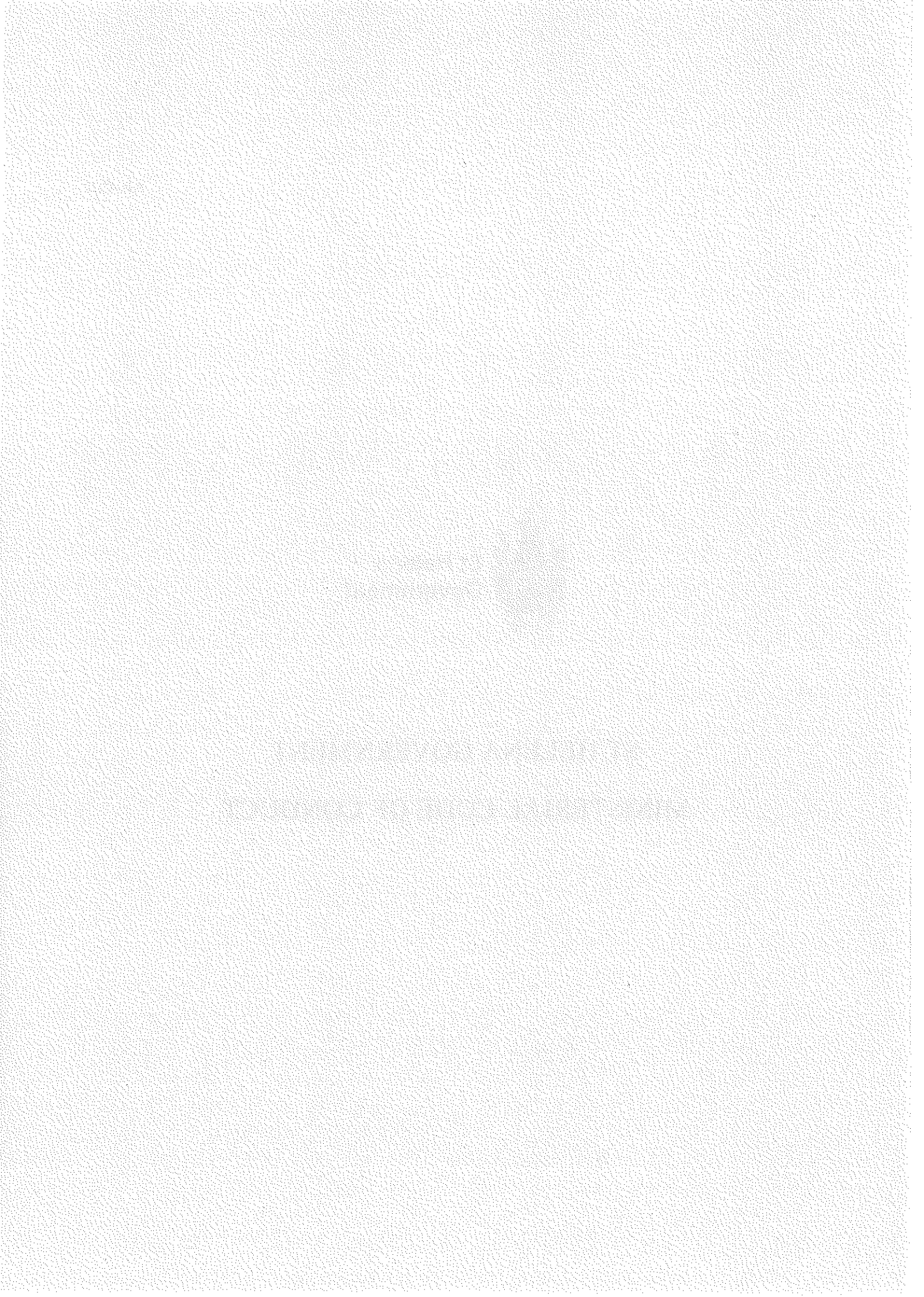




**ST HELENA GOVERNMENT**  
**MINISTERIAL CODE OF CONDUCT**



**ST HELENA**



**THE ST HELENA, ASCENSION AND TRISTAN DA CUNHA CONSTITUTION  
ORDER 2009**

*(Section 71(a))*

**MINISTERIAL CODE OF CONDUCT**

Approved by Resolution of the Legislative Council on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of December 2022.

