



**RECORD OF THE MEETING
OF THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**HELD AT THE
CATHEDRAL PARISH HALL
STANLEY**

24 SEPTEMBER 2020

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HELD AT THE CATHEDRAL PARISH HALL, STANLEY
THURSDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2020**

Speaker of the House
(Mr Keith Biles JP)

MEMBERS (Ex-Officio)

The Honourable Chief Executive
(Mr Barry Rowland)

The Honourable Financial Secretary
(Mr Timothy Waggott)

Elected

The Honourable Teslyn Siobhan Barkman
(Elected Member for Camp Constituency)

The Honourable Stacy John Bragger
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

The Honourable Roger Anthony Edwards
(Elected Member for Camp Constituency)

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

The Honourable Ian Hansen
(Elected Member for Camp Constituency)

The Honourable Mark John Pollard
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

The Honourable Roger Kenneth Spink
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

The Honourable Lucila Leona Vidal Roberts (Leona Roberts)
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

PERSONS ENTITLED TO ATTEND

The Attorney General
(Mr Simon Young)

Commander British Forces, South Atlantic Islands
(Brigadier Nick Sawyer)

DEPUTY CLERK OF THE ASSEMBLY: Imogen Didlick

PRAYERS: Rev. Canon Kathy Biles

APOLOGIES

The Honourable Lucila Leona Vidal Roberts (Leona Roberts)
(Elected Member for Stanley Constituency)

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**Record of the Meeting of the Legislative Assembly
Thursday 24 September 2020**

Prayers

Deputy Clerk of the Assembly

Confirmation of the record of the Legislative Assembly held on the 27th of August 2020.

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members, I have before me a record of our last meeting. Is it your wish I sign this as a true record?

Honourable Members

It is.

Deputy Clerk of the Assembly

Papers to be laid on the table by the Honourable Chief Executive.

In accordance with section 81(7) of the Constitution the reports of the Public Accounts Committee:

- report to the Legislative Assembly and His Excellency the Governor on the activities of the Public Accounts Committee during the period 1 September 2019 to 31st July 2020; and

In accordance with section 80(2) of the Constitution the reports of the Public Accounts Committee:

- Planned programme of work for period July 2020 to June 2021
- Falkland Islands Government Financial Statements
- Falkland Islands Government Financial Statement Year End June 2019
- Falkland Islands Government Currency Fund Year End June 2019
- Falkland Islands Government Insurance Fund Year End June 2019
- Falkland Islands Government Pensions (Old Scheme) Fund Year End June 2019
- Falkland Islands Government Retirement Pensions Equalisation Fund Year End June 2019
- Media Trust Financial Statements Year End 30 June 2018 and 30 June 2019
- Falkland Islands Tourist Board (FITB) Financial Statements Year End 30 June 2018
- South Atlantic Environment Research Institute Financial Statements Year End 30 June 2019

In accordance with section 778 of the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Ordinance 2014:

- Criminal Justice Council Annual Reports for part-year April 2017 to December 2017 and the Action Plan 2018
- Criminal Justice Council and Sentencing Guidelines Committee – Reports for 2018 and 2019; and
- Criminal Justice Council – Action Plan 2020/21

The Honourable Chief Executive

Mr Speaker, I hereby lay the aforementioned papers on the table.

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members

Under Standing Order section 41(3) I move that the report to the Legislative Assembly and His Excellency the Governor on the activities of the Public Accounts Committee during the period 01 September 2019 to 31 July 2020; the planned programme of work for period July 2020 to June 2021; and the financial statements as listed by the Clerk, be noted.

Mr Speaker, the Public Accounts Committee serves a vital role in our community and was established on the 1st of February 2010 in accordance with the Public Accounts Committee Ordinance 2009. In accordance to the Constitution, the Committee is made up of a Chairman and two other members appointed by the Governor and two Elected Members of the Assembly.

During the period of this report His Excellency the Governor appointed Mrs Nadia Knight as Chair in October 2019. Mr Richard Cockwell who had served on the PAC since 2013 resigned at the end of that year and he had also served as deputy Chair during that time. Mr Speaker, I think it is worth again this House recognises the commitment and the contribution that Richard Cockwell has made to this Committee over a long period, and I'm sure he will continue to send us letters of questions of concern and support.

The other lay member of the Committee is Mr Owen Betts, and the two MLAs on the Committee are myself and the Honourable Leona Roberts.

His Excellency the Governor has appointed a new lay member, Alexander Cleminson, whose appointment took effect on the 5th August 2020. The deputy Chair position will be appointed by the Committee at its meeting later this month.

The committee has a website www.pac.org.fk, and it's a site where we publish all reports so people can read what's going on. We already also have a PAC Facebook page so that people can see, again, what the committee is doing.

During the time in question Mr Speaker, the total costs incurred by the PAC were £48,500. These costs related to the cost of administration, including the remuneration of the secretary and cost of renting the PAC offices and expenses in attending the CPA – that's the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association forum - in London.

During the financial year there was no payment made to the internal auditor under the Memorandum of Understanding, which is there to provide research capabilities locally, and the PAC was therefore under budget as a result.

Mr Speaker, the Committee has met in public on four occasions during this period and has also examined the following accounts, the public accounts of:

- Falkland Islands Government
- Falkland Islands Development Corporation
- Falkland Islands Land Holding Corporation
- Falkland Islands Tourist Board
- Falkland Islands Conservation
- The Media Trust
- SAAS
- Museum and National Trust
- Stanley Services

The Falkland Islands Meat Company accounts for 2018 had been reviewed and the 2019 accounts go before the PAC at the end of September.

The PAC has raised concerns regarding the late submissions of financial statements from one subvention body, namely the Media Trust, and that in order to receive the substantial subvention from the Government, the PAC reported through this Assembly that this breach was unacceptable and that the Government should consider carefully whether the body in question should actually receive a subvention. The Falkland Islands Government agreed and withheld that subvention until the financial statements of 2019 had been received and approved.

Mr Speaker, during this period we, the members of the PAC, also met with our external auditors, namely Mazars, and also during this period the Committee considered five original internal audit reports and twenty follow-up reports of the Chief Internal Auditor and reported on those to this House.

Mr Speaker, during this period the Public Accounts Committee instigated an investigation of the Stanley Leisure Centre swimming pool refurbishment. It made twelve recommendations and this report was presented to this House in July 2019, and the Falkland Islands Government then had six months to respond. I'm pleased to say that the PAC received the Government's response accepting all of our recommendations. I think it's timely to say at this time we have appointed people who are going to do the final repairs to the swimming pool, and so I think we can see in the near future people getting back to swimming.

If we turn to the planned programme of work for the period of July 2020 to June 2021 there are thirteen elements and I'm just going to highlight a few.

The public accounts will continue to be audited, considered and reported to the Legislative Assembly on the Public Accounts.

If we look at statutory bodies such as the Falkland Islands Development Corporation, again we would look at their accounts and bodies in receipt of public funds, such as the Media Trust and South American Atlantic Service Ltd. - SAAS.

Also bodies in which the Falkland Islands Government is a shareholder - Stanley Services in this case - and bodies in which a statutory body is a shareholder and by that the Falkland Islands Meat Company.

We will also look at reports from the internal auditor and the current work in progress will continue into 2021 period. We highlight some of those and the continuing review of the Falkland Islands Government computer database systems, and also during this period the review of the Fisheries building will continue and some of those delays are due to personnel within the internal audit changing, but also Covid I'm afraid has had an effect as well.

The other projects which we may consider for the 2021 period include the Public Jetty Phase 1, the Vulnerable Persons Unit Scoping and Phase 1, and Falkland Islands College.

The PAC will also look into whether the following projects, which have been suggested by members of the public, are of merit and should be investigated. Two to mention are the temporary electricity generators and the electricity pricing scheme.

The PAC has considered whether the following projects, which have been suggested by members of the public, are of merit and should be investigated, but we will not conduct an investigation of these at this time, the two to think about are the FIGAS fleet and the new aircraft orders, and the replacement of emergency radio procurements.

Mr Speaker that concludes my report to the House.

Mr Speaker

And could I have a seconder please for the Motion?

The Honourable Stacy Bragger

Mr Speaker I second the motion

Mr Speaker

Does any Member wish to speak to the Motion?

The Honourable Mark Pollard

Mr Speaker,

Just briefly, I assume the budget underspend was a result of Covid-19, well I hope so? I think the swimming pool recommendations that were accepted were highlighted on what can go

wrong, and whilst I don't want to see investigations just for the sake of investigations, I think that this is a vital part of scrutiny and a learning process of our project development side.

Looking at investigating Public Jetty Phase 1, I would question whether or not that's timely, I mean it's a long time in the past, but perhaps that's an indication of how important this work is, but I would like to see this program carried on with a bit more pace perhaps. But again this could be Covid-19 related.

Thank you.

Mr Speaker

Does any other Member wish to speak?

Honourable Members, the Motion before the House is that the report to the Legislative Assembly and His Excellency the Governor on the activities of the Public Accounts Committee during the period 01 September 2019 to 31 July 2020; the planned programme of work for the period July 2020 to June 2021; and the financial statements as listed by the Clerk, those are noted.

Is there any objection to passing that Motion?

There is no objection, the reports and statements are noted.

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members

Under Standing Order section 41 (3) I move that the Criminal Justice Council Annual Reports for part year April 2017 to December 2017 and the Action Plan 2018; Criminal Justice Council and Sentencing Guidelines Committee, these Reports for 2018 and 2019; and Criminal Justice Council Action Plan 2020/21, be noted.

Mr Speaker, the purpose of this report is to consider the specific duties of the Criminal Justice Council and to make recommendations as to the Councils Action Plan for 2018.

The Criminal Justice Council was established by Part 35 of the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Ordinance 2014, which came into force on the 21st April 2017.

The aims of the Council are:

- To seek to make the criminal justice system more effective and efficient so that it reduces crime;
- Reduces reoffending;
- Punishes offended;
- Protects the public;
- Encourages the making of reparation;
- Increases public confidence in the system and to ensure the system is fair and just;

- To maintain an overview of the working of the Criminal Justice system in the Falkland Islands
- To ensure the whole system approaches the tackling issues across the Criminal Justice system, and;
- To overcome operational barriers to provide accountability and coordination across the Criminal Justice system.

Mr Speaker, the Council must prepare and submit an annual report to the Executive Council on performance of the council's function during the year. The report is then to be laid on the table before the Assembly. The report must incorporate the annual report of the Sentencing Guidelines committee and these have been laid on the table today.

President of the Council is the Chief Justice and he has appointed the Senior Magistrate as Chair of the Criminal Justice Council, and has appointed the Head of Court and Tribunals as Deputy Chair.

Mr Speaker, the Sentencing Guidelines Committee is a committee of the Council, and consists of all members of the Council. The aims of the Sentencing Guidelines Committee are to promote greater consistency in sentencing in the Falkland Islands whilst maintaining the independence of the judiciary. Also, to develop, implement and maintain a set of sentencing guidelines for use in the criminal courts of the Falkland Islands.

