



**ST HELENA GOVERNMENT
BUDGET SPEECH
2022**



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CONTENTS

1. Our Vision
2. Our Priorities
3. Our Key Outcomes for 2021/22
4. Our challenges and Opportunities
5. Our Outcomes
6. Closing Remarks

1. Our Vision

Madam Deputy Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to be able to present the Appropriation Bill 2022, the first budget for St Helena under the new Ministerial Government. This budget sets us on a path to use the limited resources afforded to build a foundation in order to achieve our Vision that was published in March this year.

At the heart of our vision, there are three main dimensions: our **environment**, our **economy** and our **social obligations**. To enable us to achieve our vision, our priority policies will focus on targeted areas, which are instrumental if we are to address our current challenges.

We are grateful to Her Majesty's Government for their contribution of Financial Aid, this year, like the last two we will receive a flat line settlement of £26.79 million and up to £2.88 million is available for the St Helena Airport operations. FCDO continues to provide contingency funding on a call down basis at an increased level of £2.12 million. This means total available funding from HMG of £31.79 million. Local revenues are projected to be £11.67 million and with a withdrawal from the General Reserve of the Consolidated Fund of a further £1.22 Million, this means total spending for 2022/23 is expected to be £44.68 million.

I want my first budget speech Madam Deputy Speaker, to provide hope for our people that St Helena will not, during this government's tenure, be constantly on the back foot, but that we have a plan for the economy that will build *A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT that creates OPPORTUNITY and inspires SOCIAL and ECONOMIC PROGRESS.*

This budget aligns our spending with our policy priorities in order to achieve our goals as set out in the ten year plan - whether that be the development of new infrastructure, changes to laws and regulation, or the targeting of incentives to the most productive sectors of the economy.

This budget also outlines plans to generate new revenue streams, which will be key to enable our island to achieve its goals.

2. Our Key Priorities for 2022/23

2.1. Health

Madam Deputy Speaker, this year this Government's key priority is to ensure a more robust health care service which acknowledges and focuses on holistic health, taking into account our aging population and the complexity of our health and social needs, whilst encouraging a more responsible approach to improving our individual lifestyles.

2.2. Environment

A healthy environment equals a healthy life. Priorities include the protection of our environment, developing our renewable energy and water security plans which ensure that we primarily protect our environment, whilst delivering both resources at affordable prices. We will strive to maintain and improve our blue and green agenda aspiring to become a blue print for others to follow.

2.3. Maximise Revenues

We want to achieve economic growth by enabling local private sector development and making St Helena more accessible for visitors, investors and residents by modernising legislation and policies that make St Helena more attractive to live, work and do business.

We will encourage opportunities to attract and facilitate new streams of revenue, in an attempt to reduce our reliance on UK aid and bolster our current shrinking tax base, and we aim to be the Government that takes St Helena forward into a new digital era maximising opportunities that comes with the arrival of the fibre optic cable that will create the platform for existing businesses to grow and for new businesses to commence.

2.4. Food Security

Food Security is key and we will put in place policies and legislation to enable the expansion of our agricultural and fishing sectors through modern techniques.

2.5. Education

We will strengthen and improve our educational offering by continuing to recognise the importance of inclusivity, whilst acknowledging the prominence of education in our lives. We will encourage lifelong learning by investing in and valuing our people in order to develop through upskilling, training and rewarding as we create a sustainable workforce.

2.6. Housing

We will implement schemes and policies that will provide options for affordable housing and enable our residents where possible to own their homes.

Whilst there will be a number of other priorities that have not been listed here which are important for St Helena and its people, we have used these key priority areas as the basis for the allocation of this budget in 2022/23.

3. Our Key outcomes for 2021/22:

Madam Deputy Speaker, we must however not forget about those good news stories that have been achieved over the past year which will positively impact on the lives on most in society. I would like to take a moment to highlight some of those key success stories.