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# 1 MINISTERS

## General principle

- 1.1 A Minister is expected to maintain high standards of behaviour and to behave in a way that upholds the highest standards of propriety.
- 1.2 A Minister should be professional in all dealings and treat all those with whom the Minister comes into contact with consideration and respect. Working relationships with colleagues, ministerial and other Elected Members and public servants should be proper and appropriate. Harassing, bullying or other inappropriate or discriminating behaviour wherever it takes place is not consistent with the Ministerial Code and will not be tolerated.
- 1.3 The Ministerial Code—
  - (a) provides guidance to a Minister on how the Minister should act and arrange the affairs of a Minister in order to uphold the appropriate standards;
  - (b) lists the principles that may apply in particular situations; and
  - (c) should be read against the background of the overarching duty on a Minister to comply with all relevant law and to protect the integrity of public life.
- 1.4 A Minister is expected to observe the Seven Principles of Public Life set out at Annex A, and the following principles of Ministerial conduct—
  - a. Collective Responsibility requires Ministers to act in accordance with decisions made collectively and applies to a Minister in the execution of all functions of the Minister's office;
  - b. A Minister is responsible for the policy decisions of the Minister's portfolio and is accountable for such policy decisions if required by the Legislative Council;
  - c. A Minister is also accountable for the performance of the Minister's portfolio directorate;
  - d. A Minister, where required and to the best of the Minister's knowledge and belief must give accurate and truthful information, correcting any inadvertent error at the earliest opportunity and a Minister who is proven to have knowingly provided inaccurate, untruthful or misleading information in any forum is required to offer that Minister's resignation to the Chief Minister;
  - e. A Minister must be as open and as transparent as possible but not in a manner that is contrary to or in conflict with—
    - (i) the principle of collective responsibility;
    - (ii) public interest; or
    - (iii) obligations that are legally or constitutionally constrained;
  - f. Where information or evidence is to be provided on behalf of a Minister, the Minister should as far as possible ensure that the information or evidence provided is provided under the direction of the Minister and is appropriate, accurate, truthful and comprehensive;

- g. A Minister must as far as possible avoid conflict or the appearance of conflict between the Minister's public duties and private interests;
  - h. A Minister must not accept a gift or any hospitality that might, or might reasonably appear to, compromise the judgement or function of the Minister or place any improper obligation in the Minister;
  - i. A Minister must only use government resources for the execution of the Minister's public duties and not for any of the Minister's private interests; and
  - j. A Minister must uphold the political impartiality of the Public Service and must not require a public servant to act in any way or to do anything which would render the behaviour of the public servant in conflict with the SHG Corporate Governance Guidance for Staff.
- 1.5 Where a breach of the Ministerial code is alleged, the course of action to be taken against a Minister in respect of the breach will be determined solely by the Chief Minister after consultation with the Attorney General or the Speaker's office as the Chief Minister considers fit in the circumstances. The Chief Minister, if the Chief Minister is satisfied that an alleged breach of the Ministerial Code warrants investigation, may request that the breach be investigated by the Speaker's office.
- 1.6 Paragraph 1.5 does not apply if—
- (a) an alleged breach directly involves the Chief Minister; or
  - (b) on initial examination an alleged breach appears serious enough to breach a responsibility of oversight placed on the Governor in the Constitution, and in such circumstances the alleged breach must be referred by the Chief Minister, Attorney General or Speaker, whomever is most appropriate to make the referral in the circumstances, to the Governor who will determine the course of action to be taken.
- 1.7 A Minister—
- (a) is personally responsible for deciding how to act and for the conduct of the Minister in accordance with the Ministerial Code and for justifying the actions and conduct of the Minister to the Legislative Council and the public; and
  - (b) only remains in office for so long as the Minister retains the confidence of the Chief Minister who, politically, is the ultimate judge of the standards of behaviour and performance expected of a Minister and the appropriate political consequences of a breach of those standards.