The committee is required to monitor the operation and the effect of its sentencing guidelines and, in particular, to assess the following:

- The frequency with which, and extent to which, courts depart from sentencing guidelines;
- The factors which influence the sentencing imposed by the courts;
- The effect of the guidelines on the promotion of consistency in sentencing;
- The effect of the guidelines on the promotion of public confidence in the Criminal Justice system;
- The effectiveness of the imposition of non-custodial sentences as an alternative to custody.

Mr Speaker, that concludes my report to the House today.

Mr Speaker

Can I have a seconder please?

The Honourable Roger Spink

Mr Speaker I second the motion.

The Honourable Teslyn Barkman

Thank you Mr Speaker, and I thank my Honourable Colleague Barry Elsbey for walking us through what is a very important piece of our judiciary system.

For me, we have spent a few years asking particular questions about how the Sentencing Guidelines Council gathers and prioritises where it will focus its attention. It is noted within the report submitted – and I will just read a short extract to give the context behind my question – *‘Sentencing Guidelines Council of England and Wales has significant access to resources and data to enable it to produce, amend and update its guidelines on a regular basis. Data on which it relies is derived from many thousands of criminal cases. The Falkland Islands has limited data due to a limited number of cases. While it is desirable to have Falkland Islands guidance for all offences in the Islands, the data is not present to undergo sentencing guidance for all offences’.*

With the above issue in mind, the SGC (Sentencing Guidelines Council) decided to target two areas of offending; road traffic offences and assault offences.

If I skip ahead a bit, it notes within the report that no progress was made to commence a public consultation as into what the draft guidelines for ‘assault’ should be. It notes very clearly in red that in November 2019, the SGC decided that it was not appropriate to target individual offences in the absence of first producing Falkland Islands over-arching sentencing principles.

So my question is, possibly to the Attorney General, what progress is being made to improve our sentencing guidelines and to give the Sentencing Guidelines Council a good framework in which to impart its guidance?

Attorney General

Thank you Mr Speaker, I’m happy to answer the Honourable Member’s question.

The Sentencing Guidelines Committee has met as recently as earlier this week. There is an advanced draft of the overarching sentencing guidelines being produced, and we are hoping to finalize that very soon and then that will go for consultation. I think the intention is to do a report to the Executive Council and to provide that to all Members of the Legislative Assembly as well as to do further consultation. The precise nature of the consultation is yet to be agreed, I think one of the things we recognized is that we have had a lot of input from some of the legal practitioners who participate in the Criminal Justice Council and Sentencing Guidelines Committee.

I think we feel we probably need to do a slightly different consultation with legal professionals who are involved in the system, who know in detail how the system works, and more widely to the general public. It is probably a slightly different consultation, but that’s one of the things that we are currently discussing. I’m hopeful that certainly by the end of the year we should certainly have that overarching sentencing guideline, if not actually in place, but very close to being in place. The draft as I say is complete and we just need to go through the

consultation process to listen to what people have to say about that, and then we can look at what further work to do from that.

I think that one of the things, and I think you highlighted it in the extract you read, the Sentencing Council in the UK has access to a very wide range of data around offences that have been carried out, and the effect of sentences and things like that; and also a very wide range of professionals, criminologists, psychologists, lawyers and others to help inform the guidelines. Realistically, we have to accept that we don't have access, certainly not to the range of data which is in many respects is a good thing because we don't have a very high level of crime, but we also don't have access to all of the sorts of professionals that would help develop the sentencing guideline.

We also have a different policy situation here, the pressure on prisons and thing like that is very different in different countries and territories, so we have different considerations, but I think, on balance, we feel we are probably better off largely following the England and Wales Sentencing Council's guidelines because they are based on much greater research information than we would be able to generate ourselves.

To answer your actual question: yes, the overarching guideline is very close to being released for consultation, and then hopefully other work will follow on from that.

The Honourable Teslyn Barkman

Thank you Attorney General for that response, it was particularly useful because I hadn't forewarned you so apologies for that. It's very heartening to hear that an advanced draft is being progressed, and thank you for updating this House on that action.

I think that while it is true that there is a comparatively low-level of crime here than compared to the UK, I think it also very fair to say that the public level of scrutiny as with anywhere else is incredibly high as to how justice is imparted, and certainly as my colleague noted in his update, it's in the interest of victims and the public that this is being designed, so it's good to hear that this is going to be up for consultation and comments soon.

Mr Speaker

Does any other Member wish to speak?

Honourable Members, the Motion is that the Criminal Justice Council Annual Reports for part year April 2017 to December 2017 and the Action Plan 2018; the Criminal Justice Council and Sentencing Guidelines Committee Reports for 2018 and 2019; and the Criminal Justice Council Action Plan for 2020/21 are noted.

Is there any objection to passing that Motion? There is no objection, those Reports and the Action Plans are noted.

Deputy Clerk of the Assembly

Questions for Oral Answer.

Question number 22 of 2020 by the Honourable Dr Barry Elsby.

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby

Mr Speaker, could the Honourable Ian Hansen please inform this House as to the following:

1. Looking at October, November and December 2019, can he please tell this House how many patients were seen in the GP clinics, expressed as a weekly average for each month and compare that to the rates for June, July and August of this year?
2. What percentage of GP consultations were conducted virtually in July and August 2020, again expressed as weekly averages?
3. What is the present wait for non-urgent face to face consultation with a GP?
4. Are routine cancer screenings for diseases such as cervical, breast and bowel cancer being delayed because of Covid, and if so by how long?
5. Similarly, is there any delay in the routine vaccination schedule for children, but also adults?

The Honourable Ian Hansen

Thank you Mr Speaker, Honourable Members,

I thank the Honourable Dr Barry Elsby for his question. It's a fairly lengthy answer with lots of figures so I hope it's not going to be too boring.

I would first of all like to thank the people of the administration for putting all of this information together, on top of all the other work they have to do, so thank you very much for that.

First of all looking at October, November and December of 2019, it should be noted before I begin that comparisons with June, July and August of this year are not quite exactly the same thing simply because not only because of Covid, but also because during the months of October to December quarter, that's normally when we have our visiting Consultants down, so numbers go up quite high when they're here.

However, the figures are as follows.

- In October 2019 there were 1,392 appointments, of which 630 were with GPs. The weekly average of 157 appointments per week accounted for 45% of appointments.
- In November 2019 there were 1,791 appointments, of which 830 were with GPs. The weekly average of 166 appointments per week accounted for 46% of appointments.
- In December 2019 there were 1,389 appointments, of which 708 were with GPs. The weekly average of 142 appointments per week accounted for 51% of appointments.

Moving on to June, July and August 2020 for this year, data from June till August of this year collates appointments and Covid-19 interactions in the form of calls made by clinicians, monitoring of symptomatic patients, swabbing encounters and anti-body blood clinics.

It does not account for the additional interactions for quarantine calls or the calls made to individuals informing them of their anti-body and swab test results.

- In June 2020, there were 2,197 appointments/interactions of which 587 were with GPs. The weekly average of 147 appointments per week accounted for 27% of appointments and interactions.
- In July 2020, there were 2,781 appointments/interactions of which 706 were with GPs. The weekly average of 141 appointments per week accounted for 25% of appointments and interactions.
- In August 2020 there were 1,797 appointments/interactions of which 607 were with GPs. The weekly average of 151 appointments per week accounted for 34% of appointments and interactions.

In comparison with a similar time period, I have data that relates to June/August 2019:

- In June 2019, there were 1,496 appointments of which 726 were with GPs. The weekly average of 181 appointments per week accounted for 49% of appointments.
- In July 2019, there 1,559 appointments of which 689 were with GPs. The weekly average of 172 appointments per week accounted for 44% of appointments.
- In August 2019, there were 1,769 appointments of which 831 were with GPs. The weekly average of 166 appointments per week accounted for 47% of appointments.

I hope those figures are of some help for my colleague.

Moving on to the next question, currently there is a two day wait for routine appointments however same day appointments are made available for urgent cases.

Moving on to the routine screenings, cervical smear screenings are to take place in mid-September, so I am assuming they are happening as we speak now; bowel cancer screening due to take place in April was cancelled due to Covid-19. The next round is scheduled for October of this year. The Breast Screening team from Wigan were due to come to the Islands in October of this year, however due to Covid restrictions in the UK, breast screening were halted and has only restarted in the last two weeks. Therefore, our screening has been postponed until January 2021.

Finally, Mr Speaker, there are no delays in the routine vaccination schedules for children or adults.

Thank you.

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members,

I'd like to thank my Honourable Colleague for that reply and indeed for the people who collated this information. It might seem laborious to do this but I think it is important.

We've seen in other countries, and I name particularly the UK, where the number of consultations during the Covid period has reduced dramatically, not just in general practice but also in hospitals as people fear to go near places where they might catch Covid. This, I think many people will be aware, there is a time bomb ticking when people have not taken up their GP clinics, people have not been off to see people with heart problems, they have not had their bowel examinations or their breast examinations, and there is grave concern that this will lead to more deaths in the future.

Reassuring figures that the numbers of GP consultations do not appear to have fallen, as we have seen in the UK, which is very reassuring and again my thanks to all the clinicians who are working in that department in these difficult times.

The other thing I wasn't clear on was the number of virtual consultations that took place in July and August. The UK is going through a difficult time as they try to look to the future of consultations and the subject of health. Matt Hancock some weeks ago made a statement which was quite extraordinary that he believed that in the future virtually all consultations should be virtual - this didn't apply just during Covid period, he thinks this is the way that medicine should go in the future, and I am pleased that that doesn't seem to be the case here.

So really Mr Speaker, thank you for that information, it's very reassuring to the public to know that the services are there, and it's also reassuring to know that the people are taking up those consultations and not staying away as we have seen in some countries.

The Honourable Ian Hansen

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members,

I thank the Honourable Dr Barry Elsby for his remarks and I totally endorse his views on the way people are working at this.

I think it's also worth mentioning that there was concern that perhaps our community psychiatric nurses may be coming under pressure. There was a bit of a spike in the work they had, but that's levelled out, and they are handling everything as well as can be done, and there is a meeting next week to review the situation, but that is being covered as well, so there is no great concern there.

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby

Mr Speaker, I thank the Honourable Ian Hansen for that.

It is another matter he and I have been discussing for some days now which is the fact that we are appearing to see an increase in the number of people who are seeking help for mental health problems, and that is not unexpected. Covid diseased countries have seen a similar rise.

The one thing we have discussed over the last few days is how that demand is being met; we have provision for three full times psychiatric nurses in the department. One is on a one year sabbatical, well-planned, well thought through, and I am unclear at the moment as to how that service is going to be maintained at three full time equivalents. They are down to two full timers at the moment so I gather, as Ian Hansen says, the demand has risen, but at that time the number of people available to help people has fallen, and that can only mean an increased wait for service.

I wonder if the Honourable Ian Hansen has been able to get those figures as to how it is planned to address that one year gap of that one full time person who is overseas.