3.1. COVID Free

- 3.1.1. During the pandemic we have been able to keep our Island safe from any outbreaks of COVID in our community, meaning that at a time when the rest of the world was in lock down, our citizens have been able to go about their daily lives in a 'business as usual' manner. Everyone involved in keeping the community safe should be congratulated for their hard work and dedication to achieving this outcome.

3.2. Social Security

- 3.2.1. Building on the work of the previous Legislative Council – we have now been able to implement substantial changes to Social Security ordinance and regulations which saw a move from a 'household' based system of determining entitlement to Income Related Benefit, to a system based on 'families'.

3.3. Increasing the availability of Housing

- 3.3.1. There was good progress made on increasing the availability of land for house building facilitating the availability of affordable land. The comprehensive development area (CDA) in Bottom Woods has seen the construction of the road network and installation of a number of services, two new Government Landlord houses have been completed with an additional block of flats containing 4 apartments to commence later this year. Soon these serviced plots will be offered to the market, with a mix of affordable and market value plots.
- 3.3.2. The much awaited signing of the development agreement for Bunkers Hill will see 154 plots being made available through nine development phases. Each phase will need to be agreed. This CDA will also have a number of plots available for first time home owners, residential plots and investment plots. As part of the development agreement the developer will provide SHG with two new GL homes and 4 serviced plots for development of additional GLH properties.
- 3.3.3. It is also pleasing to report that we are in discussions with another developer in relation to the development of the CDA in Half Tree Hollow, if successful this will see an additional 50 serviced plots being made available, with additional GLH properties.

3.4. Projects

- 3.4.1. 2021 was a significant year in the journey towards the digital transformation of St Helena, with the physical landing of our cable and the construction and commissioning of the Cable Landing Station in Rupert's. This was a significant achievement for all those involved particularly given the CLS civil works and the installation were undertaken and overseen by local contractors and SHG staff respectively.
- 3.4.2. We also saw good progress in a number of other projects including:
- Rupert's Port development.
 - The Sewerage treatment plant in Rupert's
 - A number of micro projects were completed which included the upgrading of two public toilets, a pedestrian walkway in Longwood, and additional much needed car parking at the hospital.
- 3.4.3. On our environment agenda. Excellent progress was made in year 1 of the Cloud Forest project, with a number of visits from specialists despite the challenges around access to the island. The EU funded 'move on' project which recently came to an end was also a great success story for St Helena, through this project, decision makers have access to spatial data and analysis to support evidence-based policy and decision making.

3.5. Education attainments

There was strong progress made in education attainment over the last year:

- 3.5.1. Financial year 2021-22 attainment and progress targets were met.

Madam Deputy Speaker I could go on but the point this makes is that whilst it is important to look forward see what still needs to be achieved, it is equally important to step back and recognise when there has been progress and good news. We often don't do enough to portray all of the good things that are happening.

4. Our challenges and opportunities

4.1. Health Service

4.1.1. The health service has come under a lot of pressure over the past 12 months.

4.1.2. As one of our key priorities for this financial year, spending on health and social care has largely been **protected from any budget cuts**. There is **£8.9 million** earmarked for recurrent spending, **£0.5 million** earmarked for essential improvements to areas within and around the hospital. There is also some **£4.5 million** allocated in the TC budget for Health professionals bringing a total of **£13.9 million** allocated to Health and Social Care in the coming year, this represents **31 %** of the overall budget. This Madam Deputy Speaker is good news and should provide reassurance to our community that we are treating Health as our number one priority.

4.2. Cost of Living

4.2.1. When I speak to many in the public, an area that is of great concern to all is that of the current rising prices of goods and services and the overall impact this is having on the cost of living especially when there is little or no wage growth. This is not just impacting on St Helena but also globally, in the UK for example families are seeing significant upward pressure on spending on core commodities such as utilities, as well as food. I will be undertaking a review to see how we can ease the tax burden on households by reviewing the personal allowance within the coming year.

4.2.2. Madam Deputy Speaker we have recently approved an increase in the minimum wage which will come into effect from the 1st August 2022. This will see the hourly rate for those aged 18 and over increase from £3.25 to £3.37 and for those under the ages of 18 the hourly rate increased from £2.30 - £2.42.

