



Formal meeting of the Ascension Island Council Finance Committee

1100 on Friday 11 February 2021 at the Court House

MINUTES

Present: Gareth Morris, Director of Resources

Councillor Alan Nicholls

Councillor Kitty George

Councillor Andrew Ellick

In attendance: Catherine Leo, Assistant Director of Resources

Siobhan Stewart, Clerk of Council

1. Welcome

The Director of Resources welcomed all parties.

2. Actions Points from previous meeting

The Director of Resources listed the action points from the previous meeting held on 05 February 2021.

- a. **Reprioritisation of policing resource bid:** Police Inspector has completed and the document has been redistributed.
- b. **Update Budget proposal pack and additional bids spread sheet:** DoR distributed to council prior to meeting.
- c. **Sure letter of IT recommendation to be shared:** Assistant Director of Resources awaiting formal recommendation from Sure.
- d. **Director of Operations and Facilities to send through business cases for School playground and surface water drainage at Two Boats School:** The Director of Resources reported that the Director of Operations and Facilities has withdrawn the bid for Water surface drainage at Two Boats School.

3. Feedback on shared documents

Councillor Nicholls asked if there is capacity in the police resourcing bid for Special Constables, the DoR explained that the Police Inspector has confirmed he has the ability to facilitate a Special Constable within his normal operational budget. The DoR opened up the floor to any questions Councillors may have regarding the business cases and business pack provided. Councillor George confirmed that the document provided was accurate and agreeable.

IT investment and replacement: Councillor Ellick thanked the Assistant Director of Resources for her very clear business case in relation to IT equipment, indicating his support for the bid. Councillor Nicholls indicated his approval, pending an email of recommendation from Sure. Further discussion was had around what the money will be spent on, the ADoR explaining that the quotation includes; four servers, an upgrade to AIG's current accounting package, replacement back up storage and systems, as well as replacement laptops and computers, whilst bearing in mind that this is across the whole of AIG, including Two Boats School.

Surface water drainage and playground surface at Two Boats School: The DoR explained that the DoOF requested that he make Councillors aware that the figures in the business case are a provisional sum in a bill of quantities where there are no accurate specifications, subject to designs. Councillors expressed concern over where the figures have come from for the proposed project, Councillor Ellick conveyed his strong disappointment that despite asking the DoOF for more information and an explanation of costs at a previous meeting, none has been provided. Councillors explained that whilst they fully support the principle and need for

the work to be done at Two Boats School, regrettably Councillors are unable to approve any Business case without financial details and planning.

The DoR reported that the DoOF has withdrawn the bid for a Water surface drainage solution at Two Boats School. Councillor Ellick expressed concern over the direction and quality of the business cases put forward by the Operations and Facilities Directorate, Councillor Nicholls added that he had been informed that the AIG did not have sufficient resources to complete the project, therefore questioning why the bid was put forward in the first place. Councillor Ellick described the need for guidance, support and understanding of the financial bidding process within the Operations and Facilities Directorate. The DoR explained that whilst the initial conversations happened around capital bids in July 2020, Senior Management were encouraged to prepare quotations and planning as much as possible, as the money must be spent within the 12 month period Councillor Nicholls expressed concern regarding liability where no action is taken and bids withdrawn. The DoR explained that some preventative action has been taken at Two Boats School, however the repairs that have been completed are not a long term solution, adding that the supplementary appropriation fund may be used at a later date if a more detailed business case were to be provided.

Policing Resource - Personal safety equipment: The DoR explained that the Police Inspector has since reprioritised the list of personal safety equipment, and has redistributed to the Committee. Councillor Ellick reported that following a discussion with the Police Inspector, he explained that the Body Armour requested is personalised to each Police Officer and cannot be shared or passed on to new team members. Councillor Ellick suggested that perhaps an agreement can be made with Saint Helena Government to share the financial burden, Councillor Nicholls suggested that Police Officers from Saint Helena should bring their personalised body armour with them. Councillor Nicholls added that it is difficult to justify the need for body armour, however recognises that it only takes one incident to be life threatening, Councillor George added that the impact on people jobs is a deterrent from getting into trouble with the police. Councillor Nicholls indicated his contentment with the Quick Cuffs, Normal Length Batons and Long Batons, however requested more details around the need for wall safes, the DOR explained that the wall safes have been requested for the Police Officers to store their PPE in a secure place at home. Councillor Ellick reported the need for new Body Worn Cameras as the current cameras are not tamper proof, adding that he fully supports the Police Inspectors business case. Councillors agreed to a £6,000 one off investment to replace key equipment, whilst the remaining should come from the department's annual operational budget.

