

MINISTERIAL CODE FOR St HELENA

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MINISTERIAL CODE

1 MINISTERS

General principle

1.1 Ministers are expected to maintain high standards of behaviour and to behave in a way that upholds the highest standards of propriety.

1.2 Ministers should be professional in all their dealings and treat all those with whom they come into contact with consideration and respect. Working relationships, including with public servants, ministerial and Legislative Council colleagues should be proper and appropriate. Harassing, bullying or other inappropriate or discriminating behaviour wherever it takes place is not consistent with the Ministerial Code.

1.3 The *Ministerial Code* should be read against the background of the overarching duty on Ministers to comply with the law and to protect the integrity of public life. They are expected to observe the *Seven Principles of Public Life* set out at Annex A, and the following principles of Ministerial conduct:

- a. The principle of collective responsibility applies to all Ministers;
- b. Ministers have a duty to Legislative Council to account, and be held to account, for the policies, decisions and actions of their portfolios;
- c. Ministers have a duty to give accurate and truthful information to the Legislative Council, correcting any inadvertent error at the earliest opportunity. Ministers who knowingly mislead the Legislative Council will be expected to offer their resignation to the Chief Minister;
- d. Ministers have a duty to be as open as possible with the Legislative Council and the public, refusing to provide information when disclosure would not be in the public interest and/or legally or constitutionally constrained;
- e. Ministers should similarly require public servants who provide evidence to Legislative Council Committees (Scrutiny Committees and Public Accounts Committee) on their behalf and under their direction to be as helpful as possible in providing accurate, truthful and full information in accordance with the duties and responsibilities of public servants;
- f. Ministers have a duty to ensure no conflict arises, or appears to arise, between their public duties and their private interests;
- g. Ministers should not accept any gift or hospitality that might, or might reasonably appear to, compromise their judgement or place them under an improper obligation;
- h. Ministers must not use government resources for non-government purposes; and

i. Ministers must uphold the political impartiality of the Public Service.

1.4 It is not the role of the Chief Secretary or other officials to enforce the Ministerial Code. If there were an allegation about a breach of the Ministerial Code, the Chief Minister, having consulted the Chief Secretary, would determine the course of action to be taken with Minister in question. If the Chief Minister feels an allegation warrants further investigation, he or she may ask the Speaker's Office to investigate the facts of the case and/or refer the matter to an independent adviser on Ministers' interests appointed by the Governor.

1.5 The approach described in 1.4 would not apply if the allegation directly involved the Chief Minister or on initial examination appeared to be so serious that it breached a responsibility of oversight placed on the Governor in the Constitution. In either situation, the Chief Minister or Chief Secretary is obliged to refer the allegation to the Governor to determine the course of action to be taken.

1.6 The Ministerial Code provides guidance to Ministers on how they should act and arrange their affairs in order to uphold these standards. It lists the principles that may apply in particular situations.

1.7 Ministers are personally responsible for deciding how to act and conduct themselves in the light of the Ministerial Code and for justifying their actions and conduct to the Legislative Council and the public. However, Ministers only remain in office for so long as they retain the confidence of the Chief Minister. Politically, he/she is the ultimate judge of the standards of behaviour expected of a Minister and the appropriate political consequences of a breach of those standards.

1.8 Ministers must comply with the Code of Conduct for Legislative Council and any requirements placed on them by legislation.

2 MINISTERS AND GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

General principle

2.1 The principle of collective responsibility requires that Ministers should be able to express their views frankly in the expectation that they can argue freely in private while maintaining a united front when decisions have been reached. This requires that the privacy of opinions expressed in Executive Council and any other Ministerial forum, including in correspondence, should be maintained.

Executive Council and business in Ministerial fora

2.2 The business of the Executive Council and other Ministerial fora consists in the main of:

- a. questions which significantly engage the collective responsibility of the Government because they raise major issues of policy or because they are of critical importance to the public;
- b. questions on which there is an unresolved argument between directorates.