## **2 MINISTERS AND GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

### **General principle**

- 2.1 The principle of collective responsibility requires a Minister to act in accordance with decisions taken collectively with the other Ministers and also requires a Minister to be able to express a view frankly in a private setting so as to maintain unity in respect of a decision reached. Pursuant to this principle the privacy and confidentiality of the

business of the Executive Council and any other Ministerial forum and any correspondence in relation thereto must 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; and
  - (b) questions on which there is an unresolved argument between directorates.

### **Collective responsibility**

Without prejudice to the executive authority of Executive Council—

- 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 view of a Minister or advice provided by a public servant as part of that internal process must remain confidential.
- 2.4 Decisions reached by the Cabinet or Ministerial Committees are binding on all members of the Government. Such decisions are, where appropriate, to be announced and explained as the decision of the Minister concerned.
- 2.5 A Minister has an obligation to ensure decisions agreed in Executive Council and Ministerial fora are implemented by the responsible Public Officers. A Minister has an obligation to ensure that inter-ministerial written communications are implemented.
- 2.6 A Minister should take special care in discussing issues that are the responsibility of another Minister and consult with any ministerial colleagues whose responsibilities may be relevant.
- 2.7 Matters wholly within the responsibility of a single Minister and which do not significantly engage collective responsibility need not be brought to the Cabinet or to a Ministerial Committee unless the Minister wishes to inform other Ministers or to seek the advice of the other Ministers. No definitive criteria can be given for issues which engage collective responsibility and where a portfolio is unsure as to an issue which engages collective responsibility, the advice of the Chief Secretary may be obtained, however, the final decision in respect of the applicability of collective responsibility rests with the Chief Minister.
- 2.8 Where there is a difference between portfolios, the difference should not be referred to the Cabinet until other means of resolving it have been exhausted. It is the responsibility of the initiating portfolio to ensure that proposals have been discussed with other interested portfolios and the outcome of these discussions should be reflected in the memorandum or letter submitted to Cabinet.

### **Attendance at Executive Council**

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

### **Publication of policy statements and consultation papers**

- 2.10 A policy statement (white paper) or a consultation paper (green paper) should not be published unless there is consultation between the relevant Minister and the Portfolio Director as to whether there are issues which require full collective ministerial consideration through the Executive Council and possibly other Ministerial fora and it is generally understood that collective agreement is required prior to such publication.

### **Executive Council documents**

- 2.11 A Minister relinquishing office is required to return all confidential documents in the Minister's possession to the Secretary to Executive Council for disposal.
- 2.12 Where there is a change of Government administration, special instructions regarding the disposal of Executive Council papers of the outgoing Executive Council will be issued through the Secretary to Executive Council, by the outgoing Chief Minister.

### **Access by former Ministers to official papers**

- 2.13 It is at the Chief Minister's discretion, if and by what terms an Elected Member who held the post of Minister may be allowed access to official papers of the period when the Elected Member held such office. Access, where granted, is limited to such Elected Member. The Governor may, at the discretion of the Governor, override access to official papers relating to the Governor's reserved responsibilities under the Constitution.

### **The Law Officers**

- 2.14 If the Government is required to make critical decisions involving legal considerations, consultation must be made with the requisite Law Officers in good time before such decisions are due to be made so that relevant advice may be obtained.
- 2.15 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.
- 2.16 Whether Law Officers have provided advice or not provided advice in respect of any matter and the content of such advice if any is confidential and must not be disclosed outside Government without the authority of the Law Officers.



### **3 MINISTERS AND APPOINTMENTS**

#### **General principle**

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

#### **Special advisers**

- 3.2 A Minister 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. Notwithstanding the limitation of special advisers or aides who create a demand upon the public service, a Minister can engage with whomever they wish to better aid understanding of a particular matter.

### **4 MINISTERS AND DIRECTORATES**

#### **General principle**

- 4.1 The Chief Minister is responsible for the allocation of functions between Ministers in charge of portfolios.

