

FALKLAND ISLANDS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

RURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY STEERING GROUP

MEETING HELD AT THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AT 13.30
ON THURSDAY APRIL 12TH 2012.

Attendees

- Hon. Mike Summers (MS) MLA, RDS Portfolio holder (Chairperson)
- Hon. Ian Hansen (IH) MLA, RDS Portfolio holder
- Marc Boucher (MB) GM FIDC
- Warren Landles (WL) AA DoA
- Jamie Fotheringham (JF) Head of Policy
- Nuala Knight (NK) RDS PC
- Ted Jones (MJ) East Falkland representative
- Justin Knight (JK) West Falkland representative

The following individuals attended the meeting for the second agenda item

- Craig Paice (CP) Supervisor, PWD Water Section
- Michael Betts (MBetts) Project Manager Import Substitution, FIDC

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Keith Padgett and Andrew Pollard. Warren Landles attended the meeting in place of Andrew Pollard.

2. Review of notes from last meeting held 5th March 2012

There were no comments.

3. Matters Arising

1. Utility Plan

Craig Paice attended the meeting to discuss the water problems facing Camp and the potential solutions. Mike Summers outlined the aim of the RDS Steering Group and the issues surrounding access to water. 2 papers produced by Tim Cotter circa 2002 had been circulated prior to the meeting and provided a basis for discussion.

Fox Bay settlement as the focus of the Rural Enterprise Zones was discussed first. Craig explained that there was only one storage tank being used currently but that another was available which needed lined. The Fox Bay Village Agent has a new tank liner and Craig has just sent a variety of plumbing parts needed to get the second tank on line. Craig said that if required, a water meter could be used to assess how much water is used and how much water is pumped.

Warren Landles plans to try to quantify the problem of accessing water for agricultural businesses by including sessions on this in the DoA sessions during Farmers Week sessions and by submitting articles in the Wool Press. He explained that a total 80ml had fallen over the summer so their main effort at

Saladero had been focused on moving livestock to water. He said that the process of aeration was good for getting water into the soil.

ACTION: WL to submit a Wool Press Article.

WL to organise DoA session to address “water” issue during Farmers Week.

NK to issue a questionnaire to assess opinions on water provision in Camp.

Craig said he thought that one of the main problems in Camp in terms of accessing and using water was the condition of existing infrastructure, in particular pipes.

There was no clear idea of the scale or the specifics of the water problems facing Camp. The group identified the following problems:

1. Was it retention of water e.g. in tanks (domestic use) or reservoirs (for livestock)?
2. Was there a problem with springs slowing or drying up completely? Would better retention of existing water sources tackle this?
3. Was it the infrastructure i.e. unreliable and leaking pipes wasting water?

MJ noted that the requirements in agriculture were different depending on whether water was required for livestock or crops e.g. livestock could travel to water sources so may need different solutions.

MJ noted that he had sorted out his own domestic water supply issues by installing new pipe works. He added that at the time, Golden Touza were able to source the cheapest pipe and fittings from Spain.

MB noted that in his hometown, all municipal water problems are addressed by drill rigs which drill for water.

WL said an alternative option would be to dam areas such as road side drains to limit water flowing away.

A brief discussion was held about the PWD drill rigs. It was agreed that it was very unlikely that PWD would release the rig used for blowing rock at the quarry, for use in and around Camp.

Craig Paice said that if drill rigs were thought to be the best solution that it would be advisable to buy in expertise from outside the Islands to advise on their use.

It was mooted that employing a drill rig in Camp to resolve water issues in Camp might provide part time or full time employment for an individual which would meet one of the aims of the RDS.

WL again emphasised that he felt water retainment was as much an issue as finding new sources.

IH said that perhaps we needed advice on infrastructure and retainment such as dams and ponds.

MS asked whether there was benefit in buying a large amount of alkathene pipe and some tanks in bulk to achieve low prices and then selling this equipment on to the Camp population. It was agreed that this might be one sensible option. MS said that perhaps one of the local retailers could take this opportunity on.

ACTION: NK to discuss this with retailers such as Lifestyles. NK to also contact Paul Barnes as he may have a contact for sourcing low cost alkathene pipe.

WL was tasked with speaking to Neil Judd and Peter Johnson to assess how problems are addressed in drier climates.

WL was also tasked with contacting Jim Gerrish to discuss water solutions for livestock and crops.

Craig Paice was asked to follow up his discussions with Mark Short, Quarry Manager, PWD.

CP to find out how much water Falkland Gold and Minerals found whilst drilling.

CP to speak to Stephen Luxton to find out if there are reports in their archive which could be useful or relevant regarding levels and depths of water found whilst drilling.

WL to include a water session within the DoA contributions at Farmers Week.