The Honourable Ian Hansen

Thank you Mr Speaker,

Indeed I can - the gap that is to be covered for the one person that is overseas on the Sabbatical will be covered by locums and short term postings. There is an incoming short term posting on the 1st October who will begin work on the 1st October to cover that third space and also from then on there is money in the budget, which was agreed by the Budget Select Committee, to cover the rest of it by locums, so there should not be any gaps.

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsbj

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members,

That's reassuring in one way that the money is there, but it's disconcerting as to the way the gap is to be met. The person being away for one year is something that was planned for and should've been planned for a long time ahead. I'm not sure if that post has been advertised for a one year position and it's only now because we can't get anyone that locums are being used, I'm not sure about that.

Although the money is there, using locums and short term postings will lead to a significant reduction and availability of service; everybody coming in, every locum coming in, are only ever here for a few weeks or a couple of months will have to have two weeks in isolation where they won't be able to have patient contact. I'm surprised that we are going to use locums - in the past in the medical department we have realised how expensive locums have been and I thought we have moved away from the use of locums unless *in extremis*.

So I'm not sure if the Honourable Ian Hansen can tell us whether that post was advertised as a one year post and we didn't get anyone, or a decision was made to use locums knowing about the quarantine problems.

The Honourable Ian Hansen

Thank you Mr Speaker,

I would have to double-check to make sure if that post or not was recruited. I have a feeling that the money that was put in the budget for this particular instance was enough to cover locums for that period, locums or as I say short term postings which actually cost less than locums. But I can double check to make sure with the Director that the post wasn't or was advertised and have not been able to fill, but as I say the money was put in by, and agreed by the Budget Select Committee, into the Social Services budget for this very purpose. Of course, that was before Covid-19 struck us in the way it did, that could all still change.

The Honourable Mark Pollard

Mr Speaker,

I'd like to thank my Honourable Colleague for the statistics he's provided, they are quite comprehensive statistics and my Honourable Colleague Dr Barry Elsby was right to ask the questions as well.

I just think that looking at those statistics; it shows just how busy the medical services have been during Covid-19. At a period where they have had to change their processes, look at an incoming pandemic possibly and all the things are going to have to do around that, and I think it would be remiss of me not to recognize the efforts of the hospital in doing that. As a consumer of their product if you like, you wouldn't know from walking through the door just how much they are actually doing and I think to be doing it with minimal fuss and to be honest you don't really notice the difference as a consumer, but I would like to pass my thanks on to everyone within that department please, Honourable Colleague.

Thank you Mr Speaker.

The Honourable Roger Spink

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members,

I'd like to thank my colleague the Honourable Ian Hansen for his reply. Obviously, during this pandemic the hospital has been under a great deal of pressure and strain and I'd like to thank the people that have provided these comprehensive answers to the Honourable Barry Elsby questions.

I would also like to say that I do question the relevance of some of the information comparing October, November and December 2019 with June, July and August 2020 doesn't seem very sensible to me. I would compare the same months in the previous year to actually get a comparison, but actually I don't want to put the people who have gone to extreme efforts to provide this information through the trouble of having to provide those statistics, so thank you very much.

Mr Speaker

Does any other Member wish to raise a supplementary question or raise a comment? No.

Deputy Clerk of the Assembly

Question number 24/20 by the Honourable Dr Barry Elsby.

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby

Mr Speaker,

Can the Honourable Chief Executive please tell this House how many written complaints the Falkland Islands Government received from September 1st 2019 to 31st August 2020 indicating how many per individual department?

Can he list the times taken to fully address and resolve each complaint, recording each departmental totals as perhaps less than one month, one to two months, three to four months etc bearing in mind that for the complaints procedure the complaint should be acknowledged within three working days and the target is that it is to be resolved within twenty working days, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The Honourable Chief Executive

I'd like to thank the Honourable Member for his question.

There are two main ways to make a complaint to Government, one is through the Corporate Complaints process which is the main route for members of the public and the second is the the grievance procedure which should be used by Falkland Islands employees for employment related complaints.

In both procedures there are clear escalation provisions, and in general both procedures seem to be working well.

However, having looked at both policies and procedures the records are maintained at a departmental level, and therefore it is not easy to apply the level of detail in the response to the Honourable Dr Barry Elsby's requests. Of course, we could do that, but that requires asking all the departments to provide that information, and in fact we have initiated that, but have not completed that work. It's not easy to do so, however in my view there is a lack of central record here in both systems that does need to be rectified. Once we delegated these matters to directors, directors maintain those records.

It is important essentially that we understand how we are performing in general terms. Therefore, I intend to review the arrangements to strengthen the performance management and, in the case of complaints, we need to consider how we can improve public reporting on our performance and therefore understand lessons learnt.

On the matters of grievance, this is something I'm taking up with the HR Department, but at least we will probably have a quarterly review of where we are on any outstanding matters.

I am unaware of any significant numbers that are outstanding at the moment, I am dealing with one or two at the moment in the Secretariat, but I don't think it a significant problem, but nevertheless, this question has prompted me to think carefully about what we see in terms of performance at the centre of the organization to see how Government is operating across the board.

I would hope to be able to report back to MLAs in the next few months on the provisions to the arrangements.

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members

I'd like to thank the Honourable Chief Executive for that. I think it is important – I think we both agree that knowing how the complaints procedure is working is important. Would it be his intention to publish the annual statistics around complaints?

The Honourable Chief Executive

I differentiate between the two - I think it is appropriate certainly for public complaints to the Government through the Public Complaints Procedure and policy and I think we should have an annual report actually, but in order to pre-empt that consideration I will come back to that, but would like to propose an annual report. I certainly think it is the principle that is missing from our complaints policy in general, although it can be reported elsewhere, but I prefer we saw a separate annual report. I will bring that back to Members for consideration.

As far as grievance is concerned these are employment matters that should be maintained, but I will be asking for, ideally a quarterly report from the HR department to make sure that we are moving through these various levels of escalation in an appropriate time scale.

Mr Speaker

Does any other Member wish to raise a supplementary question on that? No.

Deputy Clerk of the Assembly

Question number 25/20 by the Honourable Dr Barry Elsby.

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members

Can the Honourable Roger Edwards please inform this House of all the purchases made by PWD in the last financial year that could have been containerised, and what percentage was

shipped via SAAS, and what percentage on the FIRS service, expressed as 20 foot container equivalent?

The Honourable Roger Edwards

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members

I thank the Honourable Dr Barry Elsby for his question, but sadly PWD do not have the detailed information requested. A large proportion of purchases are specified as 'Delivered Stanley'. It is then the responsibility of the supplier to make the required shipping arrangements. Large and oversized plant comes via the Falklands Islands Resupply Ship route, as it is transported on the ro-ro deck of the vessel.

South American Atlantic Services have previously transported plant for the Falkland Islands Government using flat racks, however, this leaves the plant open to the elements during the voyage and at a greater risk of damage during transshipment operations. Larger items such as excavators, dump trucks, loading shovels and crusher plants are too large and cannot be transported in this manner.

The Falkland Islands Resupply Ship vessel is the only option for the shipment of explosives due to the required vessel classification. A number of our UK suppliers deliver to dock and often require a consolidation service for the onward shipping of goods. This is a service not currently offered by SAAS.

Thank you Mr Speaker.

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby

Mr Speaker

I'd like to thank the Honourable Roger Edwards for that. What I was trying to get out of this question - and he knows what we are trying to determine and clearly my question wasn't appropriately targeted - SAAS is a local service and it is a service that we should support, particularly as a Government. The FIRS service is a military vessel and, yes my Honourable colleague is absolutely right, the big plant cannot be containerised it has to go on the FIRS and we welcome the ability to use the FIRS service, but it is a military service and military cargo always takes priority on that.

We have at the moment now a new full-time procurement officer, and she is doing a lot of work on looking again at our procurement policies, and I have asked her to have a look at how we might understand how we try to use SAAS. My Honourable Colleague is quite right when he says we don't tell people which service to use, but perhaps we should. We would like to think that the Falkland Islands Government has most of its purchases shipped on the local service, but we have, as we hear today, no way of knowing what percentage of our purchases that could be containerized actually come on SAAS versus the FIRS vessels.

What I have asked the procurement officer to do is to consider the possibility of, as part of the tendering process, to say that it would be desirable if Government's purchases came on SAAS or perhaps to ask for two quotes - one for the supply coming on SAAS and one for the supply coming on FIRS, which would give a better indication of any cost differences depending on the service we use.

So I think in some way Mr Speaker, I think it is an important question we as a Government should be supporting local industries. It's how we try to get the statistics available to make sure it is cost effective.

The Honourable Chief Executive

Perhaps I could add to the response from the Honourable MLA Edwards.

I would say that, of course, it's in our mutual interest to maximize the use of SAAS - we are of course a 50% shareholder in SAAS and we enjoy membership on the SAAS board and we do meet on a regular basis.

I hear the point about perhaps engaging the procurement officer in doing such work - I will talk to her about that, and consider how that might fit in to what is a wider initiative that we have taken with SAAS. We have, the board - I am sure the Board will be happy for me to say this - has a planned Away Day later this month in October, not in response to MLA Elsbey's question, but I think equally, about the medium and long term development of SAAS as a service. Part of that, of course, can be and is the extent to which there is an opportunity for SAAS to be involved in helping us deliver what is a major and ambitious capital programme over the next five to ten years.

Therefore at the SAAS Board Away Day we will have senior officers of Government involved - the Director of Development, the DNR Director, the Director of Public Works - this has been planned for several months now and it is through that discussion that will determine how we encourage, if you like, the relationship with SAAS and the potential opportunities; to seize and identify those opportunities very, very early in the procurement process. Looking at the ten year capital programme for example, sharing that information and encouraging of course those who would be partnering with us to deliver those programmes.

There is a much wider discussion going on with SAAS, as well, of course, more fundamentally the future of this service and the wider views beyond that of just a shipping support for Government, so I hope that helps.

Mr Speaker

Does any other Member wish to raise a supplementary question or a comment?

The Honourable Roger Edwards

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members

In responding to the comment by the Honourable Dr Barry Elsby, no I don't know what he was getting out of the question if he didn't ask the question on the bit of paper. I agree we should support local businesses and indeed we do support local businesses, which is why we buy much of this stuff and procure an awful lot of the stuff through our local businesses who then ship it to the Islands on our behalf, rather than going direct to the supplier. But we do, where we can, ship stuff on SAAS direct to the Islands, but I think my answer still stands.

Mr Speaker

Does any other Member wish to raise a supplementary question or a comment?

Deputy Clerk of the Assembly

Question number 26/20 by the Honourable Dr Barry Elsby.

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby

Just for those that are listening, this is not a tape going round and round and this is my last question!

The Falkland Islands Government is committed to the development of a Health and Safety policy for its employees, and has recruited an expert to develop it. At the last meeting of this House the Honourable Roger Edwards informed Members that the planned Executive Council paper had slipped from September to November of this year.

Can the Honourable Roger Edwards please inform this House if the required work on mental health conditions in the workplace is receiving the same priority as other aspects of the work; who is leading on this aspect; and will it be completed and form part of the policy document coming to ExCo in November?

The Honourable Roger Edwards

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members

The Health and Safety Advisor is working towards a formal issue of the Health and Safety policy and supporting a Health and Safety Improvement Plan.