4.2.3. In addition, it is the intention of this Government to achieve a targeted minimum wage over the next 2 years of £4.00 per hour for adults over the age of 18 years and a rate of £3.05 for those under the age of 18. Madam Deputy Speaker, these targeted increases in the minimum wage will help to combat the rising cost of living. Care will be taken to understand the impacts of these proposed changes on employers.

4.3. COVID 19

4.3.1. We received approximately £5.0 – 6.0 million per annum by tourists in 2019/20, reducing to £2.0 million in 2020/21. The 75% reduction in arrivals to St Helena as

a result of COVID, has definitively had, and will continue to have, a negative impact on the Island's economy by reducing spending on-Island. This continues to be a challenge with just one flight every other week.

4.3.2. A number of tourism related businesses have struggled to sustain themselves during the pandemic, whilst others have been resilient and have diversified where possible. It is estimated by those in the industry that Tourism will not reach the pre pandemic levels until at least the 2024/25 season. Tour operators have told us that it will be nearly impossible to sell any packages to St Helena whilst there are quarantine restrictions being imposed and whilst there is only a flight every other week. Whilst there was a recent reduction in the quarantine period to 7 days further work is being carried out to assess whether there should be further reductions. This work is anticipated to be completed towards the end of May 2022.

4.3.3. It is clear Madam Deputy Speaker that we must take informed decisions on quarantine if we are to provide the level of certainty to the industry in order to reinvigorate this sector.

4.4. The global economic climate

4.4.1. There are a number of external factors that are outside of the control of St Helena that will have a significant impact on life on a small isolated island like ours.

4.4.2. Inflation is linked very closely to challenges around the increased cost of living with St Helena still heavily reliant on imports mainly from the UK and South Africa which is roughly split evenly between the two. The rate of inflation in the UK is currently around 7.0% and climbing, whilst inflation in South Africa is currently around 5.9%. Whilst inflation on St Helena is currently 3.3% it will not take long before the trickle effect from the UK and SA will result in higher inflation on St Helena.

4.4.3. The conflict in the Ukraine is having a significant impact on the global price of oil and therefore fuel prices. We will see quite substantial increases in the cost of fuel in the coming weeks, and this has already had a significant impact on the cost of freight to the Island through the bunker adjustment factor. We have seen the cost of a container jump by around £600 between 2 voyages.

4.4.4. However Madam Deputy Speaker you will have heard earlier today that this Government has taken the decision to continue to provide a subsidy of around £900 per container from the UK and around £500 for containers originating from South Africa and we will continue to help to lessen the burden of the cost of freight, through the allocation of £0.5 million in this year's budget for shipping.

4.4.5. Like for many countries the pandemic has disrupted our supply chains, making it difficult to source essential goods and services, this is particularly difficult to control on an isolated Island in the middle of the South Atlantic with limited physical access. This has meant a number of delays on many key infrastructure

projects and is a challenge that will continue to need careful planning and consideration in the year ahead.

4.5. Connectivity and Accessibility

4.5.1. Our isolation can often be seen as a blessing and a curse, during the height of the pandemic we were able to keep the community safe from any community spread, but we are certainly constrained by our physical isolation. But this is set to change with the commissioning of the fibre optic cable scheduled for early 2023 which will bring with it enormous opportunity to transform St Helena.

4.5.2. It is no secret that this government and indeed most of the Island has aspirations for more affordable, faster and unlimited internet. To that end we continue to seek a Telecoms partner who will be able to deliver the level of services that a 21st century island requires if we are to truly take advantage of what this cable will bring. I have heard concerns being aired that we have not yet announced who will be the Islands next telecommunications operator, I want to reassure you all that we are taking the time to ensure we get the best outcomes for the long term interest of the Island.

4.6. Economies of scale

4.6.1. One of the biggest challenges businesses face on St Helena is the size of the local market. This is true for both those whose businesses rely on imports and those who produce goods locally.

