she had asked the fish factory to look at the distribution of ice during the closure and this work was originally occurring at weekends but mobilisation was an issue so the full closure considered more effective and advised Members that reverting to additional working hours would come at a cost. The Hon Lawson Henry reiterated there was no publicity and these projects must be planned and in addition there is no option of buying local frozen fish. The Chief Secretary advised that she would investigate the possibility of alternative arrangements.

(Action: Hon Chief Secretary)

97.8.2 Changing of Executive Council meeting dates

The Hon Clint Beard questioned the numerous occasions that the Executive Council meeting originally planned for the 16th February 2021 had changed and whilst acknowledging that flexibility was essential he also pointed out that having a set meeting time and receiving the papers on time was equally important. The Governor's Deputy agreed with the importance of ensuring all the papers were distributed to Members on time. The Chief Secretary said the meeting had been deferred three times with the late papers originated from the Finance Committee which had met to consider them on 24th February.

97.8.3 Triathlon on 28th February 2021

The Hon Clint Beard advised that he had spoken to the Hon Cruyff Buckley about the triathlon on Sunday because he had observed all the bicycles riding through Jamestown and whilst he had been informed by the Hon Cruyff Buckley that this had been approved, he was surprised to see some riders without helmets or any marshals in place; the Chief Secretary advised that this should be addressed with the event organisers.

97.8.4 Letter in the newspaper

The Hon Clint Beard expressed concerns regarding the letter in the newspaper from Paul Marshall and questioned why they were not provided with a more detailed level of information on which to make a decision and he hoped a potential Investor for the Island was not lost; the Chief Secretary reminded Members that they had made the political decision on the prioritisation listing and also pointed out the importance of

those wanting to travel ensuring their forms are correctly filled in because this is sometimes an issue and this could have an impact on whether or not one is granted a ticket. Members reiterated strongly the need for the correct information and rules to be publicised for all. The Governor's Deputy suggested that it would be prudent to provide clarity on the travel rules and criteria to avoid any misunderstanding. The Governor added that the long term entry permit is ambiguous and recommended that the Incident Executive Group discuss this at their next meeting.

97.8.5 Arrival of Daniel Rodgett

The Governor's Deputy advised that Daniel Rodgett, the 6 month Development Representative arrived on the February flight.

There was no any other business for discussion in Open Session.

P. Rastbarmh

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Governor

A. Johnson
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Clerk of Councils

18.03.21

19-3-21

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Date