Health and wellbeing, including mental health, are included as part of this work. The current work is focussing on implementing of better incident investigation and risk assessment procedures to help Falkland Islands Government establish a better health and safety culture within the organization. The policy will provide the overarching principles to be delivered, and the delivery structure and prioritization will be set out within the improvement plan.

Work is yet to be done on the details of mental health in the workplace, and support will be required from other departments within the Falkland Islands Government who have subject area experts when delivering this particular element.

So, the answer for the final part of the question is: no, I cannot guarantee that it will be completed and form part of the November Exco paper.

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby

Mr Speaker,

Briefly one question, can he tell me when it is expected?

The Honourable Roger Edwards

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members

No, because it will be work by various and several departments rather than a single department - so I cannot give him that date.

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby

Mr Speaker

It is disappointing to hear this because it is right that the Government sets standards on health and safety. That's the whole idea of employing somebody; is that we within Government can develop a policy on health and safety and that would then inform the private sector, some of whom are already doing this.

I've always been concerned, and I think rightly so, that the attention that needed be given to mental health problems in the workplace was not at the level it should have been. I think my Honourable Colleague's answer today shows that the work on slips, trips and falls is ready – that will come to the Executive Council in November – but the required work on mental health in the workplace has yet to be completed and there is no timeframe for when that might be completed, and I think that says a lot really about the commitment to, and the recognition of, mental health problems in the workplace.

The Health and Safety Committee, or the Health and Safety Executive, in the UK is the lead body on this, and if you look on their website they have three key priorities; one of those is on occupational lung disease, (asbestosis, silicosis, pneumoconiosis all the sort of things we know about), and that is vitally important. The second one is musculoskeletal problems and that means bad backs, falls, sprains, that sort of thing, and that accounts for 41% of all the work-related illness cases and accounts for 34% of all the working days lost each year. The biggest priority is on work-related stress and other mental health problems within the workplace. That accounts for 37% of all ill-health cases reported, and it accounts for 45% of days lost due to ill-health. That accounted for about 9.3 billion pounds in the UK in 2015.

And so surely you can understand my concerns that an illness that is so serious that it accounts for nearly half of all the days lost in a workplace in the UK isn't being addressed, it seems, with the urgency that is being given to the non-mental health problems.

The Honourable Chief Executive

Thank you Mr Speaker

It is unusual for the Chief Executive to stand more than once probably in the Assembly, but I find myself standing for the third time trying to help with answering the questions that has been posed by the Honourable Member. As MLA Edwards set out, the policy will be reported in November and as part of the policy will be Mental Health, stress issues at work and so on and so forth, will be an important component of that work.

We also refer to an implementation plan and that implementation plan needs to be considered and detailed by the Corporate Management Team, and there will be a set of recommendations on the phasing of that over a number of days and we will need to prioritize each aspect of that activity.

What I would say, while I am not pre-empting precisely when detailed work will be done on mental health or any other aspect of the Health and Safety Policy's implementation, is that the Corporate Management Team will be looking at this from a risk-based perspective; where are the significant risks, where are the significant costs to the Government, and that will guide our thinking about the urgency and how we schedule that implementation plan in various phases.

The statistics that the Honourable Member describes actually are quite powerful. The slips, trips and falls, the bad backs what might have been a decade or twenty years ago, now obviously mental health is a significant issue, and stress at work is a very important issue as well, and we will be taking those things into consideration when the Corporate Management Team consider the implementation plan and bring forward a suggested timetable for various aspects of that detailed work.

The Honourable Teslyn Barkman

Thank you Mr Speaker,

I think that the Chief Executive has indicated to some of the concerns I was going to raise before, but I certainly do empathise with my colleague the Honourable Barry Elsbey.

I am still a little bit concerned that it's not really being prioritized in the right way. I mean I take what the Honourable Chief Executive has said in good faith, but I think if we draw reference to a statistic, or the notes, that the Honourable Ian Hansen made earlier in his report to Health and Medical concerns and the spike that the CPN is currently facing in the wake of Covid-19, as well as taking into consideration the work that the CMT and various volunteers have done in monitoring the effects of Covid-19 across the community, there is certainly a pressing need to put some real consideration behind this particular element if nothing else. We are currently experiencing one of the worst spikes in mental health possibly that these Islands are recognizing and actually de-stigmatizing and prioritizing that in the workplace is an important area so, like I say, I thank the Honourable Chief Executive for his comments, but it would be really useful to know who is really pulling those subject area

experts together and who is going to be giving this the momentum and prioritization it needs to get that timeline sped.

The Honourable Stacy Bragger

Thank you Mr Speaker,

Just to say that I echo the disappointment expressed by my colleague the Honourable Barry Elsbay, as I believe that the answer provided today differed from previous updates that we had received from the Public Works, so I would echo comments made about priority being given to this area as part of this work.

The Honourable Mark Pollard

Thank you Mr Speaker,

I think on Health and Safety in FIG and in the country at large, outside of FIG and the private sector as well, we are coming from a pretty low base to be fair. I don't think that this has been treated as any sort of priority for many years and I welcome the action plan coming forward. I think it's something we want to progress and it's something that is going to take a lot of work as well and it's something we can't move forward on every front at the same time, so there will have to be priorities, but I welcome the action plan coming forward. I just wanted to recognize that we are coming from a pretty low base anyway and this is not going to be an insignificant piece of work.

I think also we have to be very careful with FIG setting an example and also on how we roll that out to the private sector in the future. We have to do that in consultation with the private sector, I think even when we are implementing this within FIG I think we have to be mindful of the example we are setting, but we also have to be very careful that what we are doing can be deliverable across the Islands as a whole, and it can make things safer for people but is also sustainable as well.

The Honourable Chief Executive

Thank you Mr Speaker,

Again just to add to this point as we are having this debate, I do think that, of course, our Health and Safety policy is important. I have said how we are going to bring this forward and, of course, as I have already said, as has been said by the portfolio holder that the detailed implementation plan will be laid out and we will have a discussion about prioritization. Of course, by prioritizing what we mean is how we allocate sufficient resources to do those pieces of work that are important.

Perhaps just a general point I would make, and I agree, of course, that mental health is particularly important and we have had some challenges and further stress in our community over the recent months and it's important to recognize that, but I would just like to remind the House that in the last few years, particularly the last twelve months, we have ended up

with a Mental Health Strategy which we didn't have previously and we have actually invested, this Government has invested, in significantly more resources in mental health support over the last few years, so it's probably going to be double or treble to what we had previously. That doesn't mean that we don't need to supplement that further to carry on that important work, but I would just like to make sure that this is understood and put in context.

Thank you.

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby

Mr Speaker,

I'd like to thank all colleagues for their comments and I think the Honourable Chief Executive is right; there has been recognition in this community, as indeed in many other communities around the world, of the importance of mental health problems and we have started to address that in the way of regular training. Mental health first aid has been introduced and that's been taken up widely across Government and the private sector, I'm afraid it seems that my experience has been taken up by people perhaps not high in that hierarchy structure, so I'm not sure how many directors or senior managers or section heads have actually taken that training. I am aware that that organization recognizes that it is difficult for managers to respond to mental health problems in the workplace if they have no experience, and they run courses for managers of how to recognize mental health in the workplace, and how to react and signpost those people, and how to protect them when they are in the workplace. So it might be that that's something we need to look at in the future as we unfold this Health and Safety guidance, as to how we enable managers to manage people with First Aid and to recognize someone with mental health problems.

The Honourable Chief Executive talked about how we need to know the data, and the UK clearly has a lot of data. Speaking to directors and section heads, the response I've had is how the hell can I put in an incident form, I don't know anything about mental health problems? I can put in an incident form for someone who's tripped over and bashed their knees, but I'm not going to put one in probably for someone who's got stress or work-related whatever, even if they recognize it. So there is a stigma to get over there - if we are going to rely on the data we need a clear way of recording it and that means empowering managers to understand the problems.

But I am again reassured from my other colleagues that they are equally concerned about this.

I think the community understands how serious it is, health and safety in general is very important. I'm not aware of anyone in Government that has died from tripping, slipping or falls but in the last three years two FIG employees have killed themselves and I think it beholds us to remember that point when we talk about the relevance or otherwise mental health problems in the workplace.

The Honourable Roger Edwards

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members

In responding once again I must say I've heard things today from my colleagues that I've not heard previously.

They will all be well aware that in the Falkland Islands Government we have never employed a Health and Safety professional to come in and look at our procedures and policies and so on. We now have someone in post and he is co-located with the Public Works department, which might suggest that he is going to be concentrating more along the lines of the slips, the trips, the knocks and the bad backs and the like, rather than mental health.

The Chief Executive did point out that we do have a Mental Health Strategy and I'm sure this mental health strategy will go along a long way to solving the problems of mental health in the workplace and indeed mental health stresses and strains, even outside the workplace. All mental health stresses are not necessarily in the workplace, but must be recognized across our community and I am delighted that we have all these things. We have someone in post now who is looking at health and safety, and I wish him well with his work, but as to the question I was asked, because of the breadth of the investigations and the understanding that has to be done, the various policies, the papers, the booklets, the management codes, and everything else we have looked at, my answer still remains the same. I'm sorry I cannot give an answer as to when it will be complete or when it will be coming in front of Exco.

The Honourable Teslyn Barkman

Thank you Mr Speaker

I think this debate has been very useful; certainly a lot of relevant points have been made. I just want to draw some particular attention to, I guess why the Mental Health Strategy became a priority for the Assembly, but also acknowledging it was the effort of this Assembly, in particular my Honourable colleague Dr. Barry Elsby here, who insisted that mental health in the workplace should be made part of the Health and Safety Advisor role that we had created and recruited to, because if we go back a few years ago now we identified health and safety in the workplace as being a priority issue, and it was through discussion and attention to mental health and certainly developing the mental health strategy that actually if we want to make a culture change happen in the Falklands, we need to start where people spend most of their waking day - at work - and giving managers the courage to say, well I think this person needs some help and I know there is a pathway and a procedure in which they can get that help, and also colleagues to be able to alert managers if the employee cannot notice it themselves.

Certainly this is a culture change we are looking for. We are not reinventing the wheel, this has been done in other places and we need to make sure its Falkland's specific and as my colleague MLA Pollard pointed to, we hope to set an example to the private sector in doing this too. But it doesn't need to be this radical piece of guidance that takes years and years to develop - its root and bones, and it's not inventing the wheel. We just need to get something

started and cascade it down the CMT team, as the Honourable Chief Executive has indicated, so that there is a consistent approach to mental health in the Falkland Islands Government.

The Honourable Mark Pollard

Thank you Mr Speaker

I may be incorrect but the Mental Health First Aid course that has been offered, I think I'm probably the only MLA that has actually done that – oh my Honourable Colleague Barry Elsby has also done it - but I would urge my other colleagues to take up that opportunity if it is offered again, I imagine it will be, just to understand a little bit more about this subject as well.

Thank you Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker

Does any other Member wish to comment or raise another supplementary question? No.

Deputy Clerk of the Assembly

Motions.