4.6.2. It is clear to me that there needs to be better working together within sectors across the island, to identify where we can pool resources and knowledge to be able to take advantage of areas such as volume discounts and mechanisation to drive down costs and improve productivity. I have tasked my team to look at how we can facilitate this within the private sector as well as within SHG.

4.7. Shrinking working age population and tax base

4.7.1. The problems of market size are aggravated by one of the biggest challenges we face as an Island community which is the current outward migration. We have families leaving, and not only taking valuable skills with them but also in the case of families, taking a generation with them.

4.7.2. We must reverse this trend if we are to have any prospects of sustainable, economic growth. With the essential skills leaving the island it leaves a gap which must be filled and it is essential that we have policies that supports the transfer of skills and increase the working age population. I'm pleased to report that a final draft of the new immigration policy will soon come to EXCO for endorsement to go back out to public consultation.

4.7.3. However we cannot stop at simply making it easier for people to get here. In tandem, we need to have an awareness of why people are leaving. I am hoping that this budget starts to address many of the things people tell me makes them leave – low wages, a lack of opportunity, growing inequality, a lack of recognition and people feeling undervalued, the cost of living, and the quality of our services.

While St Helena will never be home for everybody, this government's ambition is to make it a home (again) for those throughout the diaspora who yearn to return.

4.8. Demographics

- 4.8.1. The 2021 census was a stark reminder that we have an aged and ageing population with more than 25% of the population over the age of 65.¹ This will continue to put pressure on Government resources particularly in health & social care and on the basic Island pension.
- 4.8.2. Social Care have effectively utilized their budget to develop a growing home care service, which provides care for over 70 people within the community who would have otherwise required residential, sheltered or supported accommodation. This approach to care delivery enables people to remain at home for much longer and continues to promote some level of independence outside of institutional care settings.
- 4.8.3. The budget will also enabled individual bespoke care packages for people with life changing illness or injury, to return home from hospital with the support to meet their needs to a safe standard, which would have historically resulted in an admission to residential care.
- 4.8.4. Respite care has been developed to enable the carers and those being cared for, to have a break and offer some social opportunities. Respite care enables carers to continue to care for much longer and therefore reduces the demand for residential care settings.
- 4.8.5. With our ageing demographic the affordability of the unfunded Basic Island pension liability is an area of significant concern for this Government and resources have been allocated in the coming financial year for a technical expert to assist with reviewing pensions and to make recommendations to Ministers for pension reform to ensure that going forward this state pension is sustainable, affordable and will include amongst other things the option of some form of National Insurance contribution scheme. We have allocated **£2.7 million** in this budget for the Basic Island pension which is a statutory obligation year on year for SHG.

4.9. Labour Market

- 4.9.1. Accessing the right skills and experience in the current labour market continues to be a challenge for the both the private and public sector. The 2019 Labour Market Strategy focussed on these challenges which resulted in a number of policy initiatives to level the playing field for access to skilled labour and also saw the introduction of Careers Access St Helena which looks to match the right people to the right skills so they become more employable. This has been a success thus far and we will continue to invest in this area in the year ahead.

¹ Census 2021

- 4.9.2. There continues to be a heavy reliance on Technical Cooperation posts within the public service and with a shrinking local labour market, it is likely this will continue for a number of years, especially given that many of the roles are specialist posts. This year there is a total allocation of **£8.5 million** for TC posts.
- 4.9.3. SHG recognises that salaries are generally low in comparison to the high cost of living. Salaries are a contentious issue and St Helena Public Service needs to ensure it has a fair and transparent way to set salaries across all roles in the Public Service. It also needs to have the ability to react quickly to market conditions within a transparent framework, either to retain shortage skills or react to market competitiveness for key skills, when required. A new Pay Policy is being developed to achieve this. This is positive work Madam Deputy Speaker.
- 4.9.4. A new graduate scheme has been developed to create a pathway for our students to become the labour market of the future. The scheme focuses on targeting scholarship students that are at University (or those that have recently graduated) to ensure there are much stronger links and pathways back to the island and employment.
- 4.9.5. With the arrival of the cable this will allow us the opportunity to access a new labour market where services can be supplied remotely. With the current bandwidth constraints this is not practical, but in the future we could buy in our labour requirements without them necessarily being physically present here in St Helena. There is also an opportunity for St Helena to provide services to those outside of the Island by leveraging our competitive advantage. English speaking, GMT time zone and laws based on the English legal system are just a few of the factors that make us well positioned to export professional services to the rest of the world. My aim is to construct an industrial hub in which businesses can be based, this will be a key enabler for this.

