

## **RURAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY STEERING GROUP**

### **MEETING HELD in the Chamber of Commence 1PM STANLEY TIME ON WEDNESDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2012**

#### **Attendees**

- Hon. Mike Summers (MS) MLA, RDS Portfolio holder (Chairperson)
- Hon. Ian Hansen (IH) MLA, RDS Portfolio holder
- Keith Padgett (KP) Chief Executive, FIG
- Jamie Fotheringham (JF) Head of Policy, FIG
- Michael Betts (MB) Assistant Project Manager, FIDC
- Andrew Pollard (AP) SAA DoA
- Nuala Knight (NK) RDS PC
- Mike Evans (ME) West Falkland Representative
- Ted Jones (MJ) East Falkland Representative
  
- Kerry McRae Minutes

#### **Invited guests**

- Rodney Lee (RL) Manager, Falkland Island Wool Company  
(item 6 only)

#### **1. Welcome to Kerry McRae**

- 1.1 The board welcomed Kerry McRae to the RDS Steering Group as minute taker. MS requested that hard copies of papers be provided to all members in advance of meetings.

**ACTION:** NK to ensure papers are circulated in advance of meetings to all members.

#### **2. Apologies**

- 2.1 Marc Boucher – Michael Betts attended in his absence.

#### **3. Review of notes from last meeting held 31<sup>st</sup> May 2012**

- 3.1 There were no comments.

#### **4. Matters Arising and actions carried forward**

##### **Agricultural college/training farm**

- 4.1 A discussion took place regarding the use of Becksid Farm as the site for the agricultural college proposed by the Training Centre and DoA. A model, based on Becksid Farm produced by the Training Centre was displayed during Farmers week to show the principles behind the proposed agricultural college. The Training Centre had previously been informed by FIDC that Becksid Farm wasn't available as a location. The model and associated leaflet presented at Farmers Week had therefore caused some confusion about the location of the "proposed college".

- 4.2 The proposal in its current form is being led by Marcus Morrison of the Training Centre with support from Helen Thoday, DoA. AP confirmed that the DoA's focus was on agricultural apprentices. Mike Evans suggested that there was an alternative design for an on-farm training centre that had not been discussed or aired as yet which he was interested in getting an opportunity to discuss more fully. It was agreed that the Steering Group's role in the development of the agricultural college idea was not clear.
- 4.3 Steering Group Members expressed concern at the lack of clear direction and lack of communication around this project. It was not clear when or how this proposal would come to the Steering Group for comment. KP noted that if the Training Centre wanted to pursue the idea within FIG that a detailed report would be required to go through the appropriate channels.

**ACTION:** AP to discuss the Steering Group's concerns with Eileen Davies, Manager of the Training Centre and to gain some clarity on the way forward.

**ACTION:** IH as Training portfolio holder will also follow this up.

## **5. Draft Executive Council paper**

- 5.1 The Steering Group focused on the draft RDS Action plan and budget previously circulated by e-mail. NK led a discussion on the pertinent points of the projects listed in the Action Plan.
- 5.2 Some general points were raised- the RDS Action Table should include direct references to the RDS Strategic objectives. AP said that he had had feedback from farmers who had expressed concern that the projects involved in the RDS were specific and would not necessarily benefit everyone in Camp which is what the RDS aimed to do. NK responded that specific projects would benefit different sectors of the community and economy and that no one project could be expected to touch every sector and benefit everyone in Camp equally.
- 5.3 It was noted that the Action Plan only deals with the current year and that this is a weakness. The RDS need a 5 year plan, not only to demonstrate MLA's commitment to the RDS but to provide assurance to the Camp population that there is a long term commitment to the development of Camp, East, West and the Islands.
- 5.4 TJ expressed concern that the plan did not currently have many benefits falling to East Falkland. Discussion reverted once again to the need for a long term plan which could illustrate how different projects would come on line at different times, delivering different benefits to different geographical areas and different sectors of the economy.

### **Housing for Key Workers**

- 5.5 NK summarised this project- draft building specifications were produced and sent to 3 builders. Building specifications were for a 2 and a 3 bedroomed house, and quotes requested for the costs of building the houses detached and semi-detached. 2 quotes were received. The costs of building 2 houses were higher than anticipated and as such it was agreed that the housing would need to be phased over a longer period.

5.6 It was suggested that one house be built/acquired in year 1 with the second house being built in year 2.

5.7 Ken Halliday has written to the Group requesting that Government consider a house swap for his house in Fox Bay in return for a similar FIG property in Stanley. The Group agreed that the acquisition of an established property would allow the objectives of the RDS Action Plan to be achieved more quickly than a new build.

#### **Rural Enterprise Zone (REZ)**

5.8 It was noted that the Draft Action Plan did not currently contain costs for the REZ. Training grants etc. would have a cost but further work is required on these before accurate costings could be provided. In the short term, it was proposed that JF provide a one-page summary as with the other project plans.

