

DELIVERED THROUGH THE EXPERT ADVISORY CALL-DOWN SERVICE (EACDS) LOT B:

STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE AND RESPONSE TO CRISES



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ST HELENA POLITICAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW

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STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE AND RESPONSE TO CRISES

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACRONYM	Full title
DFID	The Department for International Development
ExCo	Executive Council
FCO	The Foreign and Commonwealth Office
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
LegCo	Legislative Council
OTs	Overseas Territories
PAC	Public Accounts Committee
SEDP	Sustainable Economic Development Plan
SHG	St Helena Government
UK	United Kingdom
UKG	United Kingdom Government

1 INTRODUCTION

1) This report reviewing St Helena's political governance system, and making suggestions for the future, only deals with St Helena, as the Islands of Ascension and Tristan da Cunha were not part of the brief.

2) The Governance Review process arose out of a request by the Legislative Committee and Executive Committee on St Helena in 2019 about the need to review the current governance processes on St Helena. The proposal was to see whether a better way could be found to govern the Island. However, arriving at a new more workable governance process is not a new idea. This can be seen for example in testimony in 2018 in the United Kingdom where it was noted that:

*"We believe that it is timely to consider a possible move from the current Committee system to a different model of Government that would increase the self-determination of St Helena and provide a suitable framework for an island that is committed to reducing aid dependency and moving towards a more independent future."*¹

3) The terms of reference for the St Helena Political Governance Review was to assess the drivers and enablers of the current political governance system and the possible rationale for changing the current political governance system. Included was the request to examine best practice from other OTs, and to review whether lessons can be learnt about how to improve governance and to make recommendations.

4) The central concern was to see how to make the current governance system on St Helena work better. As was noted by the current St Helena Governor Dr Phillip Rushbrook in September 2019: *"we should find a better way to govern ourselves to ensure decision-making in weeks (not years) and individual elected councillors becoming directly responsible politically for the performance of [St Helena Government (SHG)] directorates."*²

¹ Written evidence from the Government of St Helena (OTS0061) to the Foreign Affairs Committee Hearings August 2018.

² Governor Dr Phillip Rushbrook – After 100 days on the Job" Posted on the St Helena Government website, September 12, 2019 by the St Helena Government

Thus, greater responsibility for governance to be given to those from the Island was seen to be vital as a way of promoting greater democracy and clearer accountability for those on St Helena responsible for decision-making.

- 5) The idea of improving governance processes and ensuring greater community involvement in such processes was noted in a 2012 United Kingdom (UK) report where it was stated that:

*"The UK Government has a vision of making government work better. We believe in sound public finances, building economic resilience and effective regulation. We want to increase efficiency and effectiveness, ensure public funds are spent wisely, and foster a fairer, more open and mobile society. We believe in giving power to people and communities across the UK and the Territories to drive reform. This means strengthening accountability including by making the performance of public bodies and services more transparent. We will work with the people, communities and governments of the Territories to realise this vision."*³

- 6) Dozens of meetings held on St Helena in September 2019, that involved hundreds of people informed this report. Meetings were held with the St Helena Executive and Legislative Committees. Numerous officials, who play various roles, were consulted on the Island, including the Governor, Deputy-Governor, Chief-Secretary, Financial-Secretary, Acting Attorney-General, Chief Magistrate, and other members of the St Helena Government. A number of meetings were held with people at various organizations, companies, and with various other people, including key business and other individuals. There have also been follow-up communications with various individuals. A meeting was held with various members of the media at the beginning of the consultation process, and a well-attended press conference, with journalists from all media sectors, was held at the end of the visit.

- 7) In addition, four well-attended public consultation meetings were held in the

³ Presented to the UK Parliament by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs by Command of Her Majesty June 2012 P49.

evenings in different locations on the Island. This was done to enhance interest in and knowledge about the process.

8) It is crucial to note that St Helena is absolutely defined by its geographic size, its location and the number of people who live there. The fact that St Helena is far from the United Kingdom, as well as being far from the two continents (Africa and South America) that it is positioned between, makes access to the Island difficult and expensive. The issue of its locality has, and will continue to, define the Island's economy. It will continue to have an immense influence on its economic development. How to move forward needs major political vision and political will to implement some very key decisions to move the island in a way that attempts to solve its problems.

