

Minutes of the Meeting of Executive Council held on Wednesday, 1st September 2021 at 2pm
in the Council Chamber

Present: His Excellency the Acting Governor (Mr G C R Gibson)
The Hon Chief Secretary (Mrs S O'Bey)
The Hon Financial Secretary (Mr D L Richards)
The Hon Attorney General (Mr A T Cansick) – via Virtual Link
The Solicitor General (Miss A M Hurley)
The Hon C G Buckley
The Hon C R Beard
The Hon A A Green
The Hon L A Henry
The Hon D F Thomas

In attendance: Acting Clerk of Councils (Miss A R Legg)
Head of Corporate Support (Mrs C A George)

Overseas: His Excellency the Governor (Dr Philip Rushbrook)

OPEN SESSION

113.1 Welcome

The Acting Governor welcomed all to the meeting.

113.2 Social Security (Amendment) Regulations, 2021 (ExCo Memo 54/2021)

The Strategic and Social Policy Coordinator, Ms Ann Muir and the Claims Manager, Mr Anthony Hopkins, were in attendance for this item of business.

The Hon Clint Beard declared his interest with regards to a family member being employed at the Benefits Office.

The Chairman of the Social and Community Development Committee introduced the Memorandum, which was a revision to that which had been presented on 2nd August, after addressing the comments of Executive Council. He highlighted the following changes:

- a) Re-instate in 5, (4) and in the Disregard the income of a person aged 17 and less (e.g. apprenticeship and school allowances) – however it was noted aged 17 had been stated in error and should now read aged **18**;
- b) Re-instate in the Disregard the disregarding of a Child's Savings Bond and to take into account the market value of all immovable property apart from the dwelling in which the family resides.

Members fully supported the Regulations in improving the lives of vulnerable people however felt that all situations were still not taken account of, although the financial limitations was acknowledged. Concerns raised included: a particular case relating to

cohabiting being classed as a family, which Officers advised would always remain as it was difficult to address elsewhere; persons aged 18 who it was confirmed would now be classed as adults due to the change of “household” to “family”; confirmation of transport allowances incorporated in payments however still needed to be fully explained; and category 1 persons who would drop off the system should they not fit the criteria – these persons would be able to return to the system in a two week cycle and the Chairman gave assurance that no one would be left in a dire situation, with support given during the time that they may not receive benefits. The Claims Manager also confirmed that Guidance Notes for Officers would be reviewed.

Council advised and the Governor agreed, that the Social Security (Amendment) Regulations 2021, be approved, subject to the amendment in s5 (4) by deleting ‘17’ and substituting with aged ‘18’.

(Action: Hon Attorney General / Clerk of Councils)

113.3 Confirmation of Open Session Minutes of 6 July 2021

The Open Session Minutes of the meeting held on 6th July 2021 were confirmed.

113.4 Matters Arising

113.4.1 (110.3) Appropriation Bill, 2021

One Member felt he had not received information regarding the TC underspend for 2019/20 however others felt this had now been superseded by the approval of the Bill in formal Legislative Council.

113.4.2 (110.5.1) Public Access to Government Information Bill, 2021

The Guidance Booklet and Regulations were still outstanding.

(Action: Hon Chief Secretary)

113.4.3 (110.10.1) Plans for HM Queen’s Platinum Jubilee

The Acting Governor advised this matter was currently with the Deputy Chief Secretary.

(Action: HE Acting Governor/Deputy Chief Secretary)

113.5 Confirmation of Open Session Minutes of 22 July 2021

The Open Session Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd July 2021 were confirmed.

113.6 Matters Arising

113.6.1 (111.2) Customs (Export and Import Control) (Amendment) Regulations, 2021

These Regulations would be published on 1 November 2021, the date on which they would come into force.

113.7 Confirmation of Open Session Minutes of 2 August 2021

The Open Session Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd August 2021 were confirmed.

113.8 Matters Arising

113.8.1 (112.2) Labour Regulating Authority (LRA) Employment Rights Ordinance Guidelines

The Hon Clint Beard advised that guidelines on the protection of “whistleblowers” in the workplace would be looked at in due course. The review of the SHG Procurement processes, to ensure Tenderers demonstrate compliance with the LRA guidance when submitting tenders, would also be taken forward in-house.

(Action: Hon Chief Secretary)

113.8.2 (112.3) National Honours and Awards Regulations, 2021

The Honours and Awards Regulations were currently with the Attorney General’s Chambers for finalising.

113.9 Any Other Business

113.9.1 Investment in Canning

A Member asked whether officers could ensure that appropriate feedback was given to a prospective investor in a Canning venture; it was subsequently agreed he would send further details to the Financial Secretary.

(Action: Hon Clint Beard / Hon Financial Secretary)

113.9.2 Community Care Complex (CCC)

Equipment for the CCC had been procured at the Longwood Auction, which the Financial Secretary confirmed had been undertaken in accordance with provisions of the Public Finance Ordinance. However Members were concerned with value for money and requested the Financial Secretary to ensure all machinery that had been purchased was functional.

(Action: Hon Financial Secretary)

113.9.3 Processing Venture

The Chief Secretary explained the delay in communication with an on-island organisation, which was mainly down to an officer leaving the Island suddenly. The Head of Infrastructure was now following-up this matter however Members noted it was not a quick fix.

113.9.4 MV Helena Delay

Members noted with concern the possible delays in the MV Helena returning to the Island, especially in light of the seemingly empty shelves in the shops. This was due to the delay in transshipment containers.

113.9.5 High Cost of Postal Service to Ascension

In response to a query, the Financial Secretary advised that officers would commence the process to amend the Postal Regulations, to prepare for discussion with the new Council.


(Action: Hon Financial Secretary)


113.9.6 Royal Navy Vessel – HMS Protector

The Acting Governor reported on the visit of the HMS Protector, which would arrive on 6th September for a crew change. All crew would be tested for Covid-19 and only allowed ashore if all test results were negative.

113.9.7 General Election Date

The Acting Governor notified Members of the press release issued on the Proclamation and Writ of Election.


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Acting Governor
8-9-2021
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Date


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Clerk of Councils
08.09.21