



PUBLIC CONSULTATION SUMMARY REPORT ON THE DRAFT IMMIGRATION POLICY

The Immigration Working Group, chaired by Councillor Derek Thomas held ten public consultation events, with three drop in sessions during the months of November and December 2020 for members of the public to provide their views and comments on eight key consultation points in the draft Immigration Policy. The key consultation points were:

1. It is proposed that persons in service of the Crown and their partners/dependents will become subject to the full range of entry controls. Currently, these individuals are exempt from specific entry controls.
2. It is proposed that individuals seeking to work on St Helena be required to acquire a Work Permit or sponsorship by an employer or approval to participate in a temporary employment scheme. This would replace the current arrangements where work for up to six months can be undertaken on a Short Term Entry Permit.
3. It is proposed that foreign nationals seeking work from any employer on St Helena, including SHG, hold a Work Permit or be sponsored by an employer. Future SHG employment would no longer be exempt from the requirement to obtain an Immigrant Employment Certificate.
4. It is proposed individuals who have lived on St Helena for four years be eligible to apply for Permanent Resident Status. This is consistent with the goals of the Labour Market Strategy.
5. It is proposed that a path to Fast Track Residency scheme be made available for high net worth individuals making contributions to the SHG treasury. This contribution will help SHG pay for public services. SHG is seeking feedback on the introduction and details of this scheme, including whether there should be an upper limit of participants approved each year.
6. It is proposed that partners of St Helenians be eligible to apply for St Helenian status after two years residency on-Island and all other applicants for grant of St Helenian status be eligible after six years of residence. Currently, partners of St Helenians are eligible to apply for St Helenian status after three years residency and all other applicants for grant of St Helenian status are eligible after five years.
7. It is proposed the Immigration Control Board is dissolved and professional Immigration Officers are responsible for immigration decisions. In the event a decision is challenged an appeal process would be undertaken by a judicial tribunal under the auspices of the Chief Magistrate.
8. It is proposed a small number of annual opportunities are provided through a further category of residency to encourage sustained investment in productive economic activities on St Helena.

2. Publicity

The public consultation ran from 2 November to 11 December 2020 (6 weeks). Each week a press release was issued that focused on a key consultation point. Reminders to the public about upcoming public meetings, drop in sessions etc. were also issued throughout the consultation period. All press releases were also uploaded to the SHG Facebook page and SHG website.

Hon Derek Thomas and members of the Immigration Working Group conducted 2 radio interviews on the draft Immigration Policy to publicise the consultation on the draft policy.

20 posters were printed and posted at various public places around the Island. The posters outlined the key consultation points and the strategic aims and objectives of the policy.

A PowerPoint presentation on the draft Immigration Policy was also shown on the promo TV channel.

The draft Policy was made available to the public in hard copy at the Customer Service Centre, Public Library, from the Castle Reception in Jamestown and could also be obtained from the Secretary, Nicole Plato. An electronic copy was available on the Public Consultation page of the SHG Website.

3. Public Consultation Meetings

Ten public consultation meetings were held on the draft Immigration Policy. In general, members of the public were happy with the proposed changes to the Immigration policy and expressed an interest in seeing the fast track scheme being developed more and consulted on with the public.

Please see below schedule of meetings held and the number of attendees for each.

Date	Venue	Attendees
Monday, 2 November	Longwood Community Centre	12 members of the public attended this meeting.
Tuesday, 3 November	Kingshurst Community Centre	10 members of the public attended this meeting.
Wednesday, 4 November	Silver Hill Bar	4 members of the public attended this meeting.
Monday, 9 November	HTH Community Centre	5 members of the public attended this meeting.
Tuesday, 10 November	Jamestown Community Centre	28 members of the public attended this meeting.
Wednesday, 11 November	St Michael's Church, Rupert's	5 members of the public attended this meeting.
Thursday, 12 November	Sandy Bay Community Centre	3 members of the public attended this meeting.
Monday, 16 November	Blue Hill Community Centre	7 members of the public attended this meeting.
Tuesday, 17 November	St Mary's Church, The Briars	6 members of the public attended this meeting.
Monday, 30 November	Guinea Grass Community Centre	6 members of the public attended this meeting.

Overall 86 members of the public attended the consultation meetings.

3. Drop-in Surgeries

Three drop-in surgeries were held in Jamestown. The first one was held at the Community College on Friday, 13 November 2020, the second one at the Jamestown Market on Friday,

20 November 2020 and the last one held at the Jamestown Museum on Friday, 27 November 2020. In total, 5 people attended these sessions.

4. Written Feedback

The public was invited to submit written feedback, to be sent to the Secretary in hard or soft copy. Feedback was received from 15 members of the public which included feedback from one Elected Member, Solomon's, the Equality & Human Rights Commission and the Immigration Control Board. Responses to all feedback will also be done.

Summary of Consultation

The draft immigration policy was well received, with the majority of the participants being in favour of the proposed amendments to the current Immigration Ordinance. A few of the public meetings generated some lively discussion, and the panel was on hand to respond to questions raised by attendees. The proceedings were recorded. The Chairperson of the Immigration Working Group will be responding to each written submission. All feedback will be collated and reviewed by the Immigration Working Group – should any amendments be required pursuant to feedback received, these will be applied prior to the draft policy being presented to SCDC.

Secretary
Social & Community Development Committee
12 January 2021