9) As the St Helena Legislative Committee (LegCo) testified in hearings in the United Kingdom in 2018:

*St Helena has a small aging population; limited tax base, inadequate infrastructure, median income of some £8,000.00 per annum, high reliance on imports and a fledging economy. All these factors impose severe limitations on matters such as revenue generation and sustainable economic growth.*⁴

10) It is useful that processes have begun on a 2050 vision for Saint Helena, and that the St Helena 2050 Green Paper has rationales, goals, principles, and intervention strategies for population growth, skills and human capital development, and eco-system vitality. A ten-year plan for the period 2017-27 has also been developed with various goals and the Sustainable Economic Development Plan (SEDP) that develops the economic aspects of the plan.

⁴ Written Evidence from the Elected Members of the St Helena Legislative Council (OTS0049) to the FCA 2018.

2 AN ASSESSMENT OF THE DRIVERS AND ENABLERS OF THE CURRENT POLITICAL GOVERNANCE SYSTEM

- 11) There are a number of drivers and enablers of the process. These are the Governor, the ExCo and LegCo and the SHG. There is also the role of United Kingdom Government (UKG), the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Department of International Development (DFID).
- 12) The Governor, nominated by the FCO and appointed by the UK Government (UKG), is the constitutional head of state of St Helena and represents the UKG. The Governor is required to exercise 'good governance' through an on-island Executive Council (ExCo). The Governor chairs ExCo, which is the body that advises the Governor.
- 13) The St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha Constitution provides that the Governor is responsible for business relating to the Government of St Helena. This includes the general direction and policy control of any department of the government. The Governor has the discretion to allocate to ExCo certain responsibilities. Finance is one the executive responsibilities of the Governor, but may be given a Council Committee. The Financial Secretary is part of the constitutional structure being an ex officio member of the both the ExCo and LegCo.
- 14) The Governor has special responsibility for defence, external affairs, internal security (including the police), certain defined public service matters, the administration of justice, finance and shipping. The Governor has the ability to act against the advice of the Council involving these matters. Some of the Governor's powers, depending on what specific Governors decide, are devolved to others.
- 15) The Constitution, adopted in 2009 provides for the Legislative Council (LegCo), with 12 councillors. Those councillors are elected in one constituency: ie an all-island vote. The parliamentary term is four years. The last election was in 2017 and the next

elections are to be held in 2021. While there were constituencies in the past, these were abolished in 2012 when there were two constituencies. Previously there were 8 constituencies. While political parties are possible, none exist.

16) As far as the LegCo is concerned, all the 12 councillors are members of the Legislative Council (LegCo). There is a Speaker and a deputy speaker that preside over LegCo. The Chief Secretary, the Financial Secretary and the Attorney General are non-voting ex officio members. The LegCo has the authority from the Constitution to make a variety of laws for St Helena. It is not always clear where the authority of the Governor and that of the LegCo start and end. There are no portfolios in the composition of LegCo. The roles of the LegCo versus ExCo are not clearly defined or understood and often their roles are confused. What LegCo should do is sometimes done by ExCo and vice versa. More clarity and direction on their various roles ought to occur.

17) ExCo, chaired by the Governor, is made up of five LegCo councillors who are elected by LegCo. Besides the Governor who chairs ExCo, there are other ex officio attendees of ExCo: the SHG Chief Secretary, the SHG Financial Secretary, the Attorney General and the Head of Governor's Office. It is very advantageous that both the Chief Secretary and Financial Secretary are St Helenians. This promotes local decision-making and leadership. Both of them are well skilled and are seen to be giving strong leadership.

18) ExCo has oversight for policy, legislation, and resource allocation and performance management. The five ExCo members chair the five committees of ExCo. These are the Economic Development Committee; the Education Committee; the Environment & Natural Resources Committee; the Public Health Committee; and the Social and Community Development Committee. The five committees have functional areas that do not align with the eight directorates of the SHG. Committee Chairs are not authorised to make decisions, except through their committees. The Governor, on the advice of the Executive Council, makes the decision about the number of Committees and what their functions are.

19) The “St Helena Government (SHG)” is the public administration of the Island. It is called, incorrectly, the government. This is confusing and problematic because it is seen to be where the governance decisions are taken. While this is not usually the case, it imbeds the continuation of the misconceptions that the SHG holds the governance powers and this is where decisions are taken and executed. In reality, SHG actually performs the role of both central and local government in the practical sense of being the bureaucracy or public service of the Island. As noted above, the SHG has a chief Secretary who is the head of the administration. The administration presently has a number of Directorates and Corporate Services. Most, but not all, directorates report to an ExCo Committee. The functions of the directorates are not in line with the ExCo Committee functions and therefore rationalisation and coherence are necessary.