4.10. Education

- 4.10.1. Human capital development is essential not only to future economic growth but also to the long-term economic resilience of the island.
- 4.10.2. It is vital that our education service begins to prepare our young people for the future workplace. The success of recent cohorts of our scholars in technical STEM degrees (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) shows me that St Helenians have the ability to compete in the global labour market with these high-value skills.
- 4.10.3. Our logical, analytical, and problem-solving minds, which I believe saints are blessed with, owing to the need we have to adapt to our environment from an early age, this sets us up perfectly to become world leaders in digital labour. St Helenians' skills are already one of our biggest exports, and I hope that once the cable is up and running these skills can be developed and exported without the need for anyone to move away.

4.10.4. Education continues to be a high priority for this Government and this year we have allocated **£3.6 million** to Education Skills and Employment.

4.11. Environment

4.11.1. Actions to tackle climate change will continue to be a key priority for SHG. Through our energy and water strategies we will continue to promote the use of renewable energy sources and will continue to work with our utility provider to find a solution which will allow us to attain our goal of 100% energy from renewable sources.

4.11.2. At the same time, we will continue to explore and implement sustainable options, including building on the cloud forest project, to build resilience in our water supply and reduce our reliance on rainfall to replenish water storage

4.11.3. St Helena has a rich built and natural environment and we want to ensure that both are protected.

4.11.4. This year we have allocated £1.7million for Environment, Natural Resources and Planning and this will be complemented by external environmental project funding this year of **£0.9million**. Funding has also been secured for year two of the project to restore the cloud forest in the Peak's National Park.

4.11.5. We will also continue to support and enable research on our environment through the St Helena Research Institute.

4.12. Revenues

4.12.1. The need to increase revenues to support further sustainable economic and social development is a key priority for this Government. With the current economic climate in the UK we are unlikely to get any further increases in financial aid from HMG or any certainty that the current level of funding will be maintained and therefore we must do all we can to become more self-sustaining.

4.12.2. In addition to kick starting the post pandemic tourism recovery, this Government will be investing resources into developing new revenue streams unlocked through the arrival of the cable.

4.12.3. My team has begun a programme of work to enable other new industries to base themselves on the island and make us an attractive destination for both traditional and new, niche financial services.

4.12.4. We are currently in the process of updating St Helena's company registry laws so that all companies registered on the island will be legally required to declare their beneficial owners.

4.12.5. We are currently working with international partners to understand the feasibility of digital finance on St Helena. While we recognise that St Helena does not have a competitive advantage in the more mainstream digital finance sectors, there are opportunities in the niche, underserved, and growing markets. Two such areas we are exploring are Developing a legal framework that recognises

Decentralised Autonomous Organisations (DAOs) and providing legal certainty for otherwise unclassified crypto-assets, such as Non Fungible Tokens or NFTs that are issued through smart contracts running on the block chain or as some now refer to as WEB 3 Infrastructure.

4.12.6. We are continuing to explore the possibility of cultivating and exporting high grade medical marijuana for CBD extraction. Like digital finance this is also a fast growing international commodity.

4.12.7. This year we expect to raise £6.0 million in Income Tax, up from £5.7 million in 2021/22. This is largely down to projected increases in service tax and some upward trajectory in Corporation tax.

4.12.8. Customs duties are also expected to increase to £5.6 million this year up from £5.4 million in 2021/22. The increase is a result of projected increases in general Customs duty offset by projected decreases in revenue from alcohol and tobacco.

