



Economic Development Committee (EDC) Minutes

Date: 28 January 2021

Venue: Council Chamber

Time: 09.00 am

Present: **Chairman** Hon Lawson Henry
 Members: Hon Gavin Ellick
 Hon Clint Beard
 Hon Cyril Leo
 Hon Miss Christine Scipio
 Deputy Financial Secretary, Mr Nicholas Yon
 Chief Economist, Mrs Nicole Shamier
 Director of Enterprise, Mr Robert Midwinter

Secretary Miss Anita Legg

In Attendance: Senior Economist, Mrs Amanda Curry Brown
 Director of Tourism, Mrs Helena Bennett (50.4)
 ESH Marketing and Communications Manager, Mrs Justine Green
 (Item 50.4)
 Tourism Officer, Mrs Shelley Wade (Item 50.4)
 Assistant Economist, Miss Marcella Mittens (Item 50.5)

Apologies: Members: Hon Financial Secretary, Mr Dax Richards
 Director of ENRPD, Mr Darren Duncan

OPEN SESSION

50.1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting. No members of the public were present. Apologies were received from the Financial Secretary, also the Director of ENRPD for the open session.

50.2 Declaration of Personal Interest

No personal interests were declared.

50.3 Declaration of Quarantine – ENRPD Memo 2/2021-22 – Director of ENRPD

The Economic Development Committee was asked to endorse the request to declare the Quarantine Station at Ruperts as a Quarantine Area, for the period 9th February to 9th March 2021 inclusive.

The Chairman explained this was not normal but was requested under Covid-19 circumstances however would await the arrival of the Director to explain further.

The Director later clarified that under normal legislation, the Animal (Diseases) Ordinance and Regulations, this would be exempt, as dogs would not need to quarantine but due to the possibility of Covid-19 being transmitted passively on the dog's coat, quarantine was needed as an extra precautionary measure for the island.

Concern was raised regarding financial implications however the Director was uncertain whether SHG would incur extra costs, as the full requirements were not known. However it was noted normal quarantine fees would apply, which is currently not at full cost recovery. It was also deemed too late to prevent the animal from travelling but lessons were learnt and it was agreed a notice should be issued for future cases.

EDC endorsed the quarantine area however felt that IEG should consider restricting permission for animals into the island.

Action: Director of ENRPD

50.4 ESH / Tourism Updates, December 2020 – Director of Enterprise/ Director of Tourism

The Director of Tourism was invited to present her quarterly update and she reported on the following: The Tourist Office was wrapping up projects and ensuring maintenance works and enhancements were completed by 31st March 2021. The Cloud Forest project had been handed over, with tourism related elements completed where possible. New consignments of Interpretation boards were expected on the February shipment and hoped to be in place by March. Unfortunately the Liberated African memorial signage needed a planning application approval therefore the timeline of March was uncertain. The Zulu memorial had been approved by the Planning Authority however Executive Council had decided to put this on hold until South Africa was prepared to join the venture; instead the temporary stone cairn used to mark the site was planned to be concreted for stability. The DoT also advised that a new International Tour Operator was planning on scheduling trips to the island for 2023. The office continued to support the Airport Directorate with repatriation flights and was subsequently trying to update all books before hand over. There was no progress on Dark Skies legislation, in order to complete the application and EDC expressed concern with this delay; the Chairman was requested to follow-up this matter.

Action: Chairman

Post Meeting Note:

The Chairman of ENRC later responded that it was anticipated the final draft legislation for Dark Skies would be presented at the next ENR Committee meeting.

Following a request at the November committee meeting, the ESH Marketing and Communications Manager gave a presentation on 'St Helena Tourism Marketing' and international promotion through the two offshore PR Agencies. In a related matter, EDC noted that a proposal would shortly be presented to the Finance Committee, asking FCDO for £345k for marketing, amongst other requests.

Next, the Director of Enterprise provided a brief overview on the December progress and performance report, which had been circulated for advance reading.

The Chairman thanked the Director of Enterprise and Tourism team for keeping the committee updated. The Director of Tourism and team then left the meeting.

50.5 Sustainable Economic Development Plan Mid-Year Progress Report 2020/21 – Chief Economist

The mid-year SEDP progress report had been circulated in advance for information and a presentation was given by Marcella Mittens, Assistant Economist, updating EDC on matters such as the fibre optic connectivity, communications, Company Registry, Covid-19 support packages, future exports to the EU, St Helenians living and working in the EU and products to boost the economy. It was clarified that the Investor Prospectus was still to be rewritten and there had been no occasions of air freight to Ascension in 2021.

Following discussion the Chairman thanked the Economist team for keeping the committee updated.

50.6 Confirmation of Open Minutes held on 26 November 2020 & 12 January 2021

The minutes of the open meetings held on 26th November 2020 and 12th January 2021 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

50.7 Matters Arising

50.7.1 Economic Development Committee Self-Assessment Checklist

The Deputy Chief Secretary had advised that the request for further amendments to the Council Committee (Rules of Procedure) Order, was to be discussed by the Chairpersons Assembly i.e. to extend the time for completing minutes to 14 working days, plus to amend the number of working days for papers to be circulated to a committee, to at least 5.

Action: Deputy Chief Secretary

50.7.2 Sugar Tax Review

EDC felt they still needed to see the results of the review in relation to taxes and health issues.

Action: Chief Economist

50.7.3 Options for the Re-supply of Chicks for Egg Production

The Director later reported on the ENRPD plan for replenishing chicks for egg production. Subject to being able to secure freight space on the flight in March from the UK, it was planned to import a consignment of 1000 day-old Lohmann Brown chicks from the UK, to support egg producers. If successful, the chicks would undergo the normal four week quarantine process at Rupert's.

50.7.4 Port Regulations

The Deputy Financial Secretary advised he had met with the Attorney General's Chambers last year but had heard no follow-up since.

Action: Deputy Financial Secretary

50.7.5 Draft Policy for Communications Networks and Services

The Chief Economist advised that following endorsement by EDC, the draft legislation was awaited from the Attorney General's Chambers.

Action: Chief Economist

50.7.6 Company Registry Policy

The Chief Economist advised that following endorsement by EDC, it was hoped the legislative amendments to the Income Tax Ordinance could be made ready by 1st April. Other changes would follow.

Action: Chief Economist

50.7.7 Merchant Shipping Bill, 2021

EDC noted this bill had been endorsed by Executive Council and would be presented to Legislative Council the next day, although there might still be some issues around fines.

Action: Chairman

There being no further business, this session of the Agenda was concluded and the Committee moved to closed session.

Minutes Approved: 

Chairman

Date: 2502-2021