3 THE RATIONALE FOR CHANGING THE CURRENT POLITICAL GOVERNANCE SYSTEM

20) Generally speaking, the governance system on St Helena functions reasonably effectively though slowly. However, there are a number of problems and the system is not as effective as it could be. It does not sufficiently promote transparency and accountability. A problem is that specific direction and overall direction is not provided to the Administration or Public Service that is called the SHG. There is need to promote more political vision and more processes to promote good decisive decision-making.

21) There is some unhappiness about how decisions are taken. There is some dissatisfaction about the lack of transparency in the various processes. It is unclear sometimes, to some of the community on the Island, about who took decisions and why particular choices were made, and what advice informed those choices. This is particularly the case when the perception is that those choices have not worked out as well as planned.

22) There are also blockages in the system that impedes progress. There are

perceptions that too little responsibility is taken on some matters and that this translates into a lack of accountability for some decisions. There is also a view that there is a lack of timely policy formation, that there is a lack of consultation before policies are drafted, that there is at times a failure to pursue the interests of particular sections of the general public, and that processes are not completed timely. There is also a view that individual councillors cannot be held accountable as it is not clear what positions on specific issues they hold, and what actions they have supported or opposed.

23) As noted above, there is some dissatisfaction with what is called the "St Helena Government (SHG)." The SHG is really the civil or public service bureaucracy on the Island. There are some perceptions by some people that it seemingly sometimes makes decisions that are not always in the best interests of the Island.

24) The Executive Council and Legislative Council are at times criticized for not having the ability to take decisions. They are seen to times to be ineffective in getting SHG to implement decisions. There are some negative perceptions about the state of governance and decision-making. Part of the reason for these perceptions is that the Executive Council and Legislative Council function by way of committee. Too much time is spent on working out whom should be making the decision, and how that decision ought to be made. Even in the LegCo and ExCo there is often the view that consensus is needed before a decision can be arrived at. This means that much time is spent discussing the issues and decisions are not always arrived at and if they are it has taken much energy and time.

25) There are also public perceptions about the lack of personal accountability for decision-making by the ExCo, LegCo, SHG and others. It is seen by some that the lack of specific ownership of decisions at the political and administrative levels has undesirable effects. It adversely affects how decisions are taken and then how decisions are then implemented. It specifically has an undesirable effect, as it is viewed that there is a lack of ownership of issues, particularly when problems arise.

- 26) Allied to that is the view that decision-making is slow and cumbersome and that there is not always clarity about who should take decisions and that the approval process is even longer. Further, issues take a long time to be decided upon and then it takes a long time for them to be implemented. Some councillors believe that the SHG frustrates the various governance processes in a variety of ways, and that it often impedes successful operationalization of policy formation, legislative development and the implementation of new policy or law.
- 27) The functional roles of ExCo, LegCo and the various committees of those structures are not well defined. Who has what responsibility and where things ought to be taken up, is not always clear. Who is responsible for policy formation and development is sometimes blurred. Who takes up initiatives and what processes need to be followed is also at times uncertain. Often processes are ad hoc and spontaneous. There are few clear mechanisms for suggestions or ideas to be taken up. Often a councillor comes up with a suggestion, which may or may not be taken up. No systematic means to examine proposals in a clear and orderly fashion, with other similar issues, at the same time as other similar matters exists. No time lines seemingly exist, and little organizational process and structural plans exist to manage these.
- 28) At times, there is overlap and a lack of clarity about which committee or organ has responsibility or ought to be taking up a particular matter. There is a need for greater political vision about the future and about how the various challenges are addressed.
- 29) At present, decisions in LegCo are taken by majority vote, although at times decisions are taken collectively. ExCo decisions are collectively decided upon.
- 30) Generally speaking, there are positive features of decisions by committee. Usually committee processes avoid extremes in arriving at a result. Committee processes are

also slow and cumbersome. Often the best advice is ignored because of who makes the suggestion or the way it is made. It can take a long time to reach consensus and then the decision may not be based on sufficient evidence or reason.

- 31) One of the most important elements to improve decision-making is for an individual to be mandated to make decisions but in a transparent and democratic way getting the available input that is necessary. It is for this reason that overwhelmingly, in states around the world, governance in the executive branch is carried out using a form of ministerial system. This is because agility in decision-making is key to be able to deal with major issues and respond to whatever challenges exist. At the moment too much time is spent on the process rather than on the substance of the problems. This does not mean that ministerial systems solve all problems or is the panacea for St Helena. It means that the process should work better but crucially there should be more accountability and transparency.

