



# GOVERNANCE REFORM

**Update 1 May 21**

On 26 March 2021, Legislative Council passed a resolution endorsing the result of the Consultative Poll conducted on St Helena on 17 March 2021. The resolution further recommended that the Constitution be amended to change the governance system of St Helena to a ministerial system of government.

A Governance Reform Implementation Group has representation from the Governor's Office, Attorney General's (AG) Chambers, the Speaker's Office, the Chair of the Social & Community Development Committee (SCDC), the St Helena Government's (SHG) administration's Central Support Service and Press Office. The Group is now taking forward with the UK the negotiation on the constitutional changes needed for a new governance system. The Group is progressing six strands of work, and through a monthly update, the public will be made aware of progress against each strand.

## **STRAND 2 - REMUNERATION COMMITTEE**

The Governor has identified four suitable candidates to sit on an 'Independent Body', to recommend the future remuneration levels for a Chief Minister, Ministers, other Councillors, the Speaker and Deputy Speaker. The requirement for an Independent Body to make such a recommendation is detailed in section 72 of the Constitution. The membership of this Committee will shortly be published via the Government Gazette. The first meeting of the Committee is being planned for early May.

## **STRAND 1 - PROGRESSING CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT**

Proposed amendments to the Constitution have been drafted by the AG's Chambers following instructions from the Progress Committee. Details of the most substantial amendments were given to the public in the build up to the Consultative Poll.

The proposed amendments have been sent to the Foreign & Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO). A response is now awaited. In parallel to this a letter drafted by the Chairman of SCDC, Councillor Green, was sent to the Minister of State for the Overseas Territories in the FCDO, Lord Ahmad, advising the Minister of the resolution of LegCo to progress the Ministerial system. Confirmation has this week been received from Lord Ahmad giving approval for UK officials to commence detailed discussions with SHG on finalising the constitutional amendments.

## **STRAND 3 - REDRAFTING OF LEGCO STANDING ORDERS ETC**

The St Helena branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) is working with the CPA in the UK to advise on revising LegCo Standing Orders and the associated Code of Conduct required for a Ministerial system. Any new Standing Orders need to be made by Legislative Council and a new Code of Conduct will need to be approved by them pursuant to the Constitution. Discussions with the CPA are also underway for post-election training support to Councillors and Ministers.

## **STRAND 4 - ELECTIONS MONITORING AND TRAINING**

The UK CPA are willing to assist with Election Monitoring at the time elections are due to take place. This possibility will be pursued further at a later time.

## **STRAND 5 - ROOM FOR ACCOMMODATION**

Accommodation for Ministers within Directorates is being looked at as part of a wider piece of work regarding accommodation of St Helena Government Offices. Also, the space and accommodation for Councillors and Clerks at The Castle is being reviewed.

## **STRAND 6 - OATH OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

It has been proposed that an amendment is made to the Constitution removing the current Oath of Confidentiality. It is likely that such an amendment will only be acceptable to the FCDO if alternative safeguards for protecting sensitive information and documents are established. The Implementation Group will be considering alternatives in the coming weeks.