



Informal meeting of the Ascension Island Council

10:00 on Thursday 14 September 2023 at the Courthouse

MEETING SUMMARY

Present: HH Carl Mackerras, Acting Administrator
Catherine Leo, Acting Director of Resources
Councillor Kerry Benjamin
Councillor Alan Nicholls
Councillor Kyla Benjamin
Councillor Douglas Miller

In attendance: Matthew James, Crown Counsel
Siobhan Stewart, Clerk to Council

Apologies: HH Simon Minshull, Administrator [overseas]
Councillor Laura Shearer [overseas]

The Administrator welcomed all parties and thanked everyone for attending.

There were currently no actions on the actions tracker.

Crown Counsel explained that following an enquiry raised at Council on 03 August 2023, the provision of a creche facility for parents of preschool children was discussed by the Ascension Child Safeguarding Board at the quarterly meeting held on 06 September 2023. Crown Counsel noted that the possibility of a creche in Ascension has been raised on numerous occasions over the past seven years, although has never been considered financially viable. This is not least due to the lack of an available building in which to host a creche, in addition to the increased training and regulation required for an AIG sanctioned creche to be established. Crown Counsel explained that considering the age and number of children of pre-school age in Ascension, and the time it would take to safely establish a creche, it was again considered to not be a feasible option at this time. It was proposed that resources would be better spent, and provide faster results for parents on island, if time and effort was invested into supporting existing childminders in providing their services on island.

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

- i. **Employment Disputes in Ascension:** Crown Counsel noted that AIG are working closely with Yang and Wolf Creek employees and are supporting both to ensure a smooth transition, and have highlighted their responsibilities for carrying over existing terms and conditions for current employee contracts. Councillor Nicholls indicated that he was going to raise this matter under AOB, he was advised to submit his concerns via a Councillor Enquiry Form.
- ii. **AIG Fire Service:** Councillor Miller requested an update on the interim fire service agreement between the MOD and AIG. The Administrator explained that a temporary MOU remains in place which is expected to be finalised following agreement regarding vehicle procurement. Councillor Nicholls relayed concerns from constituents in relation to fire fighting equipment in domestic buildings not being periodically inspected. The Administrator explained that this now falls under the AIG Health and Safety Officer who is progressing this matter.
- iii. **Telecommunications in Ascension:** Councillor Miller requested an update on the ongoing Telecommunications consultation. Crown Counsel explained that work on the draft policy and legislation is ongoing, and is expected to be completed by May 2024, approximately 12 months after the end user licencing scheme was introduced.
- iv. **Road Network:** Councillor Miller noted the recent increase in potholes and excessive gravel on the roads. The Administrator explained that due to increased recent rainfall there has been a rise in road degradation around the island, which the Operations team are currently addressing.

The meeting closed at 10:10

Siobhan Stewart
Clerk to Council