4 HOW BEST PRACTICE FROM OTHER OTS CAN BE APPLIED TO ST HELENA'S TRANSITION TO A NEW MODEL OF GOVERNMENT

- 32) A variety of governance models exist around the world with the parliament and presidential being some of the most important. Some islands have a hybrid system. These include the Marshall Islands and the country of Nauru, both of which has a mixture of the Westminster and Presidential system where the President is head of both the government and the state. Within those models there are few ways of exercising responsibility. Almost all rely on ministerial responsibility within the governance process rather than relying on committees as far as governance is concerned at the national level.

- 33) As far as what a ministerial system is, this model refers to a system where a politician called a minister or some other name, heads a government department, and makes and implements decisions on policies, often within a cabinet context. In some places like Belgium, Mexico, Netherlands, Philippines, Slovenia and the USA, a member

of the cabinet is not able to be a member of the legislature. Sometimes a minister is called a secretary such as in the USA. It is important to bear in mind the 2012 UK White Paper called the "The Overseas Territories: Security, Success and Sustainability."⁵ This paper notes that:

"we believe that the fundamental structure of our constitutional relationships is the right one: powers are devolved to the elected governments of the Territories to the maximum extent possible consistent with the UK retaining those powers necessary to discharge its sovereign responsibilities."

34) As far as the OTs are concerned, there are 14 British OTs. These territories all diverge in size, locality and numbers of people. They are different in that their circumstances, development, context and other matters such as economic position are all dissimilar. Some OTs have more autonomy than others. Therefore, in Bermuda and Gibraltar the Governor does not chair the Cabinet.⁶ However, most OTs have ministerial systems loosely resembling the British Westminster democracy model. It is only really in the Falkland Islands and St Helena where the ministerial system is not used. The Falklands however has a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of around US\$ 93,000. This makes its situation less economically precarious and places it in a completely different decision-making situation from that of St Helena. This is also true of Gibraltar, Bermuda and the Cayman Islands, that have very vibrant economies.

35) The OTs with ministerial systems includes Anguilla, Bermuda, the Cayman Islands, Gibraltar, Montserrat, the Turks and Caicos Islands, and the Virgin Islands. The institution that the ministers serve in is called the Cabinet in Bermuda, the Cayman Islands, Montserrat, the Turks and Caicos Islands, and the Virgin Islands. It is called the Executive Council in Anguilla and the Council of Ministers in Gibraltar.

⁵ Cm 8374.

⁶ Peter Clegg Small States & Territories, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2018, pp. 149-168 The United Kingdom and its Overseas Territories: No longer a 'benevolent patron'?

- 36) While size is important, it is not a determinate of whether an OT has a ministerial system or not. Thus, the Falkland's population is 3,000 and also has a committee system. There a Governor heads an Executive Council comprised of five members of whom three are elected and two are ex-officio. The Legislative Assembly has eight members.
- 37) On the other hand, another small territory, Montserrat, with a population of a similar size (around 5,000) to St Helena has a ministerial system with an executive Cabinet that exercises the governmental role. Montserrat had a very successful election in 2014 with 71.1 percent of voter turnout comparing to 49 percent turnout in St Helena during the general election in 2017. According to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association British Islands and Mediterranean Region election observer mission "the 2014 Legislative Assembly election in Montserrat were vibrant, peaceful and participatory." Montserrat also has a Legislative Assembly. The Cabinet comprises the Premier and three Ministers, as well as the Cabinet Secretary, Financial Secretary, Attorney General and Deputy Governor. The Legislative Assembly has nine elected members and the same ex-officio members as the Cabinet.
- 38) On the Cayman Islands where the population is much larger (55,000) there is also a ministerial system. The Legislative Assembly has fifteen elected members and two ex-officio officials, the Deputy Governor and the Attorney General. There is a cabinet that consists of a Premier, four Ministers and the same to two ex-officio officials.
- 39) In Gibraltar, with a population of about 30,000 the Parliament consists of 17 elected Members plus a Speaker. It has a single electoral constituency for the whole territory. In the Virgin Islands where there is a population of 30,000 there is a Cabinet that is composed of the Premier, four Ministers and an ex-officio official, the Attorney General. The Cabinet formulates and implements policy. The Governor exercises responsibility over external affairs, defence, internal security, facets of the public service and the courts. The House of Assembly has 13 elected members. Nine of those representatives

are elected and represent individual districts while four representatives are elected by an all island vote. The Attorney General is an ex-officio member of the House of Assembly.