Motion number 9 of 2020 by the Honourable Roger Edwards.

That this House accepts the response from the Governor (in Council) on the report of the Public Accounts Committee letter "Internal Audit: Report 12/19: Payroll Overtime & Allowances.

The Honourable Roger Edwards

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members

The Public Accounts Committee, PAC, came to the Members of the Legislative Assembly on the 21st November 2019 following the Falkland Islands Government internal audit on overtime and allowances conducted in April 2019.

The PAC recommends that high priority is given to addressing the financial risks associated with payroll, overtime and allowance audit issues raised, and that addressing the Management Code review of the section relating to this issue should be addressed as a matter of priority.

The audit opinion on the recommendations in the internal audit report shows substantial implementation. Of the seven recommendations identified in total, six are complete with one having a full report into the CMT to allow for the limited risk to be accepted.

Whilst the recommendations have been implemented, ongoing work will continue to be progressed with regular additional training and support given across Falkland Islands Government and additional checking processes are in place to eliminate any errors occurring.

On the PAC recommendations we offer the following specific comments: all of the financial risks with ensuring FIG are making the correct payments of allowances and payrolls have been addressed with the implementation of the recommendations in the report.

Chapter 7 of the Management Code has been reformatted and updated, retaining the overtime threshold as it is appropriate. In addition all allowance rates have been removed and added to a single document that is on the HR intranet, and regularly reviewed and updated annually.

Double time has not been incorporated into Chapter 7 of the Management Code, and it is not required. There was a single incident of an agreement for double time to be paid as a 'one-off' situation, which did not change the Code. The Director of HR monitors level of overtime on a monthly basis.

The two chapters covering payroll and overtime, Chapters 6 and 7, were not agreed as part of the terms of reference for the Management Code review due to the substantial implications and requirements that would be needed for these to be reviewed. Any new recommendations made and then subject to agreement, implemented. Not undertaking a review of these chapters does not pose financial risk in terms of payments being made at present.

What has progressed with this Management Code review of the chapters agreed has allowed these two chapters to be refreshed and reformatted, retaining the existing information, allowing small changes to take place, all of which support the recommendations in the internal audit report. This has been where changes have been agreed through Exco over the years, but they haven't then been amended in the Management Code, but with the refresh and revision work, it has addressed any issues identified.

Payroll and overtime rules have been clarified. Additional training has been provided by HR (Payroll) to finance clerks, particularly in areas where the use of allowance and non-standard calculations is high. In addition, a process is in place at the point of submission by payroll to highlight any allowances incorrectly submitted. Any such matter is referred to the appropriate director immediately, and the finance clerk advised.

The Audit Report recommendation that specifically states that the allowance system should be reviewed to rationalize it and any interdepartmental differences documented has been subject to consideration by CMT.

Consideration of the recommendations to rationalize the system of allowances has little or no financial risk. Therefore, acceptance of the risk of not doing this review at this time, balanced against the resources required to undertake any full review of salary and allowances, and the anticipated costs both in terms of resources but also in any required pay and allowance movement, wasn't felt proportionate.

Whilst CMT agreed that this would be something we aspire to undertake, the opportunity to complete such an extensive review and the potential return on investment is something that has been considered accordingly along with the limited risks we have against any potential outcomes.

By providing clear updated information on allowances in one single document, refining the understanding of payments that can and can't be applied with managers and finance clerks, and continue with additional training for staff, we will seek to ensure consistent implementation of the allowances currently in use.

Mr Speaker

Can I have a seconder please?

The Honourable Mark Pollard

Mr Speaker, I second the motion.

Mr Speaker

Does any Member wish to speak to the Motion?

The Motion before the House is that this House accepts the response from the Governor (in Council) on the report of the Public Accounts Committee letter entitled 'Internal Audit Report 12/19: Payroll Overtime and Allowances'.

Is there any objection to passing that Motion? There is no objection, that Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk of the Assembly

Motion number 10 of 2020 by the Honourable Dr Barry Elsby.

That this House notes the comments and recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee in respect of:

- Falkland Islands Meat Company Limited Financial Statements Year End 30 June 2018 and 30 June 2019 including the recommendation;
- Falkland Islands Development Corporation Financial Statements Year End 30 June 2019 including the recommendation.

And in accordance to the Public Accounts Ordinance 2009, clause 14 (1) a written response is required to be submitted to the Legislative Assembly by the Governor within six months.

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby

Mr Speaker

Starting with the first paper, the Falkland Islands Meat Company Limited financial statements. The Public Accounts Committee have raised two comments; one noted by Mazar was regarding staff contracts not being in place with FIMCO, which will be followed up with the Attorney General's office. The other was regarding the rental agreement not being in place for the cabins out on the Teaberry Way estate, which had been raised in 2018 and 2019. The recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee was that all fifteen cabins should have rental agreements put in place to avoid the risk of FIMCO paying rent on cabins that they do not officially have title to.

The second report concerns the Falkland Islands Development Corporation financial statement to the year end 30th of June 2019. The Public Accounts Committee noted an item raised by Mazars again regarding rental agreements not being in place or properly maintained and up to date. This item has been raised for the last seven years. The recommendation in respect to FIDC recommends that all FIDC rental agreements should accurately record, including the agreed increases so that there is no discrepancy between the amount of income posted and the amount on the rental agreement. This work should ideally be completed before the next external audit by Mazar.

Mr Speaker

Could we please have a seconder?

The Honourable Ian Hansen

Mr Speaker I second the Motion

Mr Speaker

Does any Member wish to speak to the Motion?

The Motion before the House is that this House notes the comments and recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee in respect of those reports as detailed by the Clerk, and in accordance with the Public Accounts Ordinance 2009 a written response is required to be submitted to this Assembly by the Governor within six months.

Is there any objection to passing that Motion? There is no objection, that Motion is carried.

Deputy Clerk of the Assembly

Portfolio Reports: The Honourable Teslyn Barkman.

The Honourable Teslyn Barkman

Thank you Mr Speaker,

As outlined in my last portfolio update in January there was a positive start to 2020 which has since turned into a turbulent year for the Mineral Resources portfolio.

As with every aspect of life, it is no surprise that Covid-19 has had a significant impact on the global oil industry. The oil price, already on a downward trend following OPEC disagreements, suffered considerably from an unprecedented collapse in global demand during early 2020. This dramatically affected oil prices. In line with decisions taken by many other companies across the industry, Premier Oil took the decision to suspend further significant work on Sea Lion early in the year given that the early stages of a global pandemic wasn't a viable economic landscape in which to pursue significant new investments.

However, despite the reduced activity, work has continued through 2020 with a reduced team within Premier continuing to work with FIG officials on matters that will help enable an investment decision to proceed. Although the timetable was materially impacted by COVID-19 in the first half of the year, the immediate focus of the Government is working with Premier to facilitate the proposed farm-out to the new partner, Navitas Petroleum, before the end of 2020.

Following that, it is anticipated that work will resume early in the New Year to obtain financing for the project, with the objective of allowing a financial investment decision by the joint venture by around the end of 2021. All parties remain committed to the project, and FIG remains committed to facilitating it - a position that was recently endorsed by Executive Council.

Internally, the Department of Mineral Resources has continued to work with colleagues across FIG to progress a number of fiscal, legal and regulatory matters including the introduction of enhanced legislation to replace the existing Offshore Minerals Ordinance and implement the planned improvements to regulatory standards. Through the course of the year the revised Sea Lion Environmental Impact Statement has been received, consulted upon and accepted by Executive Council, and other regulatory matters are underway.

The department has also spent time drafting a policy document to rectify an anomaly present in the 2005 Mining Ordinance which prevented the issue of any prospecting, exploration or mining licences. A paper was considered by ExCo on 17 September and has now been published. This decision will lead to draft legislation being produced in the coming months to enable prospecting and exploration licences to be issued for gold and similar minerals in response to some recent interest in resuming this type of activity.

It is important to note that, as with previous activity conducted through the 2000s, any licences issued would not over-ride the requirement for licensees to obtain landowner consent for access to private land, and it is anticipated that any exploratory activity in the foreseeable future will be limited in extent and impact. Draft legislation will emerge for consultation in due course, and should the initial activity provide encouragement, significant

further work would be required to develop appropriate regulations for any proposed extractive activity, which would be some way off.

At the department of Natural Resources it's worth noting that our industries, along with many others, have been impacted by the global pandemic.

With regards to fishing and the management of the fishery, we have worked closely with our contracted service providers and our licensed operators to reduce the chances of Covid impacting our operations. Many of the team at DNR as well as fishing vessel crews have had to endure extended periods of time away from families due to the impact of travel and border restrictions. Everyone has worked hard to accommodate these unusual circumstances. Despite these challenges and whilst it is too early to fully assess all of the impacts, it seems that we have managed to almost complete a year in an above average manner in terms of catches, and industry has managed to get its products to market. Of course, the markets have been impacted and we have received a mixture of both positive and negative feedback regarding prices and volumes sold. We continue to monitor the situation and consider impacts on the industry and economy more widely.

For Agriculture the impacts have been much more severe and wide reaching. Whilst operationally the industry has continued relatively unhindered, the support and advisory work that DoA provide has been significantly impacted due to the ability to facilitate genetic improvement projects, timely wool testing, and other routine support services.

In lieu of the cancellation of Farmers Week the team offered farm visits to all businesses. A number of strands of farmer-led extension work have been identified and these will be worked on with farmers in the coming months.

In response to the almost complete suspension of trading in wool between March and May, this Government agreed to provide support to wool producers using a Wool Support Scheme. The DoA team have been largely focused on delivering this scheme following its approval. FIG purchased all unsold 2019/20 wool clip except that produced by organisations already linked to FIG. Wool sales have commenced and so far we have met our target price on sales made, but we recognise that this will become increasingly more challenging as global wool prices continue to decline, with no clear signs of short to medium term improvements.

Staff at the Fisheries section of the Department of Natural Resources has seen some changes as well. Ludovic Goyot has finished his two-year contract as Observer Co-ordinator and was replaced by Toni Trevizan.

Dr Haseeb Randhawa finishes his four and a half year contract in the Fisheries Department as Fisheries Scientist on 25 September 2020. The recruitment process is underway for a replacement to that post.

Fisheries Observers Georgina Roberts and Amy Guest will be leaving the department after completing their contracts and recruitment again is currently underway to replace both of these positions.

Alan Henry has been appointed Acting Operations Manager to ensure that we have a Head of Service in place whilst the recruitment of a permanent post holder is completed.

Our Deputy Harbour Master, Jonathan Poynter, has decided to leave at the end of his current contract on 18th February 2021 so recruitment for replacement is under way.

Our Harbour Master Captain Chris Locke will be ending his tenure as Harbour Master at the end of December this year; we would like to thank him for his contribution to the development of the Maritime authority over the past five years.

Prior to completing the transfer of Maritime out of the Department of Natural Resources to the Department of Emergency Services and Island Security, we are overseeing the recruitment of a Maritime Officer as well. This position alongside our Fishery Protection Officers will provide a team of five to cover the duty in the Operations Room as well as at sea deployment.