#### **Approval criteria**

- 4.2 The Chief Minister's approval must be obtained where changes are proposed that affect this allocation and the responsibilities for the discharge of ministerial functions.
- 4.3 The Chief Minister's written approval must be obtained where it is proposed to transfer functions between Ministers in charge of portfolios.
- 4.4 The Chief Minister's written approval should be obtained 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 Resolving disputes concerning the allocation of functions within portfolios is the responsibility of the Chief Secretary, before a submission is made to the Chief Minister. If a dispute involves one of the Governor's special responsibilities defined in the Constitution, then the Chief Minister is obliged to consult with the Governor.
- 4.6 The Minister in charge of a portfolio is solely accountable to Legislative Council for the exercise of the powers on which the administration of that portfolio depends.

### **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. The Chief Minister may under the provisions in the Constitution appoint an Acting Minister during any period of absence of a Minister or may delegate the duties to an existing Minister if in agreement. If the absence exceeds 3 months consecutively, the Chief Minister will appoint an Acting Minister.

### **Maternity/Paternity leave and other extended absence by a Minister**

- 4.8 The Chief Minister's prior approval should be obtained 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 A Minister taking maternity or paternity leave or other extended absence from duties must request permission for such absence from the Chief Minister. If permission is granted the Minister must not exercise the Minister's functions during the period of such absence. Another Minister or an Elected Member may be appointed in accordance with section 37H of the Constitution of St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha to perform the ministerial responsibilities of the Minister who is absent for the duration of the absence.
- 4.10 A Chief Minister on maternity or paternity leave, or other extended absence from duties must seek the permission of the Governor in respect of such absence. Advice may be obtained from the Chief Minister, other Ministers and the Attorney General, as to the acceptability of any proposed appointment of a person to perform the duties of the Chief Minister during the period of absence to ensure that the continuity of effective government is maintained. The appointment must be consistent with the Constitution of St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha (the Constitution). In the event that the continuity of effective government cannot be maintained and depending on the circumstances specified in the Constitution, a new Chief Minister may need to be elected or the Governor may be required to call a General Election as specified.

## **5 MINISTERS AND PUBLIC SERVANTS**

### **General principle**

- 5.1 A Minister must uphold the political impartiality of the Public Service, and not ask public servants to act in any way that would conflict with the applicable code of conduct. A Minister should be professional regarding working relationships with the Public Service and treat all officials with consideration and respect.
- 5.2 A Minister has 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 they are responsible;
  - (ii) keeping proper accounts;
  - (iii) for the avoidance of waste and extravagance; and
  - (iv) the efficient and effective use of public finances.
- 5.4 The Financial Secretary 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 Officers 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 the Accounting Officer's objections to the proposal;
  - (ii) give the reasons for the objection; and
  - (iii) be under a duty to inform the Governor, Financial Secretary and Chief Secretary should the advice be overruled.
- 5.7 If the Minister decides nonetheless to proceed, the Minister must inform the Chief Minister of the Minister's decision and reasons for the decision. 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, Financial Secretary, 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 Responsible officers for major projects are expected to account to the Chief Secretary for the operational decisions and actions taken to deliver the projects for which responsible officers have responsibility. In turn, the Chief Secretary must ensure the relevant Ministers are informed of any significant issues impacting on principle

deliverables in respect of a project including but not limited to budgetary or timing concerns. This line of accountability relates to implementation, not policy development.

## **6 MINISTERS' POLITICAL INTERESTS**

### **General principle**

- 6.1 A Minister is provided with facilities at public expense to enable the Minister to carry out all official duties. These facilities should not be used for political activities.

### **Government property and resources**

- 6.2 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.

## **7 MINISTERS' PRIVATE INTERESTS**

### **Responsibility for avoiding a conflict**

- 7.1 It is the personal responsibility of each Minister to decide whether and what action is needed to avoid a known conflict or the perception of a conflict, taking account of advice received from their Portfolio Director and Attorney General, if necessary. In the event of a conflict of interest including a financial interest that cannot be resolved the Minister must recuse themselves from the Ministerial action.
- 7.2 In some cases, it may not be possible to devise a mechanism to avoid a conflict of interest. In any such case, a Minister must have a discussion with a person who the Minister considers appropriate to advise in the circumstances to determine the best way forward. Under no circumstances may the Minister have access to papers or information or participate in decisions which may be reasonably perceived to facilitate the Minister in deriving any personal advantage.