5.9 KP said that the “fiscal incentives” element i.e. tax breaks etc would not happen for a while as there will have to be some change in legislation for this to happen. However KP confirmed that you don’t need a change in legislation for training grants or business loans and that these could be achieved in the shorter term.

**ACTION:** JF to provide NK with a one page summary of the REZ plans.

**ACTION:** JF to work on the detail of the REZ in due course and in line with KP’s comments.

#### **Water**

5.10 There is no cost included within the draft budget at this time as not clear “project” had been identified. Discussions at Farmers Week did not provide any clarity on this. It was unclear how the RDS could add value to existing water issues- it appeared that there was a commitment from individuals to address settlement water issues themselves and that appropriate materials were available from shops.

5.11 Most respondents in the water survey noted problems with pipes and fittings which is what Craig Paice had originally suggested was the main problem.

5.12 NK noted she didn’t have the raw data from the water survey which will help analyse the issues raised by respondents.

5.13 NK suggested that solutions to agricultural water issues such as irrigation should come from the DoA as it was in line with their agricultural remit. The DoA has limited AP noted that there was no existing budget for this in the DoA budget but that a budget line could be included next year if required.

**Post meeting note:** The DoA has limited funds in its existing budget for such schemes i.e. there is 10k of research funds and 8k equipment outside of the FIP and Labour Scheme.

**ACTION:** NK to review raw data collected from water surveys and to identify the RDS’s role around access to water in Camp.

#### **Previously approved projects**

5.14 The Steering Group agreed that previously approved RDS projects (approved by the previous Steering Group) should be included within the Action Plan.

### **Power**

- 5.15 It was accepted that the exact nature of the RDS's involvement was not clear but there was general agreement that power should be retained within the plan to reflect the work that will be undertaken in this area over the next year including a meeting of those individuals involved in renewable energy in the Falklands.

### **Livestock Crates**

Rodney Lee joined the meeting at 2 o'clock and stayed for  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour.

- 5.16 Reference was made to the two papers submitted to the Steering Group by the RDS Coordinator- one paper was produced by RL on the issue of livestock crates, the other produced by John Ferguson on the various transport issues involved in livestock supply.
- 5.17 RL gave a brief description of livestock transportation of animals from the West to the abattoir. RL said that the current 40 foot crates are unsuitable for transporting animals on some roads on the West due to road conditions. The Livestock Suppliers Working Group is now seeking funding for a new 29 foot crate. As the East representative on the Steering Group, TJ said that he had concerns that this project only addressed transport problems on the West and may cause a negative response from farmers on the East who also have transport problems and are not benefiting from a similar kind of help. RL recognised this but suggested that the issue on the West required more immediate attention given the low numbers of animals going to the abattoir from the West.
- 5.18 It was generally agreed that the project objectives of the purchasing a new livestock crate fitted well with the RDS objectives. However the timeframe required for a decision on funding for the livestock crate did not fit with the proposed timetable of the RDS. It was suggested that the issue be directed to SFC instead. MS agreed that this was an appropriate way forward.

**ACTION:** KP to work with RL on an SFC paper

- 5.19 The Steering Group also suggested that a "Livestock Transport Strategy Committee" should be set up to improve the development of livestock transportation and to address the multitude of interrelating issues that seem to arise around livestock and the abattoir. RL said that there was some discussion about establishing a sub group of FIMCo to address these many issues.

**ACTION:** KP, Tim Cotter, AP and RL are to meet to discuss this further.

### **Land Lease – FCO project**

- 5.20 NK provided a description of this suggested project- to produce a map based land register of Camp to show who owns what land. This would facilitate land release. IH said that this could also be used to identify areas of land farmers would be willing to sell. It was agreed that this project was not a priority and should not be included in the Action Plan.

### **How the action plan fits with the strategy**

- 5.21 MS said that all the detail in the Action Plan was not yet addressed but that was to be expected as further work needs to be undertaken in some areas.