4.12.9. Other revenues make up £1.8 million

4.13. Other economic enablers

4.13.1. On top of everything already said, this budget period will also see SHG working with the key institutions that enable economic activity and growth on the island. Working with the Bank of St Helena and other financial institutions to ensure the range of financial products continue to serve the needs of businesses and individuals as we move forward into the modern age, this Government is ensuring we have the tools and resources in place to enable growth.

4.14. Taxation

4.14.1. Historically, tax in St Helena has focused on income tax and customs duties as the chief mode to achieve revenues. This disadvantages people who rely solely on local employment and business for their livelihood and favours people who are able to sustain a lifestyle from gains or profits that are not presently taxable on St Helena such as through inheritance, overseas pensions, or property wealth. This is inconsistent with the goal of our Labour Market Strategy to attract people to live and work on St Helena.

4.14.2. Tax reform provides St Helena with an opportunity to ease the tax burden on individuals, particularly of working age, by improving the efficiency of tax-collection and spreading the tax system over a wider base.

4.14.3. It also provides an opportunity to ensure that the tax system enables the Island's community as a whole to be in a position to benefit from tourism and successful inward and local investment. Also, very importantly, tax reform will provide the funding needed for a welfare safety net.

4.14.4. All of our future policies on tax reform are underpinned by the principles of being fair, progressive, and equitable, while broadening the tax base,

modernising fees and charges, and providing strategic incentives to key economic sectors.

4.14.5. To that end, we are exploring initiatives to be greener - through encouraging greener transport initiatives; improving the support to families with children; continuing to encourage healthy behaviours, more effective and efficient use of land and buildings; and levelling the playing field between higher and lower earners.

4.14.6. I can also confirm that there are no proposed changes to the income tax rates for next financial year.

4.14.7. As is customary the import duty on Alcohol increased by inflation in line with the current policy from the end of March 2022, this means an increase of 1.7%. As a result, the duty on a bottle of 750ml of spirit or liqueur will increase by 24p, a 750ml bottle of wine will increase by 9p and the duty on a 330ml bottle of castle light will increase by 1p.

4.14.8. Tobacco and Tobacco products increased at the end of March 2022 by 3.7% which is inflation plus 2.0%. This means that on a packet of 20 cigarettes the duty increased by 18p. There will be no other customs duty changes made at this time.

5. Our Outcomes

Madam Deputy Speaker we are all striving to achieve the goals as outlined in the Island's 10 year plan. This year we have allocated the budget to achieve the desired outcomes as follows:

5.1. Altogether Healthier - We want to live longer, healthier, happier lives and are able to remain independent and active in our homes for as long as possible.

We have allocated £13.5 million to deliver on this outcome.

5.2. Altogether Wealthier - Our communities feel the benefits of economic growth by being in-work and enjoying a good quality of life. St Helena works toward becoming more financially sustainable and less reliant on aid.

We have allocated £6.5 million to deliver on this outcome

5.3. Effective Infrastructure - We live in well-designed sustainable places where we can access the amenities and services we need.

We have allocated £1.7 million to deliver on this outcome

5.4. Altogether Greener - We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect and enhance it for future generations.

We have allocated £1.2 million to deliver on this outcome

5.5. Altogether Better for Children and Young People - Our children and young people in St Helena get the best start in life and we are better educated, more skilled and more successful.

We have allocated £5.6 million to deliver on this outcome

5.6. Altogether Safer - We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger, and our older and vulnerable residents feel included, safe, and supported with choices to live independently.

We have allocated £2.8 million to deliver on this outcome

5.7. Effective Efficient and Accountable Public Sector - Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to customer's needs. We generate sustainable revenues to reduce our budget deficit. Our decisions are evidence based.