Illex catches totalled 62.7 thousand tonnes. This is the second highest catch in the last five years but it is not even comparable with catches up to 357,000 tonnes experienced between 2010 and 2015. We believe that the main reason for these lower catches is the enormous increased effort on the high seas by Chinese fleets. Department for Natural Resources continues to explore potential avenues that could deliver sustainable management across the South West Atlantic.

In Loligo the total catch so far this year is 57,000 tonnes. We may reach 60 by the end of the season, which is next Wednesday. This is lower than catch levels in the last two years but still at the high end of long-term levels. The overall average annual catch is about 45,000 tonnes.

Stocks are in a good condition. Since the issue of marine mammal bycatch in the Loligo fishery was identified in 2017, the Fisheries section has been working closely with industry to mitigate bycatch as much as possible. To this end, license conditions have been amended and there is a clear escalation protocol in place to reduce the chances of marine mammal bycatch. Industry is working jointly with FIG to fund a Marine Mammal Observer programme that covers the entire fleet. This programme has been incredibly successful and has reduced bycatch to a negligible level.

So far 34,000 tonnes of Hake has been caught; this is the second highest catch behind the last years' which was a record of 53,000 tonnes. Even though the effort is lessened this year there are still expectations for 40-43,000 tonnes by the end of the year.

Work to deliver the opportunity for an early renewal of ITQ continues. As the additional policy clarifications, process and required legislative amendments crystallise, this will be shared with industry so that we are able to deliver this opportunity successfully on 1st July 2021.

A review of the science and management of our Finfish fisheries was completed in July. This report will be presented to Exco in coming months with recommendations for next steps.

A new approach to data gathering has been implemented with regards to fishing license compliance. This idea was presented recently to the Fisheries Advisory Committee and has been largely supported by industry who are keen to work with Fisheries to improve compliance wherever we fall short. Following a full historical review, we will be monitoring compliance quarterly and using the information we gather to inform our policy direction.

Over the past nine months, significant work has been carried out to prepare for the IMO III Code audit. This audit was delayed from July this year, but I am happy to report that we have informed the IMO that we are ready whenever they are. ExCo have agreed to our implementation strategy and to the establishment of a steering committee whose responsibility it will be to ensure our international and national obligations are met in a timely manner.

Working with industry we are nearing the completion of an implementation plan for the delivery of the inspection standards that assess safety on foreign flagged fishing vessels that operate in our waters.

At the Agricultural and Veterinary sections staff is also being changed. Ross Milner completed his contract at the end of July and departed the Islands last week on board the San Aspiring. Trainee Veterinary Nurse, Kattrice Berntsen has left to start her University course in Scotland. We welcome back Andrew Pollard who has joined the department as Agricultural Adviser on an eleven month contract. Phillip Van Der Riet starts work with us in August 2020 and is settling in very well.

A vet visit to the west is planned for mid-October to carry out any work required and to show Phillip around.

Meredith Ellis is working as part-time receptionist and is doing great work whipping all the filing and record keeping into shape!

Saladero Manager, Mandy Ford, flies out today on medical and we wish her well.

Consultants' programmes were cancelled this year due to Covid-19 so, as mentioned, there will be no artificial insemination for 2020.

The Saladero Ram Sale was held in March with Covid-19 restrictions in place and all rams were sold either on the sale day or subsequently by auction.

The National Beef Herd was sold and the cattle yards put up for tender and sold. This was following consultation and assessment of the herd. It is considered that any further genetic improvements that are required can be best delivered either from some of the excellent animals owned by private farmers locally or by the importation of semen as required.

Saladero capital works have progressed well, with tenders being advertised. Probably awaiting progression is a better way of describing that, I apologise.

Wool coring season was successful with samples being sent via post to get them to the Wool Testing Service in Europe following interruptions to our normal routes via LATAM.

The Wool Coring Contract for 2020/21 has been awarded to Nathan Wenn.

In the 2019/20, 2,418 wool samples were processed on the recently purchased OFDA machine.

The 2019/20 Calafate control programme was successful; the team are considering what “caretaker” plans could be delivered for this coming year.

At the Veterinary section too, they are currently working on updates to the Livestock and Meat Products (Hygiene) Regulations 2015. The amendment is to tidy up some definitions and add small amounts of farm kill - pork, goat and poultry - that can be supplied direct to final consumers without onerous regulation.

Following projects include the amendment of the Livestock and Meat Products Regulations we are looking to uniform how codes of practice are issued and amended. This will develop basic regulations regarding supply of game meat in small quantities; review two large pieces of new EU legislation to ensure all our national regulations give equivalent guarantees. They are amending the Animals (Welfare and Protection) Ordinance 2016 to include reference to ‘Finns Law’ regarding causing harm to service animals and they are also following up a large piece of work the Ross Milner started regarding an infectious animal disease outbreak control.

At Biosecurity, working with Customs to update and sign working MoU for biosecurity procedures is ongoing. They are being kept busy with inspections from incoming vessels – the *MV Scout* and FIRS vessel have both been busy lately. There has been a slightly reduced flight presence given the Covid situation, but this is increasing again.

Routine work is continuing providing essential results, for example a large consignment of lettuces was found to be very contaminated with invasive insects. This was caught by our team and it’s these small actions which actually do quite a lot for the wildlife and security of our future.

At Falkland Landholdings there have a lot of great discussion in terms of wool market and wool sales. Unfortunately that great discussion hasn’t been of the most positive kind. A series of global events have transpired to cause a dramatic fall in greasy wool prices over the last twelve to eighteen months. These events being reduced general consumer demand for woollen products; trade difficulties between USA and China and latterly Australia; Brexit impact on currency; and buyer sentiment, but most recently Covid-19 again.

Wool prices have fallen from the highs of the historic wool price super-cycle that ran from 2015 through to early 2019 to levels not experienced since the early 2000’s. This said, significant on-farm genetic progress over the last decade at FLH has meant that wool price projections for this year remain above those achieved in the early 2000’s.

Falkland Landholdings is planning on an average wool price of £4.00/kg clean gross this financial year, rather than less than £3.00/kg that may otherwise have been expected. This represents the value of the slightly finer wool now being produced by FLH farms.

It should be noted that price levels circa £4.00/kg clean will still result in a significant cash loss to FLH this financial year. A cash loss of approximately £400,000 is expected.

FLH has continued to sell wool over the last few months; they were the FIG associated statutory board not in receipt of the wool purchase scheme that FIG had issued, but they achieved good sales relative to current markets.

To-date, FLH has sold 2,194 bales of wool out of the 2,538 produced. Wool sales have generated an income of £1,827,000, with an average sales value achieved of £832 per bale sold.

343 bales remain to be sold. This wool represents the organisations least valuable oddment wool types. The 343 bales have an estimated sale value of £64,000 with an expected sales value of £187 per bale.

Projected wool income for the 2019-20 wool clip stands at £1,891,000 compared to an income achieved in 2018-19 of £3,200,000.

FLH has projected wool income of £1,400,000 for the 2020-21 financial year.

Meat sales are projected to generate an income of £330,000 this financial year. Very little scope exists to increase meat income without significantly eroding the long-term economic performance of FLH.

The FLH Board recognises the difficult economic circumstances facing the organisation and is working to critically review and improve the business. The Board seeks to shape a more efficient business that can achieve closer to a cash neutral position in the next three to five years.

It should be noted that significant change would be required to the current FLH business model to achieve cash neutrality given the fact that operations this financial year are likely to lead to a cash loss of approximately £400,000.

The Board of FLH recognises that strategic leadership may be required to build FLH into a more resilient and diversified business that is better equipped to weather the vagaries of global commodity cycles.

The Board is actively discussing the potential conflict between locking the FLH business down tightly to achieve close to a cash neutral budget this year, versus working to shape a business that grows and prospers for the benefit of the Falkland Islands Agricultural sector long-term.

But FLH continues to perform at very high levels of productivity relative to other farms in the Islands.

According to the 2019-2020 Farming Statistics, FLH farms once again achieved very satisfactory lamb marking percentages, death rates and wool production per hectare when compared to other farms in the Falkland Islands.

Economic benchmarking is planned in the future to determine the relationship between farm productivity and farm economic performance.

The FLH General Manager and farm managers met with staff to discuss the financial circumstances facing FLH and farming more broadly in the Falkland Islands. Staff are to be commended for their understanding of the issues facing the FLH farming business and their preparedness to work together to seek improvements during this difficult time.

FLH truly values the support of staff and the contribution they are making towards these difficult times. This is similarly admired by MLA Hansen and myself as Chair and portfolio holder of FLH.

Moving on to Brexit, and the last arm of my portfolio.

The Falkland Islands Government continues to work with the UK Government to explore options for the continued tariff-free market access for our fisheries products following the end of the transition period on 01 January 2021.

As we have done throughout this process, we will continue to work closely with Falkland Islands Fishing Companies Association and their members.

When I was recently in the UK with my colleague MLA Pollard, we held a number of meetings with officials in the FCDO and with our Minister and Shadow Minister. In all of these meetings we continued to impress upon the UK the importance of securing some form of arrangement that allows us to continue exporting tariff-free to the EU.

My fellow MLAs, like everyone else, will be aware the UK/EU negotiations do not appear to be going well. We therefore continue to prepare for all eventualities. With this in mind we have increased our engagement with the Falkland Islands Fishing Companies Association and have established a working group involving the Chief Executive, Director of Natural Resources and the UK Representative, Richard Hyslop. In addition to this, we have also had regular meetings with the negotiating team in the Foreign Commonwealth Development Office. These meetings also involve the Governor.

It is vitally important that MLAs, FIG, FIFCA and the team at Government House are all working together in a united fashion at this critically important time.

Lastly Mr Speaker, I am struck by just how very fortunate I am to represent the Natural Resources portfolio and I would like to thank Director of Mineral Resources, Stephen Luxton, Director of Natural Resources, Andrea Clausen, General Manager of FLH, Neil Judd, and our Falklands Representative, Richard Hyslop, for submitting their highlights from the last few months. I would also like to personally commend their teams for their dedicated work on what has been a turbulent period across all areas of the portfolio.

While I realise I have taken a lot of time to run through what are only highlights of what has happened in the past few months across the departments of Mineral Resources, Natural Resources, FLH and our London office. It is clear that there have been incredible team efforts made in this challenging time to keep our resource based economy ticking – that is the priority. The efforts are recognised and the collaboration with my colleagues and the private sector to act fast has always been integral. We can't take our eye off the future, but we continue to find our own way even in this new and ever changing world we will rise to the challenges it throws at us.

Thank you Mr Speaker.

The Honourable Dr Barry Elsby

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members

That was indeed a very thorough report and it is a big portfolio. I was interested by the comments on the Biosecurity, which is an important part of how we keep our Islands pristine, that lots of lettuces were found being infected and clearly had to be destroyed. Were they imported for consumption by the civilian population or the military at MPA?

The Honourable Teslyn Barkman

I thank my colleague for his question, unfortunately I don't have that information available to me, but I'm happy to follow it up and provide him with an answer outside of this Assembly or similarly happy to report back to the Assembly if that's what he would wish.

