



# GOVERNANCE REFORM

**Update 2 June 21**

The Governance Reform Implementation Group continues to progress the key strands of work to take forward the constitutional changes needed for a new Governance system.

Below is this month's update on progress against each Strand including a new Strand which deals with Delineating seven new Post-election Representational Districts.

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

The Foreign & Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) has agreed the proposed amendments to the Constitution subject to final legal checks. A Motion to endorse the draft informing the proposed amendments to the Constitution of St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha was passed, subject to minor changes, by Legislative Council at their meeting on Friday, 4 June 2021.

The draft Order amending the Constitution can be viewed on the SHG website here: <https://www.sainthelena.gov.sh/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/23-St-Helena-Ascension-Tristan-da-cunha-Constitution-amendment-order-2021.pdf>

The draft Order has now been returned to the FCDO with the request that they progress it to the Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC) in time for the Privy Council to consider at their sitting in July.

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

A first draft of changes to the Standing Orders of Legislative Council and the Code of Conduct for Members of Legislative Council has been prepared by the Administration.

This draft has now been passed to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) for their independent views. Once the draft is returned by the CPA it will be sent to the Speaker for further discussion and input from Members of Legislative Council. It is hoped that Legislative Council will be able to formally approve the changes to the Standing Orders and Code of Conduct before its dissolution. These changes to the Standing Orders and Code of Conduct will only come into effect at the time of a Ministerial Government.

In addition, a Ministerial Code has been drafted and shared with the CPA for comment. Once returned by the CPA it will also be sent to the Speaker for further discussion and input from Members of Legislative Council. It is hoped that the Ministerial Code will be considered for formal approval at the first sitting of Legislative Council under a Ministerial system. The Ministerial Code cannot be approved until the first sitting as it can only be formally considered following the amendments to the Constitution.

## **STRAND 2 - REMUNERATION COMMITTEE**

The Independent Remuneration Committee comprises members Anne Dillon as Chairperson and Helena Bennett, Shayla Ellick and Paul Gasteen as members. The Committee held their first meeting on 7 May and have had several since then. Good progress has been made to date and the Committee is currently gathering information to inform a remuneration package for both the committee system and ministerial system. They are also meeting with a wide range of interested parties including Councillors, Portfolio Heads, Directors and other stakeholders to inform their decision.

It is expected the recommendations will be concluded by the end of June and will be laid before Legislative Council and published shortly after. A Bill will then be prepared in consultation with Members of Legislative Council which it is planned will be formally considered by Legislative Council before its dissolution. Pursuant to the Constitution the Bill cannot include levels of remuneration, allowances or benefits that exceed those proposed in the independent report.

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

This Strand remains on hold as it is currently too early to speculate an election date or if monitoring is required.

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

Accommodation for Ministers has been identified in the respective Portfolios and an area has been earmarked in the Castle for the Chief Minister and the Clerk and Secretarial staff. →

## **STRAND 6 – OATH OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

The Governance Reform Implementation Group is distinguishing between Ministers and other Councillors if or what confidentiality provisions need to be made. This is work in progress.

## **STRAND 7 – DELINEATING SEVEN NEW POST-ELECTION REPRESENTATIONAL DISTRICTS**

This is a new Strand which looks at options for post-election representational districts.

Currently there are eight electoral districts (constituencies), but to align with the seven Legislators of the Ministerial system, who will each be allocated a constituency, it was identified that that the eight districts should somehow be reduced to seven. The Statistical Commissioner presented a number of options for doing this. The Group will further discuss how this can be progressed and work up timescales for presentation to Members of Legislative Council.