We have allocated £7.9 million to deliver on this outcome

6. Closing Remarks

Every Government wants to provide certainty to its people and it had been hoped that St Helena would receive a three-year financial aid settlement with HMG to allow this Government to implement longer term plans with certainty over funding. Unfortunately, due to the current climate with the UK and their own challenges around uncertainties not helped by the current conflict in Ukraine, this year's settlement is for a one-year only. We will continue to work with our partners in HMG to press for a future settlement which provides the certainty we need for implementing long term plans.

My budget speech comes at a time of both hope and uncertainty, maybe more leaning towards uncertainty, but in this last section of my first budget speech, hope is where I'll start and finish. Hope, because a new dawn is approaching as the world turns a corner in the fight to combat COVID 19. Borders are opening, vaccination and booster rates are proving effective, resulting in less serious COVID cases and related deaths. The world is quickly adapting to living with COVID. Uncertainty, Madam Deputy Speaker, we can put as much resources and time into formulating a plan to reopen our Island but there is always the uncertainty of when and how.

Has the time come to move with the rest of the world? Can we cope with a community outbreak? All big questions Madam Deputy Speaker, but as leaders we must unite and find the answers.

Uncertainty of delivering on our long term plans in every sector, a 1-year settlement only adds to the difficulty in planning for our post COVID recovery.

St Helena depends heavily on imports, and we will remain alert to potential economic aftershocks on the horizon that will no doubt send ripples to our shores in a variety of ways. With the events in Eastern Europe, the uncertainty of what this means to the way of life on St Helena remains at the fore-front of our minds. We will continue to take every possible action within our capacity to cushion the effects of rising costs but unless we start to generate new streams of revenue we will always be playing catch up.

Now, back to hope Madam Deputy Speaker, with a little light at the end of the tunnel thanks to HMG in the form of our capital programme (EDIP), EU Funding for our fibre optic cable and a new form of Ministerial Government to deliver phase 2 of EDIP, and the rollout of high speed internet to our homes and businesses. I hope with the support of this entire house that we can finalise our transformational business cases to present to HMG in this financial year so we may start the process of attaining further capital programme funding.

Work has commenced with the design and plans for the new prison. This Government cannot continue to ignore the facts, and although it may not fit with economic development in principle, the construction and running of the new prison will bring new work and jobs. I would also like to say Madam Deputy Speaker that we are already exploring options to generate new revenue from the current prison building once the new prison is operational.

The last of the capital funding for the EDIP still needs to be approved, business cases will be developed to ensure greater long-term returns from economic development, as a snippet:

We will create a light industrial and technology business zone that meets the demands of the 21st century. It will provide one location for existing and new businesses to be established and grow in a controlled environment that enhances its surroundings, designed to be as eco-friendly and sustainable as possible, promoting what St Helena is already leading in, with the arrival of the cable the need to prepare for opportunities is essential if we want to make the most of our cable in an environmentally friendly way

We will develop opportunities for Public Private Partnerships (PPP) in areas such as the Jamestown wharf regeneration plan, providing and enabling the private sector to invest in prime real-estate and create economic development, that will add a tourist attraction and offer improved experience for cruise ships disembarkation and our yachting visitors alike. Regardless of whether you are a tourist or a local, we will all be able to enjoy a safe and designated waterfront that meets all our leisurely needs including those with disabilities.

I hope, Madam Deputy Speaker that soon the people of St Helena will have access to fast, affordable, and unlimited internet through a 21st Century cable, these foundations will also benefit opening St Helena up to so many more prospects which our Island has never had before. For instance, St Helena has been greatly fixed on attracting investment that grows and fits with industry and assets of our past and present, but with this cable, we can also look to growing the industries of our future, and with the amalgamation of both, new gate-ways will be opened that have never been an option before.

We will see possibilities to use this tool, not only to become pioneers but to promote our health, social, educational and economic development with the capabilities to become a self-sustaining Island. We will endeavour to accelerate economic stimulus and growth, focus on targeted projects offering opportunities for investment which meets the needs of tomorrow.

Madam Deputy Speaker for the hope of our people and the generations of tomorrow, we must move towards self-determined priorities whenever we have an opportunity to do so. Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, I beg to move.