### **Procedure**

- 7.3 Where it is proper for a Minister to retain a private interest that may reasonably be perceived to be in conflict with the Minister's duties, the Minister should notify the Speaker of the conflict and seek advice from the Speaker in respect of the conflict. The Minister will release the advice proffered by the Speaker to Ministerial colleagues and the Chief Secretary.

### **Financial interests**

- 7.4 A Minister must scrupulously avoid any danger of an actual or perceived conflict of interest between the Ministerial position and the private financial interests of the Minister and should be guided by the Seven Principles of Public Life at Annex A.

## **Public appointments**

- 7.5 Upon being appointed to office, a Minister (including the Chief Minister) should consider any public appointment (such as membership of company boards) the Minister may hold. Where exceptionally it is proposed that such an appointment should be retained, the Minister should seek the advice of the Minister's Portfolio Director and Law Officers.

## **Non-Public Bodies**

- 7.6 A Minister should take care to ensure that the Minister does 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.
- 7.7 A Minister should not be involved in pressure groups or organisations dependent in whole or in part on Government funding. There is normally less objection to a Minister associating themselves with a charity, subject to the points above. A Minister should take care to ensure that in participating in any fund-raising activity, the Minister does not place, or appear to place, the Minister under an obligation to those to whom appeals are directed.

## **Legal proceedings**

- 7.8 Where a Minister becomes involved in legal proceedings in a personal capacity, there may be implications for the Minister in the Minister's official position. Defamation is an example of an area where proceedings will invariably raise issues for the Minister's official and private position. In all such cases, a Minister should notify the Attorney General in good time and before legal proceedings are initiated.
- 7.9 Similarly, when a Minister is a defendant or a witness in an action, the Minister should notify the Attorney General as soon as possible. Preferably, this should be before the Minister has instructed the Minister's own solicitors in the matter, if applicable.

## **Nomination for local decorations and awards**

- 7.10 A Minister 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**

- 7.11 A Minister should not normally, whilst holding office, accept decorations from countries beyond the United Kingdom. Where such an award is offered directly to a Minister and it would be difficult or embarrassing to decline, the Minister may receive the award but should inform the Governor and Chief Minister of the award as soon as possible. The Governor will thereafter inform the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and provide advice to the Minister in respect of the award.

### **Acceptance of gifts and hospitality**

- 7.12 A Minister should not accept gifts, hospitality or services from anyone that would, or might appear to, place them under an obligation. The same principle applies if gifts etc. are offered to a member of their nuclear family with the intention of gaining political favour. This is primarily a matter that must be left to the good sense of a Minister.
- 7.13 Gifts given to a Minister in a Ministerial capacity becomes the property of the Government and do not need to be declared in the Register of Members' Interests. A gift of insignificant value may be retained by the recipient. A gift which a Minister considers to be of a significant value must be handed over to the Treasury for disposal. If there is any doubt as to the significance of the value of the gift the Minister must seek the guidance of the Chief Minister.

### **Acceptance of appointments after leaving ministerial office**

- 7.14 On leaving ministerial office and the Legislative Council, a person who is no longer a Minister should seek the advice of the Chief Secretary and Attorney General about any appointments or employment the person may accept in connection with the person's former role as a Minister within two years of the person leaving office.

## **8 MINISTERS AND THE PRESENTATION OF POLICY**

### **Media interviews, speeches etc.**

- 8.1 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 ideally be approved in draft with the Press Office and Portfolio Directors in advance. It is desirable that all major interviews and media appearances, both print and broadcast, be agreed with the Press Office.
- 8.2 A Minister should ensure that the Minister's statements are consistent with collective Government policy. A Minister should take special care in referring to subjects that are the responsibility of other Ministers.
- 8.3 A Minister invited to be interviewed or to a discussion for broadcast on radio, video or webcasts in a political or private capacity should consider if such a broadcast would have a bearing on another Minister's portfolio's responsibilities, in which case the Minister should clear the matter with the Ministerial colleague concerned before agreeing to the invitation.