Collective responsibility

2.3 Collective responsibility is the internal process through which a decision has been made. Decisions reached by the Executive Council or Ministerial fora are binding on all members of these bodies. The individual views of Ministers or advice provided by public servants as part of that internal process should *not* be disclosed.

Decisions are normally announced and explained as a decision of the specific Minister concerned with a particular portfolio. On exceptional occasions, it may be desirable to emphasise the importance of a decision by stating specifically that it is the decision of the whole Ministerial government.

Ministers have an obligation to ensure decisions agreed in Executive Council, Ministerial fora and in inter-ministerial written communications are implemented.

Ministers should take special care in discussing issues that are the responsibility of other Ministers and consult with those ministerial colleagues whose responsibilities may be relevant.

2.4 Matters wholly within the responsibility of a single Minister and which do not significantly engage collective responsibility need not be brought to the Executive Council or Ministerial fora unless the Minister wishes to inform his colleagues or to have their advice.

No definitive criteria can be given for issues which engage collective responsibility. The final decision rests with the Chief Minister. When there is a difference between directorates, it should not be referred to the Executive Council until other means of resolving it have been exhausted. It is the responsibility of the initiating directorate to

ensure that proposals have been discussed with other interested directorates and the outcome of these discussions should be reflected in the memorandum.

Attendance at Executive Council

2.5 Executive Council meetings take precedence over all other Ministerial business apart from engagement with the Governor on matters relating to the Constitution.

It is understood that Ministers may occasionally have to be absent. Officials from a Minister's directorate cannot attend Executive Council meetings in place of a Minister. If exceptionally officials or advisers need to attend, the Chair of the Executive Council and Chief Secretary must agree attendance of officials in advance.

Publication of policy statements and consultation papers

2.6 Before a directorate publishes a policy statement (white paper) or a consultation paper (green paper), the Portfolio Director should consider whether it raises issues that require full collective ministerial consideration through the Executive Council and possibly other Ministerial fora. The expectation is that most such papers will need collective agreement prior to publication.

Executive Council documents

2.7 Ministers relinquishing office should hand back to the Secretary to Executive Council for disposal any Executive Council documents and/or other directorate papers in their possession.

2.8 On a change of Government, the Secretary to Executive Council, on behalf of the outgoing Chief Minister, will issue special instructions about the disposal of Executive Council papers of the outgoing Council.

Access by former Ministers to official papers

2.9 It is at the Chief Minister's discretion, if and by what terms former Ministers may be allowed access to official papers of the period when they were in office. Access where granted would be limited to former Ministers personally. The Governor may, at his/her discretion, override access to official papers relating to his/her reserved responsibilities under the Constitution.

The Law Officers

2.10 Law Officers must be consulted in good time before the Government is committed to critical decisions involving legal considerations.

2.11 By convention, written opinions of the Law Officers, unlike other ministerial papers, are generally made available to succeeding Administrations.

2.12 When advice from the Law Officers is included in correspondence between Ministers or in papers for the Executive Council, the conclusions may if necessary be summarised but, if this is done, the complete text of the advice should be attached.

2.13 The fact that the Law Officers have advised or have not advised and the content of their advice must not be disclosed outside Government without their authority.

Security of Government business

2.14 Ministers have an important role to play in maintaining the security of Government business. They should ensure they follow advice on confidentiality from officials and safeguard the information they receive. If in doubt about any particular arrangements, Ministers should, in the first instance, consult the Portfolio Director in their directorate for advice.

3 MINISTERS AND APPOINTMENTS

General principle

3.1 Civil service appointments must be made in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution to ensure the public service remains impartial and free from political influence.

3.2 The integrity of the recruitment process for public servants is the responsibility of the Chief Secretary acting on behalf of the Governor. Ministers have a duty to ensure that influence over public service and public appointments is not abused for partisan purposes.

