

**ASCENSION ISLAND  
GOVERNMENT**

Clerk of Council's Office  
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## **Informal meeting of the Ascension Island Council**

**10:00 on Tuesday 21 February 2023 at the Courthouse**

### **MEETING SUMMARY**

Present: HH Simon Minshull, Administrator  
Matthew James, Crown Counsel  
Catherine Leo, Deputy Director of Resources  
Councillor Kerry Benjamin  
Councillor Kyla Benjamin  
Councillor Alan Nicholls  
Councillor Laura Shearer  
Councillor Douglas Miller

In attendance: Carl Mackerras, Head of the Administrator's Office  
Diane Baum, Director of Conservation and Fisheries  
Siobhan Stewart, Clerk to Council

Apologies:

The Administrator welcomed all parties and thanked everyone for attending.

Matters arising were addressed via the actions tracker. There were two topics on the tracker which was discussed as follows:

**Blue Marine Endowment Fund:** The DoCF explained that the Blue Marine Endowment Fund is yet to generate any funds due to investments not performing as well as hoped. Councillor Nicholls expressed his disappointment. It was highlighted that the fund has only been invested for one year so far and is hoped to perform better soon. The DoCF recommended that Councillors have a call with Blue Marine CEO, Clare Brook, who will be able to explain the fund management and performance. It was agreed that the MOU would be circulated prior to any meeting.

**ITT for AIG Guest House:** The ADoR confirmed that the creation of the necessary tender documents is progressing well. A further update will be provided at the next meeting.

The DoCF explained that the Public Consultation on the Inshore Fisheries Strategy and Policies has now ended and the collation of responses and responses has begun. The DoCF thanked Councillors for their feedback thus far and requested that Councillors consider the draft consultation response and should they feel anything has not been addressed or is not formatted in a clear manner, to let her know. The DoCF suggested that a dedicated meeting is arranged with Councillors to move on to the next stage of considering the consultation responses and work towards a revised strategy and policies. Councillors agreed. The DoCF confirmed that there are no further periods of public consultation planned however, if there were to be very contentious issues a period of further consultation may be required.

Councillors Nicholls recommended that the implementation of the Inshore Strategy and Policies is dealt with in an expeditious manner and requested a timeline on the next steps. The DoCF confirmed that she hopes to be in a position to present further memos at the next informal meeting of Council around the end of March 2023. Crown Counsel reported that due to limited resources the drafting of legislation along with enforcement guidance is likely to take a number of months with a forecast implementation date of around late summer 2023. Councillor Nicholls noted that the incentive of the endowment fund is no longer there due to no interest being made on the investment thus far. The DoCF explained that the endowment fund is dependent upon responsible management of the marine protected area and money can only be released once a system of inshore fisheries management is in place.

The Head of the Administrator's Office gave an update on the **runway project** reporting that the project is progressing well with the asphaltting of the runway now complete. Work is ongoing in relation to the final electrical installations, signage and concrete work, which will be followed by the final FAA certification. Resurfacing of the roads between the airhead and the pier head has now been completed, with reinstatement of the speedbump leading into Georgetown in progress. The HoAO confirmed that contractor numbers have begun to decrease as the demobilisation continues, with the final departures expected in June 2023. As part of the demobilisation phase the USAF vessel due this weekend is expected to take back over 100 containers.

Councillor Kerry Benjamin requested clarity on the size of the speedbump being reinstated. The Administrator explained that the AIG have been engaging with the Runway Project Manager and the design has been modified to ensure there will be no damage to vehicles, whilst still having the desired effect of slowing vehicles.

There were two items of **other business**:

- i. **UKOTA Pre JMC meetings:** The HoAO reported of a Sherpa meeting scheduled for later in the week and invited Councillors to attend.
- ii. **Joint Ministerial Council:** The HoAO requested that elected members consider who they wish to nominate to attend the JMC from 10 to 12 May 2023. Discussion was had regarding potential flight options. Councillor Nicholls highlighted that Ascension is the only Overseas Territory at a disadvantage with no representation based in London. The Administrator agreed to raise the concern with HE the Governor and revert back.

The meeting closed at 10:40

Siobhan Stewart  
Clerk of Council