**EXCO MEETING of 18 DECEMBER 2012**

Good afternoon.

Before I discuss today’s ExCo, I would like to report on the special ExCo we had a fortnight ago on Divestment of Energy and Water Utilities.  We considered the proposed regulatory framework for Divestment which had been postponed from the previous meeting to allow Councillors a chance to discuss further specific proposals contained within the paper.  With a few amendments, Councillors were content to agree the Regulatory Framework and support the Divestment of Utilities to a Government owned company with a target date of 1 April 2013.

Today’s ExCo had a busy agenda.  The first item was to consider the external appearance of the Freight and Baggage Terminal and whether it should be painted or not.  At a previous ExCo in 2010, Council had advised and the Governor had agreed that the Freight and Baggage Terminal should be left in its natural state until the new Customs Passenger Terminal Building was built, so it could be determined whether or not to paint both buildings.  Feedback from the public suggests that there is considerable support for leaving the building in its current state of a stone clad finish.  Councillors agreed with the feedback and decided that the Freight and Baggage Terminal should be left as it is.

The next item was seeking the views of Council to the issuing of a Special Warrant to buy a Customs Scanner for the new building.  It was originally assumed that the current machine could be moved across. However, recent expert advice is that if the existing scanner is moved from its current location, it is unlikely to work again.  On that basis, an urgent replacement is needed and the Special Warrant will allow the purchase to be made so that the new Customs Building can be fully functional by the end of February 2013.  It was agreed that the Warrant should be issued.

We then looked at a proposal to amend the Road Traffic Regulations.  These amendments follow a review of the speed limits and would change the regulations to reflect appropriate speed limits.  There were a number of recommended changes to the speed limit of roads throughout the Island.  Once the regulations are amended, the changes to the roadside signs can also be implemented.  Councillors agreed to the proposals.

Next up was a proposal to issue a Broadcasting Licence to St Helena Broadcasting (Guarantee) Corporation Ltd for specified frequencies following changes to the original frequency plan submitted in November 2011 and agreed by ExCo then.   The new frequencies will not cause interference with other already allocated frequencies.  Councillors confirmed that they were content to approve the Broadcasting Licence for St Helena Broadcasting (Guarantee) Corporation Ltd.

Our final paper detailed a draft bill and regulations amending the Immigration Ordinance 2011, which came into effect on 25 January 2012.  The practical operation of the Ordinance has been kept under review and the legislation has been broadly successful.  The amendments presented in this morning’s paper are mainly tidying up the legislation.    However, a small number of significant changes to the legislation have been identified to improve it.  These include: first, making provision for two new groups of people to qualify for St Helenian status; persons born outside of St Helena to St Helenian parents and persons under the age of 18, who are the son or daughter of parents who are applying for St Helenian status; second, providing a mechanism for the Immigration Control Board to revoke a work permit or immigrant employment certificate if the holder has not delivered on  commitments made in the application; and lastly, changes to the Governor in Council’s powers to grant a dispensation from the requirements to obtain St Helenian status.  Councillors agreed that the draft Amendment Bill should be presented as Government business at the next Legislative Council.

Having started at 09.30 we were able to conclude our business shortly before 11.00.

This is my last ExCo as Acting Governor before Governor Capes returns to the Island early next year.  I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a peaceful and tranquil Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Thank you for very much for listening and a good afternoon to you all.

Owen O’Sullivan

Acting Governor

**SHG**

**18 December 2012**