2. Import Substitution

WL confirmed that the DoA had e-mailed farmers and asked for feedback on the lack of uptake on the Import Substitution Programme. MBetts ran through the results of the DoA's questions outlining the feedback. This was as follows:

- *4 people claimed they didn't know about/were unaware of the scheme so couldn't comment*
- *5 said the £10k minimum loan incentive is too high and suggested figures of between £2-£5k as a start-up*
- *Three people suggested that the scheme would work better if it introduced some collaboration e.g. several small veg growers combining to share knowledge, transport etc and this would minimise the impact of crop failure on a single farm*
- *3 thought the scheme was linked specifically to Becksid farm and made no other comments*
- *Several thought the complexity of dealing with FIDC would be too great and felt put off*
- *A lot of comments from the West farmers mentioned freight costs as a barrier*
- *Several thought the scheme could be linked to the DOA's Farm Improvement Programme (FIP)*
- *Labour was a major issue, in that a larger commercial venture would potentially require a high labour input particularly if it were to run alongside existing sheep/cattle enterprises*
- *The changing climate and the need for water irrigation was highlighted by several who had looked at growing vegetables on a larger scale*
- *Two others felt that the weather pattern of the Islands necessitated the use of poly tunnels only and that outside production was virtually impossible on a large scale*
- *Two farmers had made detailed cost of production comparisons and highlighted that buyers would need to pay more for Falkland Island produce for it to become sustainable*

MBetts countered the first bullet above by confirming that the scheme had been widely advertised.

It was agreed by the Group that changes could be made to the scheme without ExCo approval, as long as the objectives were still being met.

MBetts said that he had been speaking to restaurants and retailers about the quantities of vegetables required by them and can feed this information into the programme.

MB said that he felt that the level of bureaucracy should reflect the level of funding available therefore small projects should have minimal bureaucracy. There was general agreement that the design of the current programme probably scared potential applicants off.

The scheme was originally set up on the basis of food security. It was suggested that the focus has probably shifted from this perspective somewhat.

ACTION: MBetts, WL, JF to revise the scheme and make it dual purpose i.e. about food security whilst also meeting the objectives of the RDS.

Decentralisation was discussed. MS noted decentralisation of the DoA staff had been tried previously. MJ said that having DoA staff in Camp worked very well for farmers and was a success in their eyes though he felt that that view was not shared by the public sector. There was generally a difference in opinion amongst the Steering Group about the economic benefit of decentralising public sector staff.

There was agreement that the privatisation of FIG services could provide opportunities for Camp. It was felt that the RDS was well represented on the existing groups responsible for driving the "localisation" agenda forward. Steering Group representatives would use these other forums to identify opportunities for achieving the RDS objectives and feed-back relevant information.

ACTION: JF to explore decentralisation of DoA staff further with Andrew Pollard. JF and Simon Fletcher to consider how best to dovetail the discussions held in other forums on localisation, into the RDS.

Other public services which could be undertaken in Camp, on a part time or occasional basis include nursing. The Chair asked that David Jenkins be invited to the next RDS meeting.

ACTION: NK to invite David Jenkins to the next meeting

4. **Justin Knight and Ted Jones**

JK and MJ were formally welcomed to the meeting.

5. **Remit of the RDS**

MS explained that the remit of the Group was to take an interest in those prospects which will help achieve the aims of the RDS. The three roles of the Steering Group are broadly

- a) Direct delivery of projects
- b) Partnership and collaboration with partners e.g. water
- c) To direct those projects "which don't have a home"
- d) General administration

JF felt there should be more private sector representation going forward.

MS asked whether these individuals should be full and permanent members or whether they should change according to the agenda. It was generally agreed that there should be a minimum of two Camp private sector representatives at every meeting.

ACTION: NK to speak to the RBA about representation from the East and West

It was agreed that the notes or minutes from RDS meetings should be made public and that the ExCo approved strategy should be circulated.

ACTION: NK

MS asked that the RDS Action Plan utilise the project management software currently used by FIDC for its other projects.

ACTION: NK

In terms of the RDS Action Plan, it was agreed that a few head line actions were required to condense the detail currently included. It was further agreed that the selected actions should reflect the original 5 RDS Key priorities i.e. Business, Workforce, Community, Infrastructure and the Environment.

The head line actions provisionally agreed at the meeting were as follows:

- Adding value to wool
- Horticulture and land release
- Inshore Fisheries
- Key Worker Scheme and localisation/privatisation
- Rural Enterprise Zones- infrastructure development plus fiscal incentives
- Utilities- water and power

It was agreed that the action plan would be amended and circulated by e-mail for comment before the next meeting.

Action: NK to amend the document.

All Steering Group members to comment on amended Action Plan prior to the next meeting.

MS requested that tourism be added to the next meeting agenda.

Action: NK

6. Any Other Business

JK commented on the proposed WSL freight charges increase and the agreed increase in FIGAS flight costs. JK felt that continuing to steeply increase FIGAS rates was a disincentive for attracting new people to Camp and that this was not aligned to the RDS objectives.

MS raised the proposed community consultation. It was suggested that the next Steering Group Meeting should be held on the West. Some consultation would be conducted at the same time. The same consultation will be held on the East.

ACTION: NK to organise meeting and consultation and advertise it.

8. Date of next meeting

The meeting ended at 4.00pm. It was agreed the date for the next meeting should be around the w/b 30th April.

Post meeting note: The date of the next meeting will be the 7th May. This meeting will be held on the West and will include an element of consultation.

Nuala Knight
24th April 2012