

SHG ARCHIVES LENDING POLICY

Decision Sought

Committee is asked to decide whether:

- (a) the attached revised SHG Archives Lending Policy should be endorsed and forwarded to Executive Council for consideration; and
- (b) the policy requirement for documents to be insured when loaned should be amended to include a penalty clause requiring payment of a set fee by the organisation borrowing documents in the event of loss or damage of any documents, as explained in paragraphs 4 and 5 below.

Background and Considerations

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

The earliest collections are the:

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

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.

2. At the Social and Community Development Committee (SCDC) held on 9 December 2020, SCDC agreed, after discussion and pertinent comments being made, that the draft Archives Lending Policy should be referred to Executive Council for consideration. Executive Council considered the policy at its meeting on 19 January 2021 and at the same time noted late representations that had been received from members of the public, most of which objected to the proposal. As a result, the Chairman of the SCDC withdrew the Memorandum to allow Executive Council to consider the public representations and would undertake further consultation and report back to Executive Council in due course.

3. The SCDC further considered the draft policy at its meeting held on 10 February 2021, when the Chairman explained the outcome of the Executive Council discussion on 19 January 2021 and reviewed the 4 objections and 1 letter of support of the policy. Generally, Members supported the policy but requested additional strengthening of it.

4. The attached revised policy includes the suggestions made by SCDC and includes some further 'tidying up' of the document, which are shown as track changes. Members will note that the revised policy still includes a requirement for borrowers to reimburse SHG for the cost of insurance cover for any documents which are borrowed. However, since SCDC last considered the draft policy, Solomons Cell Captive has retracted its initial stance regarding indemnity cover, stating that as the documents are irreplaceable, SHG should accept that this is not a risk that can be transferred and SHG should therefore retain the risk.

5. The possibility of securing insurance cover from offshore companies could be explored; this however would likely be a long, drawn out process. SCDC may therefore wish to consider whether a penalty clause to cover any loss or damage whilst the documents are on loan, whereby the organisation borrowing the documents would be required to pay a set fee if any documents were to be lost or damaged, should be included. This would hopefully go some way to ensuring that borrowers understand the real value that SHG places on these unique historical documents

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with the implementation of this policy as its implementation will be administered by existing SHG Archives staff and the policy proposes cost recovery for activities associated with the implementation of the policy.

Economic Implications

There are no significant economic implications associated with the implementation of this policy.

Consistency with Investment Policy Principles

Not applicable.

Public/Social Impact

Unlikely to be any significant adverse public/social impact.

Environmental Impact

None.

Previous Consultation/Committee Input

1. SCDC first considered the draft policy at its meeting held on 9 December 2020. Executive Council considered the draft policy at its meeting held on 19 January 2021 and SCDC further considered the policy at its meeting held on 10 February 2021.

Public Reaction

There have been 4 objections received to the implementation of the policy, one of which was from the St Helena Heritage Society. There has been one letter of support for the policy received from the Director of the Museum of St Helena. All submissions have been reviewed by SCDC Members.

Publicity - No specific publicity considered necessary.

Support to 10-Year Plan: Altogether Wealthier

Central Support Service
8 April 2021