40) Usefully, in the OTs with ministerial systems, the Ministers with portfolios can be questioned before the various legislative and other institutions about a range of matters. This promotes transparency and accountability. The Minister must represent and defend the policies they are advocating in various forums and in debates and elsewhere where the issues are raised. The Minister is responsible for steering suggested laws and policy proposals through the various processes. Usefully, the oversight processes permit interrogation of what is planned and what has occurred. As Woodhouse suggests "the duty of Ministers [is] to give information about their areas of responsibility to the House and its Committees and not knowingly to mislead it."⁷ The extent of the oversight being successful is dependent on the commitment by those who have to play that role. It is however to institutionalise such processes by having a dedicated question time as well as processes set aside for oversight.

41) What can be seen also in various OTs is that a variety of name changes have occurred to provide clarity and status to the various bodies. Thus, in the Falkland Islands and in Montserrat the legislative body became the Legislative Assembly. In Gibraltar, it was retitled the Gibraltar Parliament. In the Virgin Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands, the legislative body became the House of Assembly. It gives greater status the institution. It has been noted that: *"the practical day-to-day functioning of a parliamentary democracy depends on ministerial responsibility as the bedrock principle for the organization and operation of the machinery of government."*⁸ This is seen to be important, as a parliament must be able to *"demand the responsibility of its ministers to it. The second prerequisite is that civil servants need to be able to follow ministerial direction."*⁹ Answerability thus is key and promotes good decision-making.

⁷ Woodhouse, Diana. 1997. "Ministerial Responsibility: Something Old, Something New." *Public Law*. Summer: 262-282.

⁸ D'Ombra, Nicholas. 2008. "Ministerial responsibility and the machinery of government." *Canadian Public Administration*. 50: 195-217.

⁹ Aucoin, Peter and Mark Jarvis. 2005. "Modernizing Government Accountability: A framework for reform." Ottawa: Canada School of Public Service

5 A FUTURE GOVERNANCE MODEL FOR ST HELENA

42) There are various options available for governance on St Helena for the future. There is support for moving to an individual responsibility governance system. Another model would be to retain the committee system but to refine it and giving more responsibility to those committees. This is problematic as the same problems that exist at present would continue and there would still be cumbersome, slow, unaccountable and problematic decision-making processes and outcomes. Individual decision-making and individual accountability, rather than committee decision-making and accountability are key changes to make the processes work far better. Collective processes need to give way to individual decision-making and individual accountability. Real transparency and oversight methods need to be put into operation at both the governance level but also at the community level. Lines of decision-making need to be drafted and the processes of decision-making need to be clarified, and in fact simplified. Decision on the numbers of people on LegCo and ExCo must be configured by the needs of the governance model. The number of people on the ExCo and LegCo should not dramatically change, but there ought to be an odd number i.e. 11, 13 or 15 not 12, 14 or 16 to avoid the possibility of votes being tied. There does need to be more members on LegCo, who are not on ExCo, to provide oversight of the ExCo. A reformed ExCo should play a greater role in setting policy direction. ExCo should be responsible for implementing that policy by getting the public service to do so. Thus, the public service should be operating under the executive and be accountable to the executive. This is not the case at present.

5.1 HOW SUCH A NEW MODEL CAN BROADEN THE POOL OF POTENTIAL CANDIDATES

43) There are difficulties to get more people to participate in the governance system at present partly because of the perceptions about how the governance system works currently. If the system changes and there is great trust in the process and greater powers to affect processes are seen, this should lead to greater participation. If there is an acceptance that more change is possible and those on ExCo and LegCo have a greater opportunity to effect such change more participation is likely. Greater

transparency and accountability are apt to promote greater community involvement.