### **Press articles**

- 8.4 A Minister may contribute to a book, journal or newspaper, including a local publication, provided that publication will not be at variance with the Minister's obligations to the Legislative Council and the Minister's duty to observe the principle of collective responsibility. No payment may be accepted for such contributions.

8.5 Any Minister practising regular journalism must have the prior approval of the Chief Minister. The Chief Minister may seek the advice of the Press Office before deciding to approve.

8.6 A Minister should not accept payment for speeches or media articles of an official nature or which directly draw on the responsibility or experience as a Minister.

### **Books**

8.7 A Minister may not, while in office, write and publish a book on the Minister's ministerial experience. Whilst serving as a Minister, the Minister may not enter into any agreement to publish a memoir on leaving that ministerial position.

8.8 A Minister may write and publish a book on topics that are not connected to the Minister's ministerial duties and that do not contravene the expectation of collective responsibility between Ministers. Permission to produce such a book should be obtained from the Chief Minister.

### **Surveys**

8.9 A Minister may be asked to give interviews to persons engaged in academic research or in market opinion surveys or questionnaires. A Minister should bear in mind the possibility that the Minister's views may be reported in a manner incompatible with the Minister's responsibilities and duties as members of the Government.

### **Complaints**

8.10 A Minister making a complaint against a journalist or a particular section of the media to the regulator must have approval in advance from the Chief Minister before making the complaint.

### **Meetings with external organisations**

8.11 A Minister may meet many people and organisations and such meetings may 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. The Minister should consult with the Chief Secretary or the Portfolio Director if there is a risk of a perceived conflict of interest. If a Minister meets an external organisation or individual and the meeting results in a discussion about official business without an official being present at the discussion – 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 discussion.

## **9 MINISTERS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

### **General principle**

9.1 Any announcement of national importance by a Minister 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, the timing of the announcement may require careful consideration in order to avoid clashes with other Government publications, statements, announcements or planned Legislative Council business.

### **Oral Statements**

- 9.3 Every effort must be made to ensure that where a person who used to be appointed as a Minister remains an Elected Member or a ministerial colleague or a fellow Elected Member is mentioned in a statement or report that prompts a Ministerial statement, such person, ministerial colleague or Elected Member is given as much notice as reasonably possible.

## **10 TRAVEL BY MINISTERS**

### **General principle**

- 10.1 A Minister must ensure that the Minister always makes efficient and cost-effective travel arrangements. Official transport should not normally be used for travel arrangements arising from private business, except where this is justified on security grounds.

### **Overseas visits**

- 10.2 A Minister should be satisfied that any travel arrangements of the Minister can be defended in public.
- 10.3 When a Minister travels on official business, the Minister's travel expenses should be borne by the Minister's directorate's budget. Offers of free travel should not normally be accepted. The unqualified exception to the foregoing is travel and travel expenses offered by the United Kingdom Government. Travel expenses paid for by 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 or officials from a government that is not the UK government or a British Overseas Territory or British Dependency where official business is likely to be discussed, a Minister shall ensure a UK government official is appointed in respect of advising in any respect if necessary, in respect of the meeting. If a Minister meets an external organisation or individual which results in a discussion about official business without an official being present at the discussion – for example at a social occasion or on holiday – any significant content should be passed back to the Portfolio Director and Governor's Office as soon as possible after the



discussion. A Minister should seek guidance in advance from the Minister's Portfolio Director and the Governor's Office in cases of doubt.

#### **Ministers recalled from abroad**

- 10.5 If a Minister is abroad on personal business and is called back to St Helena for ministerial or Legislative Council reasons, the cost of the extra journey back and forth should be met by public funds if not possible to be covered by other means.

#### **Island visits**

- 10.6 A Minister making an official visit within St Helena must in advance of the visit inform the Legislative Councillor whose Post-election Representation District is to be included within the itinerary.

#### **Political occasions**

- 10.7 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**

- 10.8 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. A financial justification must be provided to the Financial Secretary with the agreement of the Chief Minister obtained on each occasion before travel.

### **ANNEX A** *(Paragraph 1.4 and .5)*

#### **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.