Mr Speaker

Does any other Member wish to comment? No.

Deputy Clerk of Assembly

Portfolio reports: the Honourable Roger Spink.

The Honourable Roger Spink

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members

I will start with the Treasury. The Treasury team have, alongside all elements of Government, continued to provide exchequer and financial management services across all departments and to our wider community stakeholders.

Challenges have been plentiful over the last few months, not least a change in Financial Secretary. I know that the new incumbent Tim Waggott has been keen to acknowledge the hard work of his predecessor, James Wilson, and the efforts of the wider team for their hard work and dedication over an extended period of time.

As economic support measures were introduced to support the population in the face of the global Covid-19 pandemic, the Treasury have found themselves at the forefront of administration for the employment / self-employment schemes which were followed by the Job Retention (Furlough) Scheme, Income Supplement Scheme, Unemployment Subsidy Scheme and, in addition, the Business Grant Scheme in association with Falkland Islands Development Corporation.

These schemes have now seen 323 claims paid, supporting many individuals and businesses to keep their 'heads above water' at a challenging time with more than £1 million in support paid out in a four to five month period. In addition, substantial support has been provided to the farming sector with almost £2.8 million paid out to purchase the unsold wool clip.

I should like to pay tribute to the Internal Audit team, Philip Honeybone and Jack Ford, who have worked on the scheme design and guidance, and have tirelessly ensured a robust process is in place to support the expense of public money. I must also make special mention of our Financial Accountant, Satwinder Chandla, who whilst new to these Islands, was often the only person in the office in the early days of the schemes to ensure claims were processed and money got to those in need.

Alongside the immediate pressures of the moment the team have been working to continue to facilitate the business of Government by delivering a budget and progressing the usual round of financial reports, as well as preparing accounts for external audit. Time has even been found to reinvigorate the Stamp Advisory Committee with a competition launched to support a Christmas issue of stamps designed by young people.

The Tax Office have continued the excellent work of the last few years in ensuring that taxpayers file their returns on time, and that payments are made. I strongly encourage everyone to comply with their responsibilities to pay tax in accordance with the law of the Falkland Islands. If you are struggling please do not bury your head in the sand. Positive engagement with the tax office will save time in the long-run and it is right to point out that Government is only able to provide support to the wider community at difficult times if it is able to collect what is due.

On that note it is pleasing that in respect of tax returns due in 2020:

- Personal tax returns issued - 2652
- Personal tax returns received - 2465
- Outstanding returns - 187

Of those received we have returned as assessed, or queried, 1839 and have therefore processed 75% of the returns received.

Corporation tax receipts for 2020/21 were between £18 and £19 million as at the end of last week. We are pleased that this is close to the budget for the year and are therefore hopeful that this important revenue for Government will be in line with expectations.

The Head of Tax (Esther Green) has worked hard as part of the Strategic Oil Group to create the right conditions for the oil sector on the Islands to flourish when global markets recover.

A number of pieces of tax legislation form part of the legislative programme for 2020/21 and the team have been working hard to progress both policy papers and drafting of the detailed legislation in conjunction with the Attorney General's Chambers.

It would be fair to say that with their role in delivering the economic support measures it has been difficult for Internal Audit to deliver much of their initial plan for this year. Regrettably they were further held back as one member of the team decided that it was in their best interests to return to their home country for family reasons. An audit plan for 2020/21 and beyond is due for review by the Corporate Management Team this month and with a positive External Quality Assurance of our internal audit function received, we are continuing to review and improve our governance and risk management strategies.

Looking ahead for the remainder of 2020/21 we are looking at costs and revenues which are largely in line with budgets and as a result it is unlikely that we will require a mini-budget as trailed a few months ago. However, much work is being undertaken in preparing a ten year capital programme which is crucial for our medium and long-term financial strategy as we look to build for the future and consider investments to benefit current and future generations. Our aspirations cover a wide range of areas including, but not limited to: a new port, a new power station, hospital improvements, enhanced educational facilities, radio services, housing and roads.

You may also have seen that the introduction of electronic payments via Square and MasterCard featured widely in the international media demonstrating how we are continuing to progress as a nation, providing services that are commonplace around the globe. We will continue to work with Standard Chartered Bank and others to develop further over time.

Having the right team in place both now and in the future is critically important; a number of recruitments are being undertaken both locally and overseas.

We remain mindful of the need to build local skills and capacity. It is for this reason that conversations are again taking place with local professionals to see how working alongside our colleagues in education we can build the right platform to encourage growth in core skills.

For those who don't know it – finance can be fun!

Human Resources: the new Human Resources Director has been in place for seven months. In this time she has continued to progress a number of areas of work and lead the function through Covid.

The reorganisation of workloads within the HR team to bring about a better flow of work amongst team members, to avoid bottlenecks and to provide an end-to-end HR service to managers and employees has started to settle, although with COVID and staff changes it is still in its infancy.

Each Directorate now has two HR contacts that provide a range of services to managers and employees throughout the employee life-cycle from recruitment to exit. The initial feedback

has been positive from Directorates, and the knowledge basis within HR is slowly starting to expand with this way of working.

All of the team in HR are on local terms apart from the one contract post, Director. The continued development of the team is key to delivering an effective efficient HR service and regular training inputs are now in place with a schedule of things being delivered to the team. We have recently recruited a new trainee HR Advisor and also utilised the ability to have a student on a work placement for a short period of time that worked well.

In addition, the team have been encouraged to progress in terms of HR qualifications and development has been identified on appraisals in the setting of objectives. One of the team has applied for and successfully obtained funding for the next level of their HR professional qualification.

The recruitment of a number of key positions have been a significant feature during this period including a new Financial Secretary, Chief Information Officer, and the selection process for the Chief Executive has been undertaken.

Over the last six months, 91 adverts and recruitment processes have been undertaken across FIG.

COVID: HR continued to function as it is a key area of activity during Covid and provided clear detailed advice and support to the whole Government approach taken during this difficult time.

The team supported the development of guidance in terms of attendance at work, safe working practices and supported managers with identifying how things could be done differently. HR provided a point of contact for opportunities to deploy people differently and identifying practices that needed to change due to implications for staff.

HR caseload: the team have continued to work with colleagues across FIG to satisfactorily resolve a number of complex and sensitive HR issues including conduct, performance, grievance and disciplinary matters, in addition to supporting a significant change programme within the Natural Resources Directorate.

Work has taken place with Immigration in terms of amendments to recruitment and contract lengths, in line with the Management Code and ordinance. There has been considerable work completed in terms of audit recommendations that have resulted in the implementation of a number that were previously outstanding.

The introduction from July 1st of using the CHRIS system for recording of annual leave and sick leave will provide for data to be more readily accessible and available from this year 2020/21 for comparison – I am sure the Honourable Barry Elsbey will be pleased.

Training has been provided to all directorates to ensure that that the benefits of this system are achieved.

The equalisation of annual leave was introduced from 1 July 2020, ensuring that all staff within FIG receives thirty days annual leave as opposed to the staggered amount previously in place for local staff. This has benefited 191 locally employed staff.

There has been a re-aligned and refreshed exit interview process implemented with additional detail provided for and, more recently, the introduction of a recruitment survey for new starters to identify opportunities for change and improvement in recruitment processes.

Performance developments plans – appraisals - have been refreshed re-trained and are now mandatory for all. Providing for managers to identify continued opportunities for staff and supervisors to share expectations, consider career paths and objectives.

Succession Planning: there continues to be a well-planned, varied, sustainable approach to the development and succession plans across FIG. This is supported with the continued work that is being done by developing managers to consider different approaches to roles, support the opportunities for staff to take control of their careers and identify career paths for people wishing to move forward.

Across FIG we supported the programme of FE placements; we had seven placements with regular discussions for others when available. This shows a real commitment from managers in FIG to support these programmes.

A further area of work that has now come to fruition has been the Management Trainee Programme that has been developed and will shortly be implemented. This is a great opportunity for two individuals to join FIG on a two year management trainee programme, alongside which they will be studying a professional qualification.

This has also allowed us to introduce a programme for mentors to be identified from within FIG to link in to the trainees which allows for a supportive, professional, confidential relationship during the programme. Notwithstanding the development of the mentor programme within its own right this gives mentors additional skills.

Whilst Health & Safety has moved across to PWD, work in the “well-being” element of this is still retained in HR. This work has progressed more slowly than hoped but continues with the draft elements to be contained in the revision of Chapter 3 of the Management Code being discussed and progressed.

The HR Induction for all staff and managers has also been refreshed and is now timetabled as part of the starters checklist introduced by HR.

Management Code: significant progress has been made with the review of the FIG Management Code policies and procedures. In preparation for implementation of these Chapters, training was delivered to managers across FIG. This consisted of a one day workshop to understand the changes made to the policies and to help managers understand their people management responsibilities.

The workshop also covered essential management skills, such as effective one-to-one meetings, with almost 100 managers having attended the training. All of the chapters that were agreed for review have now been implemented from July 1st.

The launch of the new chapters was due to be accompanied by a comprehensive training programme starting with 'Recruitment, Selection and Induction' training being piloted last year. Due to Covid this wasn't achievable in the way anticipated so was more streamlined. There are still a number of areas where additional detailed written guidance for managers needs to be completed. A plan has been agreed to ensure that this is done quickly in support of managers.

Moving on to FIGO, the Falkland Islands Government London office has continued to support FIG and the wider Islands throughout 2020.

The year to date can be split into two defined periods: January to March and then March to the present day. January to March was a very busy period for the FIGO team hosting a reception in January for FITB and LATAM to promote the new Sao Paulo flight to representatives of the travel industry and journalists.

FIGO continued to ensure the Falkland Islands concerns were understood in Westminster with the Representative and Deputy Representative meeting with MPs and Peers on an almost daily basis.

The office was as busy as ever with a range of UK-based Falkland Islands organisations using the office for their meetings. In addition to this, FIGO facilities were used by FIG and the private sector for meetings and interviews.

Members of the FIGO team were actively involved in a number of projects and meetings outside of London. Chief amongst these was the SS Great Britain 50th anniversary events in Bristol.

As an active member of UKOTA, FIGO continued to work closely with the other UK Overseas Territories on areas of mutual interest. This included a number of events promoting the Overseas Territories in Parliament.

Work continued supporting our students and medical patients and the flight desk seemed to be busier than ever. It was also encouraging to see FIGO expanding and growing our social media presence and securing a variety of positive media coverage.

In March FIGO was forced to close as a result of the COVID-19 restrictions and the team had to work from home. During this difficult and challenging time FIGO continued to support the Islands and, in addition to our usual work, helped organise repatriation flights, provided additional support for our students and medical patients and made sure that the FIGO flat was available to anyone from the Islands who needed it. The team also liaised with the FCDO and the MoD on issues such as the Air Bridge and medical support.

We also continued to engage remotely with politicians in Westminster to ensure that the situation facing the Islands was fully understood. As the difficulties related to COVID-19 continue in the UK, much of this additional work continues.

