

Memorandum for Executive Council

SUBJECT

Excision of National Forest Land from the Government Forest Estate

Memorandum by Chairman of the Environment and Natural Resources
Committee

ADVICE SOUGHT

1. **Executive Council is asked to consider and advise whether the land parcels listed in the draft Legal Notice at Annex 1 designated as National Forest should be excised from the Government Forest Estate through variation of Orders 8 and 12 of 1955.**

**BACKGROUND &
CONSIDERATIONS**

2. Variation of Statutory Rules and Orders 8 and 12 of 1955 constituting land as National Forest is required through the excision of 9.51 acres of land within the Government Forest Estate.
3. Release of this National Forest land is required to allow the Crown Estates Section to:
 - a) support land requirements for the Hooper Campsite Project (5.04 acres);
 - b) take over land that is unproductive for forestry purposes (4.12 acres);
 - c) support a small amount of land required for bank stabilisation requirements for current residential properties;
 - d) meet land requirements to enable extension of Government Landlord Houses at Plantation Stables;
 - e) meet land requirements for their residential property reparcelation exercises.
 - f) provide additional land for Connect St Helena Limited to make improvements at their Levelwood Treatment Plant.
4. Registry details of the land parcels are attached at Annex 2.
5. A Report by the Forestry Officer is attached at Annex 3 and provides information with regards environmental consequences of the loss of forest, the associated forest value of the parcels and the consultation exercise to vary the forestry Orders through excision of the said parcels.

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FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6. There are no adverse financial consequences for the transfer of forest land as the land does not comprise forest plantations or trees of significant value through their conversion for sale of wood products. A positive financial impact is expected through land sales revenue generated by SHG through disposal of the land.

ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

7. This supports development of a Tourism product. Tourism is an export sector within the SEDP.
8. The Camp Site Project on the Thompsons Wood land parcel has already been awarded Approved Investor Status by the Investment Enabling Committee. The Camp Site Project is therefore considered to be in the interests of the Island in line with the Investment Strategy goals.

CONSISTENCY WITH INVESTMENT POLICY PRINCIPLES

9. Release of land to enable progression of a private sector Camp Site Proposal supports principle 1: 'Make Saint Helena a desirable and competitive destination to do business by removing barriers to investment'.

PUBLIC/SOCIAL IMPACT

10. A positive impact is expected as the disposal of the land will meet both business and residential needs.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

11. There is no significant area of tree cover that will be lost through excision of the attached parcels and new use of the land through its sale proposes to retain and improve tree cover.
12. The environmental impact of any development applications on the land parcels will be assessed through the development permission consultation process.

PREVIOUS CONSULTATION/ COMMITTEE INPUT

13. Executive Council agreed for the Thompsons Wood land to be excised at their 16 October 2012 meeting. However, in October 2020 it was identified that the required public consultation period necessary to vary the related Order was not undertaken at the time, and so was undertaken in November 2020 to January 2021.
14. The Environment and Natural Resources Committee approved the request for excision of the other parcels of land at Annex 1 at their January 2021 meeting.
15. The public was provided opportunity to comment on or make representations to the proposals to vary the above Orders through

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consultation periods provided in Government Gazette Notice No 125 dated 20 November 2020 and No 21 dated 26 February 2021.

- PUBLIC REACTION** 16. It is expected there will be a positive response to the proposal to excise the land as the disposal of the land will support business and residential needs.
- PUBLICITY** 17. If approved by Executive Council, the decision will form part of the ExCo radio briefing following the meeting.
18. A Press Release might also be desirable.
- SUPPORT TO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES** 19. The proposed excision supports the following National Goal/Objective: ‘Altogether Wealthier’: We are committed to a Crown Estates strategy to make obtaining Crown land easier.
- LINK TO SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN GOALS** 20. This paper is linked to the following SEDP Goal 5: Improving Land Productivity - Making use of derelict or underused brownfield land and changing use of existing property to provide space for business and residential development to thrive.
21. It is also linked to the SEDP Goal 3 – Attract Visitors and Increase Tourism – Encouraging the provision of tourist infrastructure required for a variety of visitor needs from hotels, restaurants and attractions serviced by a skills and customer focused workforce.
- IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY/ LEGISLATION** 22. The request to vary Statutory Rules and Orders is made under Section 12 of The Forestry Ordinance CAP 92, which states:
- (1) *The Governor in Council may, after consultation with the Committee and subject as hereinafter provided, amend, vary, or revoke, any Order relating to the constitution of land as National Forest, Dedicated Forest, or Protected Forest.*
- OPEN/CLOSED AGENDA ITEM** 23. Recommended for the open agenda.

CGB

Central Support
Service

30th April 2021

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