Special advisers

3.3 Ministers may not appoint or co-opt personal special advisers or aides, whom by their nature would be outside of the public service, into paid or unpaid posts that create a demand upon or use of public service resources, facilities or properties.

4 MINISTERS AND THEIR DIRECTORATES

General principle

4.1 The Chief Minister is responsible for the overall choice and prioritisation at the policies level of policies for St Helena and the allocation of policy responsibilities between Ministers in charge of directorates.

Approval criteria

4.2 The Chief Minister's approval must be sought where changes are proposed that affect the allocation of the responsibilities for the discharge of ministerial functions.

4.3 The Chief Minister's written approval must be sought where it is proposed to transfer functions between Ministers in charge of directorates unless the changes are minor.

4.4 The Chief Minister's written approval should be sought for proposals to allocate new functions to a particular Minister where the function does not fall wholly within the field of responsibilities of one Minister, or where there is disagreement about who should be responsible.

4.5 Unresolved disputes between Portfolio Directors concerning the allocation of functions is the responsibility of the Chief Secretary, who in turn would consult with the Chief Minister on the allocations proposed to resolve the dispute. If a dispute involves one of the Governor's special responsibilities defined in the Constitution, then the Chief Secretary is obliged to consult with the Governor.

4.6 The Minister in charge of a directorate is solely accountable to Legislative Council for the exercise of the powers on which the administration of that directorate depends. The Minister's authority for a specific matter or range of matters is typically delegated to specific officials to implement. However, the Minister remains responsible for the consequences of any such delegation.

Arrangements during absence

4.7 Portfolio Directors should ensure appropriate arrangements are made to maintain continuity of business within a directorate when Ministers are absent from St Helena. A Chief Minister may under the provisions in the Constitution appoint an Acting Minister during a period of absence of a Minister.

Maternity leave and other extended absence by a Minister

4.8 The Chief Minister's prior approval should be sought for the arrangements for superintending the work of a directorate when the Minister in charge will be absent. Arrangements to continue to exercise a directorate's statutory powers should be ensured.

4.9 Ministers who wish to take maternity leave (of up to 6 months), or other extended absence from Council including paternity leave, must seek the permission of the Chief Minister. Where the Chief Minister agrees to such a request, the Minister must not exercise their functions as a Minister during their period of extended absence. A replacement Minister would be appointed by the Chief Minister to cover temporarily the ministerial responsibilities.

4.10 Where a Chief Minister wishes to take maternity leave (of up to 6 months), or other extended absence from Council including paternity leave, he or she must seek the permission of the Governor. The Governor would request the Chief Minister, Speaker, Executive Council Ministers and Attorney General to advise on the acceptability of the proposed temporary replacement Chief Minister. The Governor would seek to determine if the continuity of effective government can be maintained. Where such continuity of government cannot be assured, the Chief Minister and Ministers would be required to step down. Legislative Council would then be asked

to elect a new Chief Minister. If no Chief Minister could be identified by Legislative Council, then the Governor would be obliged to call a General Election.

5 MINISTERS AND PUBLIC SERVANTS

General principle

5.1 Ministers must uphold the political impartiality of the Public Service, and not ask public servants to act in any way that would conflict with their code of conduct. Ministers should be professional in their working relationships with the Public Service and treat all officials with consideration and respect.

5.2 Ministers have a duty to give fair consideration and due weight to informed and impartial advice from public servants, as well as to other considerations and advice in reaching policy decisions.

The role of the Accounting Officer

5.3 Portfolio Directors hold a delegation as the responsible officer (i.e. a Directorate Accounting Officer) for the proper financial management of their directorates. This is a personal responsibility for:

- i) the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which he/she is responsible;
- ii) keeping proper accounts;
- iii) for the avoidance of waste and extravagance; and
- iv) the efficient and effective use of . .

