

**ASCENSION ISLAND
GOVERNMENT**

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Informal meeting of the Ascension Island Council

10:00 on Thursday 3rd April at the AIG Meeting Room

MEETING SUMMARY

Present: HH Simon Minshull, Administrator
Director of Resources, Peter Thomas
Councillor Alan Nicholls
Councillor Laura Shearer

In attendance: Head of the Administrator's Office, Martin Hogg
Acting Crown Council, Daniel Weight [Remotely]
Locum Senior Crown Council, Gareth Rhys [Remotely]
Georgina Wilson, Clerk to Council

Apologies: Acting Attorney General, Andrew Dawson [Remotely]
Councillor Kyla Benjamin

1. Welcome

The Administrator welcomed all parties and thanked everyone for attending.

2. Sick Leave Policy

Gareth Rhys (GR – Locum Senior Crown Council) apologised to Councillors for the delay to the work on the Employment (Sick Leave) Regulations. GR explained that he was drafting the legislation in collaboration with the legislative drafters in the Attorney General's office in St Helena. GR explained that councillors would receive draft legislation prior to formal Council Meeting on the 10 April. GR noted that the pending dissolution of the legislative council in St Helena meant there was limited support available from legislative drafters but, that the regulations were on track to be provided in draft form to councillors.

GR explained that he required further information from Council. GR asked for clarity on the minimum sick leave entitlement of 10 days minimum per year, and the impact on annual leave entitlement. Further discussion was had on the difference between self-certification of sick leave and certified sick leave. The Administrator highlighted that the legislation aims to set a minimum standard for employing organisations to provide for its employees. GR noted that full explanation of definitions of different types of sick leave will be included to ensure that it is clear in the draft for councillors' consideration. Acting Crown Council (Ag CC) asked for clarity on long term illness. Councillor Shearer explained that certified long-term sick leave would come under employing organisations' own policies, with the main priority being to ensure that a minimum standard of 10 working days annual paid leave entitlement was required by all employers.

It was confirmed to GR that the 10 days entitlement did not accrue year on year. Discussion was had on the impact of this annual entitlement on long term sick leave. GR noted that clarity was still required on the protection for workers with long term illnesses. The Administrator reconfirmed the priority is to focus on the minimum sick leave entitlement but thanked GR for raising the issues that need to be considered in the draft legislation.

GR sought advice on the transition period for the legislation. It was discussed and confirmed that the legislation would be implemented as soon as practical, with 01 June 2025 proposed as a start date. Public consultation on the legislation took place in December 2024 with organisations and the community made aware of the proposed changes so transition should not come as a surprise.

GR highlighted that he had provided advice on the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) regulations and asked if his advice has been considered. The Administrator agreed that it had and thanked GR for the advice. The Administrator confirmed that the US Base Commander was aware and it was expected this would reassure Base employees that Island rules and regulations would apply with the transfer of the US Base contract.

The Administrator and Councillors thanked GR for his help with the drafting of the legislation and he left the meeting at 10:32.

3. Matters arising

Matters arising were addressed via the actions tracker as follows:

Future Vet Visit Plans: The Administrator confirmed that there was no update but confirmed that AIG are working with the Falklands Islands Senior Veterinary Officer to agree a suitable time for a visit, which is currently hoped to take place in May 2025.

Sick Leave Policy: The draft sick leave regulations had been covered in the meeting. Councillors were grateful for the re-gained momentum the policy and that it was nearing completion, commented on their frustration about the taken time to get to this stage.

4. Any other business

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

- i. **Domestic Abuse Ordinance:** Councillor Shearer asked for confirmation that the Domestic Abuse Ordinance had been published. Ag CC confirmed that it had been enacted and notified in February 2025 and was in force. Councillors requested a Public Notice be issued to raise community awareness of the legislation. The Administrator confirmed he would liaise with the Police and Social Worker on how best to raise awareness, and the Head of Administrator's Office (HoAO) would ensure the legislation was placed on the St Helena/Ascension Government websites.
- ii. **Dissolution of Council:** The HoAO explained that a notice of dissolution would be published in the week commencing 07 April to advise that Council would be dissolved on the 16 April 2025 with HE Governor's approval. The election is scheduled to take place on the 15 May 2025, with candidate nominations closing on the 01 May 2025. The update to the register of electors had commenced and updates will be published before the nomination window closes. Updates to the register for 2024-2025 can continue to be made until the end of August 2025.
- iii. **Procurement and Finance Regulations:** The Ag CC advised that they have provided advice to AIG but felt more work was needed to formalise. The DoR explained that while these were not legislative, they were needed and had been identified as a recommendation from a recent audit. The DoR highlighted the need to have these implemented quickly but recommended a call between himself and the Ag CC to finalise details. These would be presented to the new Council after the election.
- iv. **Telecommunication's situation:** Councillor Shearer asked about the telecoms situation. The Administrator confirmed that the subsidy contract has been signed between SURE and AIG and was in place. The Administrator confirmed the discussions with SURE regarding the AIG's IT maintenance contract were nearing completion.

5. Proposed date of next meeting

Formal Meeting 16.30 on 10 April 2025

The meeting closed at 10:51.

Georgina Wilson
Clerk to Council