



St Helena
Government

THE ROLE OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL



A General Election will be held on Wednesday 3 September 2025, if more than 12 valid nominations are received by no later than 12 noon on Nomination Day, Wednesday, 20 August 2025. This year's Election will be the second under a ministerial system of Government.

Leading up to the General Election we will provide information on how the Ministerial Government works.

This week's focus is on the role of Executive Council.

Who forms the Executive Council?

The Chief Minister, the four Ministers and the Attorney General form Executive Council (ExCo), which is the highest decision making body of the St Helena Government.

The Governor presides at meetings of ExCo.

The Governor in his own discretion, or following a request from the Chief Minister, can invite Officers of the St Helena Public Service to meetings of ExCo.

What happens at meetings of ExCo?

At meetings of ExCo the most significant policies, primary legislation to be presented at Legislative Council and secondary legislation to be enacted are considered and approved. Also at meetings of ExCo, national strategy is decided, the government's legislative programme is agreed and decisions are made on many of the Island's most difficult issues.

What role does the Governor have at meetings of ExCo?

The Governor presides at meetings of ExCo as established in the Constitution. At meetings the Governor asks the Chief Minister or one of the Ministers to lead on items on the ExCo agenda, with the Chief Minister leading most discussions and summing up the collective advice of Ministers to the Governor once a matter has been debated.

The Governor will follow the advice of ExCo on most matters. However, on matters which in the Constitution are special responsibilities of the Governor, the Governor normally only has to consult ExCo and can choose not to follow their advice. There are also certain matters that legally the Governor does not have to consult with ExCo.

Do any Government officials sit on ExCo?

The Attorney General is a non-voting member of ExCo. The Chief Secretary and Financial Secretary attend ExCo meetings as policy advisors but they are not members of ExCo and do not have a vote. The Governor also appoints a Secretary who is responsible for arranging the business for, and keeping the minutes of, the

meetings of the Executive Council, and for conveying decisions reached at the meetings to the appropriate person or authority.

The Governor on their own, or following a request from the Chief Minister, can invite other officers of the St Helena Public Service to attend meetings where their presence is considered desirable for specific business.

Are ExCo decisions based on the principle of ‘collective responsibility’?

Yes they are. Under the Constitution ExCo is collectively responsible to the Legislative Council for both advice given to the Governor and actions taken by Ministers in the execution of their duty.

How often does ExCo meet?

ExCo meets as often as is required. ExCo can be summoned either at the discretion of the Governor, or following a request to the Governor from the Chief Minister. Generally, ExCo meets every fortnight but does so more frequently when important business requires such.

Must all Ministers attend meetings of ExCo?

For business to be transacted at a meeting of ExCo there must be at least three Ministers in attendance, one of which must be the Chief Minister. However, it is expected that given the importance of meetings of ExCo all Ministers will be in attendance unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The Constitution allows ExCo to make provisions for the remote attendance of Ministers by electronic means.

In our next issue we will look at the role of Legislative Council. These Information Releases are also available online at:

<https://www.sainthelena.gov.sh/government/public-information/elections/>

**SHG
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