5.4 The Financial Secretary is a Portfolio Director. He or she is the ultimate Accounting Officer for the overall management and control of Government finances. Other Portfolio Directors, in the management of their delegated responsibilities, must abide by the financial directions and instruction issued by the Financial Secretary. The Accounting Officer and Portfolio Directors answer personally to the Public Accounts Committee on relevant financial matters. Within the framework of ministerial accountability to Legislative Council, Ministers retain political responsibility for the policies, actions and conduct of their directorates.

5.5 Accounting Officers have a particular responsibility to see that appropriate advice is tendered to Ministers on all matters of financial propriety and regularity and more broadly, considerations of prudent and economical administration, efficiency and effectiveness and value for money.

5.6 If a Minister in charge of a directorate contemplates a course of action that would involve a transaction that the Accounting Officer considers would breach the requirements of propriety or may be viewed as novel or contentious, the Accounting Officer will:

- i) set out in writing his/her objections to the proposal;
- ii) give the reasons for the objection; and

- iii) be under a duty to inform the Governor, Chief Secretary and Chief Auditor should the advice be overruled.

5.7 If the Minister decides nonetheless to proceed, the Accounting Officer will seek a written instruction from the Minister to take the action in question. The Accounting Officer is obliged to comply with a Minister's written instruction and send relevant papers to the Governor, Chief Secretary and Chief Auditor. A similar procedure applies where the Accounting Officer has concerns about whether a proposed course of action offers value for money. This notification process enables the Public Accounts Committee to see that the Accounting Officer does not bear personal responsibility for the actions concerned.

5.8 Senior Responsible Owners/Project Managers of the major projects are expected to account to the Chief Secretary for the operational decisions and actions they have taken to deliver the projects for which they have personal responsibility. In turn, the Chief Secretary should ensure the relevant Ministers are informed of any significant issues. This line of accountability relates to implementation not policy development.

5.9 Former Accounting Officers and Senior Responsible Owners may be invited to return to give evidence to a Scrutiny Committee and the Public Accounts Committee on matters for which they were previously responsible. Where a Committee wishes to take evidence from a former Accounting Officer or Senior Responsible Owner, the request should set out in writing a clear rationale for doing so.

6 MINISTERS' POLITICAL INTERESTS

General principle

6.1 Ministers are provided with facilities at public expense to enable them to carry out their official duties. These facilities should not be used for political activities.

Use of Government property/resources

6.2 Government property should not be used for political activities.

6.3 Official facilities and resources may not be used for the dissemination of material that is essentially political in nature. Particular care should be taken to ensure that official social media accounts are not used for political purposes. The personal use of office facilities is not permitted.

Geographical interests

6.4 Where Ministers have to take decisions within their directorates that might have a specific impact on a geographical area with which they may have a connection, particular care must be taken to avoid any possible conflict of interest. Within portfolios, the Minister should advise their Portfolio Director of the interest so that responsibilities can be arranged to avoid any conflict of interest.

6.5 Ministers are free to make their views about geographical matters known in a private capacity to the responsible Minister by correspondence or by personal meeting, provided they make clear that they have a specific interest and are not doing so as a Minister.

6.6 Ministers are advised to take particular care in cases relating to planning applications or other similar issues. In all such cases, it is important that they make clear that they are not representing a view as a Minister. They should avoid criticism of Government policies and confine themselves to comments that could reasonably be made by those who are not Ministers. Once a decision has been announced, it should normally be accepted without question or criticism.

6.7 Particular care also needs to be taken over cases in which a Minister may have a personal interest or connection, for example because they concern family, friends or employees. If, exceptionally, a Minister wishes to raise questions about the handling of such a case they should advise their Portfolio Director and write to the Minister responsible. They should make clear their personal connection or interest. The responsible Minister should ensure that any enquiry is handled without special treatment.

7 MINISTERS' PRIVATE INTERESTS

General Principle

7.1 Ministers must ensure that no conflict arises, or could reasonably be perceived to arise, between their public duties and their private interests, financial or otherwise.