Additional Resource for the Sea Rescue Team: The DoR explained that the business cases for the Sea Rescue Training manager and Marine Mechanic had been streamlined by the PI and distributed prior to the meeting. Councillor Nicholls requested more information with regards to which department the Training Manager will come under, the DoR reported that whilst several options were being considered, it was likely that the role would have links into the Police Department as well as the Marine team. Some discussion was had around the future of the AIG Fire Department, and whether a dual purpose role could be recruited, however this was deemed unlikely. Councillor Ellick conveyed his support for the Marine Mechanic role, however had concerns over the requirement for a full time Training Manager for one boat. The DoR explained that the role advertised would be a Sea Rescue Lead/Trainer, with the expectation that they will bring a level of experience to train and coordinate the existing voluntary service, whilst contributing to emergency response planning across all sectors and taking up other duties as required. Councillor Ellick requested that the responsibility of the AIG Drone remains with the AIG, not over to SHG, the ADoR added that the Finance Department has details of what was purchased, when, and by who to ensure it remains within the correct department.

4. Proposed budgets, movements from 2021/2021

The DoR provided a summary on the overall budget position of the AIG. The DoR was pleased to report that the forecast of revenue is expected to increase, with the assistance of the commemorative coin company deal and with additional contractors on island, income tax is expected to increase. Councillor Nicholls requested an update on the Sure 247 World one number, the DoR explained that whilst this revenue income was still being considered, legal considerations were taking time. The DoR went onto explain that the forecast sale of fuel versus budget was inaccurate, therefore adjusted on the revenue for 2021 and forecast for 2022.

The DoR provided an update on where Councillors have indicated an agreement for additional expenditure in the following key areas; Sea Rescue Lead and Mechanic, additional resource for the school, as well as extra staffing costs for the hospital during Covid19. The DoR highlighted that whilst in some key areas revenues have fallen, this is being offset by lower costs elsewhere, such as more efficient use of the incinerator. Councillor Nicholls asked if there were further saving that could be made in operating the incinerator as costs are still quite high. Further discussion was had around the use of the incinerator by other Employing Organisations on the island and the environmental benefits of using the incinerator. Councillor Nicholls asked if the car crusher was being used and whether owners of vehicles had to pay to have their vehicle crushed, the DoR explained that whilst the car crusher is operational, there are currently no fees passed onto the owners of the vehicle.

The DoR confirmed that he will provide an updated summary of figures prior to the next meeting. The DoR asked Councillors to recommend that this is proposed to Council formally with the proviso that a written commentary will be provided to support prior to the formal meeting. Councillors agreed to take the budget forward to a Formal Council meeting.

5. Overall proposed positions

	Proposal	KG	AE	AN
1	Operation Pay Inflation	Yes	Yes	Yes
2	Recruitment of Marine Mechanic & Training Manager	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	Additional Police Constable	No	No	No
4	Administrative support	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	Recruitment of Marine Mechanic & Training Manager	Yes	Yes	Yes
6	Marine lifting equipment	Yes	Yes	Yes
7	Surface water drainage at Two Boats School (detail required)	No	No	No
8	Playground surface at Two Boats School (detail required)	No	No	No
9	Road upgrades (withdrawn)	No	No	No
10	Property refurbishment	Yes	Yes	Yes
11	Two Public Transport Busses (one to be EDF funded)	Yes	Yes	Yes
12	Three Vivaro vehicles	Yes	Yes	Yes
13	One tractor unit	Yes	Yes	Yes

The DoR thanked Councillors for their time, not only today but over the previous weeks.

There was no further business and the meeting ended at 12:10

Siobhan

Siobhan Stewart
Clerk of Council

I certify that this is a true record of the meeting to which it relates.



Gareth Morris
Director of Resources – Chair of Finance Committee