- 5.22 JF said that the priority should be housing and key workers. This was generally agreed.
- 5.23 It was noted that there were no specific items on the action plan that related to the Environment. It was agreed that the Environment as an RDS Key Priority needed to be included. This led into the discussion of issues that might be relevant to consider in the future, such as the impact of climate change. MS said that there is a joint interest in climate change as it is a big issue and that RDS might play a role in this.
- 5.24 If funding is approved by EXCO KP said that there will need to be some control over the spending procedures. The Treasury will not release £250K in a single instalment. Any money that is released to RDS is the responsibility of FIDC. KP said that it is likely that when a scheme begins, FIDB would approve the project and the funds and the funds would then be released by the Treasury.
- 5.25 MS said that the action plan should include the provision of health and education. NK confirmed that she had e-mailed DJ following the FB and GG meetings to try to distil some “health” specific actions but didn’t think this was very effective and no clear way forward had been identified.  
**ACTION:** KP to discuss how to incorporate health into the RDS with David Jenkins.
- 5.26 MS also suggested that an RDS “island” meeting should take place to talk about issues facing island residents and businesses.  
**ACTION:** NK to organise a meeting for Islanders to address the particular challenges being faced by the islands.
- 5.27 MS would like to see a village council formed at Fox Bay with the council responsible for the REZ related budget. NK noted that the community had held a meeting to discuss this issue and it was agreed by them that some kind of group would be established. The community meeting had focused on housing.
- 6. AOB**
- 6.1 TJ raised the issue of mobile phone coverage in Camp which led to a discussion about the effectiveness of the 2 meter set system in Camp. MS said that if there were issues then consideration should be given to reinstating the system. ME and TJ said that they will canvass RBA members for their opinions.  
**ACTION:** ME and TJ to assess support addressing problems with the 2m system in Camp.  
**ACTION:** KP to investigate where the responsibility for managing the 2m masts/system lies.
- 6.2 TJ asked if fencing was an eligible cost under the Import Substitution Program. MB confirmed that anything that is linked to the production of fruit, vegetables or chicken eggs is eligible for funding.
- 6.3 TJ suggested that the RDS be presented to people and businesses not currently located in Camp i.e. prospective new residents of Camp. TJ said that raising the profile of the RDS and the Action Plan would be important for attracting new people to Camp.

- 6.4 KP suggested that once the RDS Action Plan is approved by ExCo we could publish in the Penguin News to give people an idea what the strategy is about. TJ said that perhaps a FIDC open day would also be a good idea- the idea being that interested parties could come and talk about the RDS and its aims at a central location in Stanley. Marc Boucher had already confirmed his support for this idea.  
**ACTION:** MB to organise an RDS open day at the FIDC offices in Stanley.
- 6.5 NK said that she emailed Simon Catton regarding the cabins at Fox Bay to see whether or not they could be used by other users. She had been told that the cabins could not be used for other purposes due to issues raised by the Treasury. She was waiting for more information from Simon on the nature of the issues. MS said that the cabins are Government assets and therefore he sees no reason why they can't be used. KP said that he will follow up with Manfred Keenleyside, Director of Public Works.  
**ACTION:** KP to discuss the matter with Manfred Keenleyside
- 6.6 NK described a potential project which sought to advertise the Falkland's "agriculture sector" in a general fashion as opposed to advertising specific jobs. The benefit would be that the costs of the adverts in larger magazines would be split and that the entire sector would benefit from the advertising campaign rather than a single business. The information supplied by Owen Summers, FLH Manager, which had been produced in partnership between the DoA and FLH was thought to be far too detailed to be useful. KP suggested contacting Darren Christie in the first instance.  
**ACTION:** NK to contact Darren Christie to assess whether the FIG website has an "employment" section
- 6.7 NK mentioned the FIGAS review and whether the Steering Group would have or should have formal input. KP said that this review had not started as yet but once it does there would be an opportunity for comment.
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## Appendix 1: Actions carried forward from previous meetings

5<sup>th</sup> March 2012

- **Action:** JF to redraft REZ paper to reflect comments from the Steering Group.
- **Action:** JF to continue work on an "RDS Immigration system" which would facilitate foreign investment and increase immigration into Camp.

12<sup>th</sup> April 2012

- **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.

7<sup>th</sup> of May 2012 (Fox Bay)

- **Action:** NK to try to assess the needs of the community, in terms of health, education and training and relay that information back to DJ
- **Action:** NK to try to distil the requirements for adult training or “life-long learning” in Camp. NK is to consider the case for securing an additional two weeks of teaching at Fox Bay.

31<sup>st</sup> of May 2012 (Goose Green)

- **Action:** NK - A catch up meeting is to be arranged with David Jenkins and Tom Hill to review actions falling from the meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May
- **Action: ALL RDSSG members** - Timescales are required for ALL actions, members are asked to review actions, attach timescales to their own actions and pass with to Kerry McRae.
- **Action:** JF to consider the following two points in his immigration review a) whether employers could have the opportunity to note “renewal of work permits” on adverts for renewal posts b) the possible economic benefits in Camp of relaxing the rules for seasonal labour
- **Action:** AP to review dams as an option for addressing access to water in agriculture as suggested by AE
- **Action:** NK and MJ to try to assess interest and re-establish the North Camp Community Hall Working Group if support is found.
- **Action:** NK. Power and renewable energy to be added to the RDS agenda
- **Action:** AP to review the suitability/value of the agriculture apprenticeship in the Falkland’s farming context and assess whether there is a need to modify the elements in the manner outlined by Maggie Battersby.
- **Action:** The funding of the apprenticeship to be reviewed the DoA and the training centre. Currently the training centre pays 50% of the costs of the apprentice with the host farmer paying the remaining 50%. On historic agricultural apprenticeship schemes the Training Centre paid 100% of the costs. Perhaps the costs could reflect the experience of the individual e.g. the farmer pays 50% for a year 2 or 3 apprentice?
- **Action:** MB to discuss the potential of tourism lodges and tourism development with SD