Responsibility for avoiding a conflict

7.2 It is the personal responsibility of each Minister to decide whether and what action is needed to avoid a conflict or the perception of a conflict, taking account of advice received from their Portfolio Director.

Procedure

7.3 On appointment to each new office, Ministers must provide their Portfolio Director with a full list in writing of all interests that might be thought to give rise to a conflict. The list should also cover interests of the Minister's spouse or partner and close family that might be thought to give rise to a conflict.

7.4 Where appropriate, the Minister will meet the Portfolio Director to agree action on the handling of interests. Ministers must record in writing what action has been taken and provide the Portfolio Director with a copy of that record.

7.5 The personal information which Ministers disclose to those who advise them is treated in confidence. However, a statement covering relevant Ministers' interests will be published yearly.

7.6 Where it is proper for a Minister to retain a private interest, he or she should declare that interest to Ministerial colleagues if they have to discuss public business

that in any way affects it. The Minister should remain entirely detached from the consideration of that business. Similar steps may be necessary in relation to a Minister's previous interests.

Financial interests

7.7 Ministers must scrupulously avoid any danger of an actual or perceived conflict of interest between their Ministerial position and their private financial interests. They should be guided by the general principle that they should either dispose of the interest giving rise to the conflict or take alternative steps to prevent it. In reaching their decision, they should be guided by the advice given to them by their Portfolio Director.

Steps to be taken where financial interests are retained

7.8 Where exceptionally it is decided a Minister can retain an interest, the Minister and the Portfolio Director must put processes in place to prohibit access to certain papers and ensure that the Minister is not involved in certain decisions and discussions relating to that interest.

7.9 In some cases, it may not be possible to devise a mechanism to avoid a conflict of interest. In any such case, the Chief Minister must be consulted and it may be necessary for the Minister to cease to hold the office in question.

Public appointments

7.10 When they take up office, Ministers (including the Chief Minister) should give up public appointments they may hold. Where exceptionally it is proposed that such an appointment should be retained, the Minister should seek the advice of their Portfolio Director and Law Officers.

Non-Public Bodies

7.11 Ministers should take care to ensure that they do not become associated with non-public organisations whose objectives may in any degree conflict with Government policy and thus give rise to a conflict of interest.

7.12 Ministers should not therefore normally accept invitations to act as patrons of, or otherwise offer support to, pressure groups or organisations dependent in whole or in part on Government funding. There is normally less objection to a Minister associating him or herself with a charity, subject to the points above. Ministers should take care to ensure that in participating in any fund-raising activity, they do not place, or appear to place, themselves under an obligation as Ministers to those to whom appeals are directed. For this reason, they should not approach individuals or companies personally for this purpose. In all such cases, the Minister should consult their Portfolio Director.

Membership of Select Committees

7.13 In order to avoid any conflict of interest, Ministers on taking up office must give up membership of a Scrutiny Committee or the Public Accounts Committee.

Legal proceedings

7.14 Where Ministers become involved in legal proceedings in a personal capacity, there may be implications for them in their official position. Defamation is an example of an area where proceedings will invariably raise issues for the Minister's official as well as his/her private position. In all such cases, Ministers should consult the Attorney General in good time and before legal proceedings are initiated so that they may offer guidance on the potential implications and handling of the proceedings.

7.15 Similarly, when a Minister is a defendant or a witness in an action, he/she should notify the Attorney General as soon as possible. Preferably, this should be before he/she has instructed his/her own solicitors in the matter.

Nomination for prizes and awards

7.16 From time to time, the personal support of Ministers is requested for nominations being made for State and local decorations and awards. Ministers should not sponsor individual nominations for any awards, since it is possible some people will assume that the Government was itself giving its sponsorship.