5.2 HOW SUCH A NEW MODEL CAN BE PROMOTED POSITIVELY INCLUDING THROUGH USING APPROPRIATE (AND ACCESSIBLE) TECHNOLOGY

44) At present, committees and ExCo have open agenda sessions, where the public can attend. Elected members hold constituency meetings. However, there ought to be more public engagement. There ought to be more public hearings and more public meetings. A variety of methods can be used to enhance outreach including more public meetings to engage the people on the Island and to consult them more on governance matters. Appropriate technology can be used to allow greater access to the governance process and processes of issues that are being considered. A variety of civic and voter education is important and processes to get voter participation. This should occur also outside election processes to include matters relating to budget matters, oversight and government monitoring. Interactive processes can be useful as well as providing open government data in databases and other accessible information storage mechanisms. Enhancing the role of the public can also be achieved by working with civil society groups including the media to provide information. Promoting the role of civil society in the absence of political parties is important. More resources for these groups and their use of appropriate technology will also enhance outcomes. The various websites used by the formal governance institutions, as well as others that play such a role, need to be continually updated with relevant information. However, because of the cost and difficulties with the internet information should be made available by providing information in other easily accessible formats, such as possibly a five-page weekly government bulletin that provides factual information on developments and upcoming events and processes. Possibly computers for people to access necessary information for free, will enhance much activity, including civic ones.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS (TO BE CONSULTED ON DURING THE SECOND VISIT)

45) Reforming the system of governance on St Helena is key to a process that could allow the Island to face its challenges and find ways to overcome them. Greater

organizational clarity is needed on whom is responsible for what, how processes work, who and how decisions are taken, how those decisions are then executed, and how oversight of those processes ought to occur. Individual leadership is also needed in conjunction with greater accountability and transparency more vision is needed. For this a Premier, Chief Islander, Chief Councillor, or person who is the main visionary and takes responsibility for the overall running of the government and is the person responsible for the finance portfolio which is the key issue for the future. This person would also be responsible for representing the Island in negotiations with the UK Government on the budget etc.

46) Whatever governance model St Helena has in the future, those responsible for carrying it out will need policy and legal support to be able to deliver on their mandates. As the St Helena Tourism Association has noted: "Accountability, inclusiveness, partnership, equity and meaningful communication are indispensable if governance of the Overseas Territories is to be effective, efficient, supported and respected by the citizens of the British Overseas Territories."¹⁰

47) Besides supporting those taking future decisions with technical and legal advice, training will be necessary at the beginning of their tenure and then all the way through their time in office. People should also be assisted with research support and other types of advice when necessary, as well as support that allows them to gain greater aptitude to the needs of change and to think in strategic ways. Greater ways to achieve community accountability is crucial. There is a perception by some constituents, that on some important issues, their views are not taken into account. While councillors do hold public meetings, there needs to be greater engagement by councillors with the community, with more regular report backs and more processes of consultation. Detailed manifestos ought to be key parts of election processes and more question times and communication with the people on the Island ought to occur. Greater accountability of councillors is crucial to promote greater trust in the process.

¹⁰ Written evidence from the St Helena Tourism Association (OTS0025).

- 48) As far as the administration is concerned, a more integrated administrative system is needed on St Helena. It needs to be nimble and should allow good and responsible policy choices to be made, and implemented quickly and effectively, making use of a reconfigured public service that operates in way that is coherent with the processes in the legislative and executive structures. The processes in the executive structure should therefore be aligned to the directorates in the public service.
- 49) As far as the electoral system is concerned the Island had a number of constituencies in the past. The system was later amended to have 2 constituencies for the island. As this caused difficulties, a few years ago constituencies were abandoned and now no constituencies exist and councillors are elected by an all Island vote. Having constituencies could promote greater vibrancy and more accountability but there is a danger that there may not be candidates in all constituencies if that model is adopted. Thus, moving to constituencies may be useful, but it has dangers in that too few people may stand for all the vacancies.
- 50) Political parties are a possibility on the Island but the creation of such parties should evolve when there is a perceived need for them by those on the Island. At present there does not seem to be support to create political parties, but there ought to be the possibility for them to be established in the future if such a need comes to the fore.
- 51) A reformed administration model should see 5 or 6 portfolios in the ExCo and the same number of 5 or 6 Directorates, with the same functions to ensure coherence between the bodies, in the reformed Public Service.
- 52) Very usefully, a Public Accounts Committee (PAC) exists. It is established under section 69 of the 2009 Constitution Order of St Helena to examine the audited financial statements of Government and other public bodies and report to Legislative Council.

The Committee performs an important role in the holding to account of those entrusted with the management of public funds. This Committee is composed of some members of the LegCo and some independent community people. The PAC ought to be enhanced and composed of more independent people than elected people to provide greater financial oversight in the future. The PAC should be given the authority to examine all public sector assets, liabilities, income and expenditure. This should apply to all public sector assets owned by St Helena Government or other entities where St Helena is a shareholder. The Chief Auditor has the function of promoting public accountability and acts as adviser to the Public Accounts Committee. There is a need to revise the processes relating to the Chief Auditor and update the audit legislation.