Despite these challenges we are moving to some semblance of normality and FIGO was able to support the recent visit to the UK by MLAs Barkman and Pollard, organising a range of meetings with officials and ministers and shadow ministers.

We were also able to host the Chief Executive interviews and to host a small reception to mark Falklands Day.

FIGO has taken advantage of applications like Zoom to involve MLAs in more meetings and events in the UK. Recently MLA Barkman and SAERI addressed the Virtual Islands Summit and, alongside MLA Roberts, MLA Barkman addressed a meeting of the Falkland Islands APPG. In a couple of weeks FIG will host a fringe meeting at the virtual Conservative Party Conference.

Finally, and most importantly, FIGO was still able to ensure that Liberation Day was marked in the UK. The Representative and Chairman of SAMA jointly laid wreaths at the Cenotaph in Whitehall, the Representative then went on to lay flowers at the memorial inside the Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel at Pangbourne College and a special film was made involving Islanders, MLA Roberts, and SAMA.

Law and Regulation: I want to remind everyone that today is polling day and I would encourage everyone who has not already voted by post or at a mobile polling station to attend one of the polling stations throughout the Islands and vote in the Single Constituency Referendum. Regardless of what your view is, it is important that we hear from as many people as possible. If anyone has any technical queries, please contact the Registrar General at the Town Hall.

The Civil Aviation Department continues to fulfil its functions in relation to the regulation of Civil Aviation in the Islands. Following an audit by Air Safety Support International, it was concluded that the department works to a high standard and discharges its responsibilities well – its designation to undertake those functions remains unchanged. ASSI concluded that this was a very positive assessment and complemented the proactive approach of the team. This is all down to the hard work of Bruce, Terrienne and Lisa.

The Communications Regulator continues to work through his annual work plan, assisting in the development of a National Broadband Strategy, developing his policy around licensing as well as his functions in relation to the monitoring of Sure – something I'm fond of reminding him about! We have the detailed annual Telecommunications presentation on Wednesday 7th October.

The Legal team in particular has been really pressed over many months, carrying a number of vacancies, but is continuing to deliver advice and support on all key Government functions. Several vacancies in the team are now subject to offers of employment and it is hoped that the team will be up to full complement soon.

The legislative drafting team is up to full complement and is progressing well with a number of key legislative projects.

The department has recruited a new Legal Policy Adviser to help with the process of converting all of the good policy ideas of Members and officers into the required legislation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members that concludes my portfolio report.

The Honourable Teslyn Barkman

Thank you Mr Speaker,

I don't necessarily think this is a question, but more of a comment on some of the areas my Honourable Colleague, MLA Spink, has pointed to.

Remarking finance might not always be fun, certainly it is something to be proud of and I had a very interesting conversation yesterday with a member of the public talking about the immense pride they have in the fact that the Falkland Islands is expanding its Financial Services to the public because, whether it's the ATM at Stanley Services or the Square payments that my Honourable Colleague was referring to, it shows that our society is truly modernizing and it was just nice to hear that there is pride in the community on what is being achieved there.

I know that the efforts of FIGO have been somewhat immense and I feel some modesty possibly on the part of our Representative in the UK, not to pull out some of the great effort that is being made before Covid-19 really took off in March. They set a new and ambitious plan to engage every single MP in Westminster within a year. Coming quite new into this role that was previously held by Sukey Cameron, he really did change the landscapes for which FIGO operated and has set some bold targets, and I think it's fair to say he's gone above and beyond being able to achieve what the level of engagement they could on our priority issues, as well as handling the Covid-19 impacts.

I think now more than ever, as reported in my portfolio, our interests need to be heard. We have got some significant areas of concern that we need to keep on the forefront of the UK Government's mind and I think that we are very encouraged by the work that Richard, Michael and the team at FIGO are conducting on our behalf.

Lastly, I would just support my Honourable colleagues call for everyone to vote today. I think everyone should have their voice heard on this issue.

Thank you Mr Speaker.

The Honourable Stacy Bragger

Thank you Mr Speaker, and thanks to the Honourable Roger Spink for his update.

He mentioned telecoms and the work of a regulator; we are all aware there have been improvements in internet access in the last couple of years and increases in data allowance, but we all wish to see continued development going forward, and I was just wondering if MLA Spink had any thoughts on what the future holds in terms of continued development and what sort of framework there is for exploring options for continued innovation in telecoms?

The Honourable Roger Spink

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members,

I think the Chief Executive is shortly going to be reconvening a group to discuss future developments for broadband and other telecommunications within the Islands so that we can keep moving things forwards.

The Honourable Stacy Bragger

Thank you very much.

The Honourable Mark Pollard

Thank you Mr Speaker,

I just would like to say I have said this to the department itself, but my Honourable colleague's portfolio isn't necessarily the most public-facing of portfolios, and I think that some of the work they have been doing during Covid, spoken about by my colleague, has to be highlighted I think on top of the normal workload they have had. I would like to pass my thanks on to the Honourable Financial Secretary and his team for all the work they've done - as well as everyone else within the portfolio who has been beavering away. As I say, it's not a public facing portfolio, but it's not the first to be recognized for all the hard work that they do, so I would just like to pass on my thanks to all involved.

Thank you.

Mr Speaker

Does any other Member wish to comment? No.

Thank you to both of the Honourable Members for their portfolio reports.

Deputy Clerk of the Assembly

Order of the Day: Bills.

Supplementary Appropriation (2020-2021) Bill 2020. This Bill has not been gazetted and we go to the first read.

The Honourable Financial Secretary

Mr Speaker, I beg to move the first reading of the Bill

The Honourable Roger Spink

I second the Motion.

Mr Speaker

The Motion is that the Bill be read a first time, is there any objection to the Motion?

There is no objection, the Bill will be read a first time

Deputy Clerk of the Assembly

Supplementary Appropriation (2020-2021) Bill 2020.

The Honourable Financial Secretary

Mr Speaker

Thank you, the purpose of this Bill is to give effect to additional sums recently approved by Exco and Standing Finance Committee enabling £16,226,760 to be spent this year.

Contingencies warrant number 1 of 2020/21 was signed by myself on the 19th September 2020 under Section 26 (2) of the Finance Ordinance on the basis that I was satisfied that due to exceptional circumstances the items contained within could not have been foreseen and there was an urgent need for the expenditure. These include £2.5 million on three capital projects and a balance in respect of operational expenditure. The costs cannot be avoided or, if they were, they would have a detrimental effect on the work of Government.

I am required by law to highlight any advances authorized by the contingencies fund under Section 26 and set them out in a Supplementary Appropriation Bill in order to replenish the Contingency Fund.

Mr Speaker, a further sum just under £13.7 million is made up of carried forward monies from the 2019/20 financial year. This is in excess of the £5.7 million which is contained in the Contingencies Fund for 2021, and therefore I am unable to sign this off under my own authority for our contingencies warrant. In any event the sums involved are not needed urgently, so are included in this Supplementary Appropriation without having first being advanced from the Contingencies Fund.

I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

Mr Speaker

Thank you, and a seconder please?

The Honourable Roger Spink

I second the Motion.

Mr Speaker

The Motion is that the Bill be read a second time, does any Honourable Member wish to speak to that Motion?

There is no debate, is there any objection to taking this Bill by the short procedure?

There is no objection, does any Member wish to propose any amendment to the wording of the Bill?

There are no amendments, I declare the Bill will be read for a third time and do pass.

Deputy Clerk of the Assembly

Supplementary Appropriation (2020-2021) Bill 2020.

Motion for Adjournment

The Honourable Chief Executive

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this House stands adjourned *sine die*.

The Honourable Roger Edwards

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members

It's been quite a long morning so I will be very brief. Today is Referendum day and I hope that people listening to me speaking at the moment are actually holding their portable radios to their ears as they queue outside the Polling Stations ready to cast their vote. Their votes are important.

Those of you with a keen ear will have noticed that we have a different Clerk today, and also we are in a different House. We are in the Parish Hall today because the usual Court and Council Chamber is being used as the Polling Station. We have a different Clerk because our normal Clerk, Cherie Clifford, and the Honourable Leona Roberts are taking part in a virtual British Islands and Mediterranean region CPA meeting which is going on at Gilbert House even as we speak.

This weekend the majority of Members are traveling to Camp to take part in, as well as support, the briefing on the Housing Strategy going forward and so I will close by saying I look forward to meeting many of you over this coming weekend.

Mr Speaker, I support the Motion for Adjournment.

The Honourable Teslyn Barkman

Thank you Mr Speaker,

I too will be brief. The Honourable Roger Edwards pointed to us on the road from tomorrow and I am very much looking forward to spending a few days and having public meetings at Goose Green, Port Howard and Fox Bay on the Housing Policy which is currently out for consultation. It's a key piece of legislation so I would draw people to get involved, to get in contact with the Policy department if you want to know more. There is a web portal for that information - it is a national project and it's so important. Everyone who struggles to find a house to rent, and I was one of those people for a great number of years, everyone who thinks the system that we have currently is unfairly stacked to one side or the other, or thinks it's perfect and wants to have that acknowledged, everyone's voice matters just like with everything else.

Something significant happened yesterday at Exco, was that we proved a domestic travel plan scheme to encourage tourism to actually happen this season. Without cruise ships we recognize deficits in quite a few local providers in the sector may have reduced footfall, so we came up with this grand scheme and it might be a bit complicated to wrap your heads around - it's got many strands but the whole purpose of it is, we need to keep the money going round the economy, and we actually found a great idea that gave our society a chance to know itself better as well I think, which is why we also extended it to Mount Pleasant because there is great benefit in everyone knowing what these Islands truly has to offer.

So, again, I would encourage you to start making your travel plans as soon as possible, I'm sure places are going to be booking up fast, but certainly I hope this gives everyone a good opportunity to get out and about and help support our economy.

Thank you Mr Speaker, I support the Motion.

The Honourable Mark Pollard

Thank you Mr Speaker,

Again with the Camp trip, we are out on the road and again although we are only going to a limited number of settlements - so Goose Green across to Port Howard and Fox Bay, and possibly Hill Cove, but I am not sure if that was confirmed or not - we obviously aren't going to be able to see everyone, there will be people shearing, people with other commitments as well, but I will just reiterate what I've said throughout this Assembly that we are available as Members, so even though you can't see us on the road by all means get hold of us by other methods.

I just wanted to point out briefly the SAROS II site - I just seen an email coming in as we were sat here this morning, with several different tenders for contracts from FIG and I wanted to point that out to businesses in the Falklands that these contracts are going out now; we are seeing more and more on this site. If you are not sure on how to join the site, please speak to FIDC, I'm sure they would be able to point you through it.

It's not just a place to look at FIG contracts and bid for those, but it's a place where you can put your own contracts on there as well and tender for work. So I think that could be a key thing going forwards, I would advise people to look into that.

Thank you very much Mr Speaker, finally I would like to just urge everyone to go and vote as well, please it's a democratic power you have so please exercise that, thank you.

I support the Motion, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker

Honourable Members, does any other Member wish to speak to the Motion for Adjournment? No.

Honourable Members, that concludes the business for today, the House stands adjourned accordingly.