Foreign decorations

7.17 Ministers should not normally, whilst holding office, accept decorations from countries beyond St Helena and the United Kingdom. Where such an award is offered directly to a Minister and it would be difficult or embarrassing to decline, they can receive the award but should inform the Governor and Chief Secretary as soon as possible. The Governor would inform the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and provide advice to the Minister. Generally, permission to wear in St Helena, United Kingdom and overseas territories' events will not be granted but the Minister will be able to retain the award as a keepsake.

Acceptance of gifts and hospitality

7.18 A Minister should not accept gifts, hospitality or services from anyone that would, or might appear to, place him or her under an obligation. The same principle applies if gifts etc. are offered to a member of their family.

7.19 This is primarily a matter that must be left to the good sense of Ministers. If a Minister is in doubt or difficulty over this he or she should seek the advice of their Portfolio Director.

7.20 Gifts given to Ministers in their Ministerial capacity become the property of the Government and do not need to be declared in the Register of Members' Interests. Gifts of small value, the upper value being set by the Financial Secretary, may be retained by the recipient. Gifts of a higher value should be handed over to the directorate for disposal unless the recipient wishes to purchase the gift.

7.21 Directorates will publish details of hospitality received by Ministers in a Ministerial capacity.

Acceptance of appointments after leaving ministerial office

7.22 On leaving a ministerial office and the Legislative Council, former Ministers will be prohibited from lobbying Government for two years. They must seek advice from the Chief Secretary and Attorney General about any appointments or employment they wish to take up within two years of leaving office. Former Ministers must ensure that no new appointments are announced, or taken up, before advice has been provided. The advice provided may be published at the discretion of the Chief Secretary.

8 MINISTERS AND THE PRESENTATION OF POLICY

General principle

8.1 Official facilities paid for out of public funds should be used for Government publicity and advertising but may not be used for the dissemination of material that is essentially political in nature.

Media interviews, speeches etc.

8.2 In order to ensure the effective coordination of Cabinet business, the policy content and timing of all major announcements, speeches, press releases and new policy initiatives should be cleared in draft with the Press Office and Portfolio Directors in advance. All major interviews and media appearances, both print and broadcast, should also be agreed with the Press Office.

8.3 In all media engagements the principle of collective responsibility applies. Ministers should ensure that their statements are consistent with collective Government policy. Ministers should take special care in referring to subjects that are the responsibility of other Ministers.

8.4 Ministers must only use official machinery, including social media, for distributing texts of speeches relating to Government business. Speeches made in a political context should not be distributed via official machinery.

8.5 Ministers invited to broadcast on radio, video and/or webcasts in a political or private capacity should consider if such a broadcast would have a bearing on another directorate's responsibilities, in which case they should clear the matter with the ministerial colleague concerned before agreeing to the invitation.

Press articles

8.6 Ministers may contribute to a book, journal or newspaper, including a local publication, provided that publication will not be at variance with their obligations to the Legislative Council and their duty to observe the principle of collective ministerial responsibility. No payment should be accepted for such articles.

8.7 Any Minister wishing to practice regular journalism must have the prior approval of the Chief Minister. The Chief Minister must seek the advice of the Press Office before making a decision to approve.

Payment for speeches, media articles etc.

8.8 Ministers should not accept payment for speeches or media articles of an official nature or which directly draw on their responsibilities or experience as Ministers.

Books

8.9 Ministers may not, while in office, write and publish a book on their ministerial experience. Whilst serving as a Minister, they may not enter into any agreement to publish their memoirs on leaving their ministerial position.

8.10 Ministers may write and publish a book on topics that are not connected to their ministerial duties and would not contravene the expectation of collective responsibility between Ministers. Permission to produce such a book should be obtained from the Chief Minister and its contents must be reviewed by the Chief Secretary before the manuscript is sent to a publisher.

Surveys

8.11 Ministers are sometimes asked to give interviews to persons engaged in academic research or in market opinion surveys or questionnaires. Ministers should bear in mind the possibility that their views may be reported in a manner incompatible with their responsibilities and duties as members of the Government. Such interviews should normally be declined.

Complaints

8.12 Ministers who wish to make a complaint against a journalist or a particular section of the media to the regulator must have the approval in advance from the Chief Minister and any complaint should be directed to the St Helena Media Commission

Meetings with external organisations

8.13 Ministers meet many people and organisations and consider a wide range of views as part of the formulation of Government policy. Meetings on official business should normally be arranged through a Minister's directorate. An official should be present for all discussions relating to Government business. If a Minister meets an external organisation or individual and finds themselves discussing official business without an official present – for example at a social occasion or on holiday – any significant content should be passed back to the Portfolio Director as soon as possible after the event.

9 MINISTERS AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

General principle

9.1 The most important announcements of Government policy by Ministers should be made in the first instance in or to Legislative Council. The Chief Minister, Chief Secretary and government Press Office should be given an opportunity in advance to comment on all important announcements. The Governor's Office should have an opportunity in advance to comment where an announcement impacts upon a special responsibility of the Governor defined in the Constitution.

Timing and form of announcement

9.2 Even when a Government announcement by a Minister is not of major importance, its timing may require careful consideration in order to avoid clashes with other Government publications, statements, announcements or planned Legislative Council business.

Oral Statements

9.3 Ministers should not give undertakings, either in or outside of Legislative Council that an oral statement will be made to Legislative Council until the agreement has been given by the Chief Minister.

9.4 A copy of the final text of an oral statement should in all cases be sent in advance to the Speaker.

9.5 Every effort must be made to ensure that where a former Minister or a ministerial colleague and/or a fellow Councillor is mentioned in a statement or report that prompts a Ministerial statement, he or she is given as much notice as reasonably possible.

Scrutiny Committee, etc. Reports

9.7 A Minister should not see a Scrutiny Committee report until it is published. Any Minister who inadvertently receives a copy of a Scrutiny Committee report in advance of publication should make no use of the document and return it to the committee as soon as possible.

10 TRAVEL BY MINISTERS

General principle

10.1 Ministers must ensure that they always make efficient and cost-effective travel arrangements. Official transport should not normally be used for travel arrangements arising from private or political business, except where this is justified on security grounds.

Overseas visits

10.2 Ministers will wish to be satisfied that their travel arrangements could be defended in public.

10.3 When Ministers travel on official business, their travel expenses should be borne by their directorate's budget. Offers of free travel should not normally be accepted. The unqualified exception to this being travel and travel expenses offered by the United Kingdom government. Free transport from a foreign overseas government or another overseas territory may be accepted provided no undue obligation is created.

10.4 When holding meetings overseas with Ministers and/or officials from overseas governments, or where official business is likely to be discussed, Ministers should always ensure one of their officials or a UK embassy official is present. If a Minister meets an external organisation or individual and finds themselves discussing official business without an official present – for example at a social occasion or on holiday – any significant content should be passed back to the Portfolio Director as soon as possible after the event. Ministers should seek guidance in advance from their Portfolio Secretary and the Governor's Office in cases of doubt.

Ministers recalled from abroad

10.5 If a Minister is abroad with permission and called back to St Helena for ministerial or Legislative Council reasons the cost of the extra journey back and forth may be met by public funds.

Island visits

10.6 Ministers intending to make an official visit within St Helena must inform in advance the Legislative Councillor whose Post-election Representation District is to be included within the itinerary.

Use of Official cars

10.7 Ministers are provided with a financial allowance to pay for the cost of travel on St Helena on Government business.

Political occasions

10.8 Where a visit is a mix of political and official engagements, it is important that a directorate pays only for the correct proper proportion of the actual cost.

Travelling expenses of spouses/partners

10.9 The expenses of a Minister's spouse/partner when accompanying the Minister on official duties may occasionally be paid from public funds provided it is clearly in the public interest that he or she should accompany the Minister. The agreement of the Chief Minister and Financial Secretary must be obtained on each occasion before travel.

ANNEX A

The Seven Principles of Public Life

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.