

MINUTES

SEARTG

BOARD MEETING 20 DECEMBER 2013

South East Avon Regional Transition Group
Cunderdin, Quairading, Tammin and York

**SOUTH EAST AVON REGIONAL TRANSITION GROUP
(S E A R T G)**

MINUTES

MEETING OF BOARD MEMBERS

SHIRE OF YORK – COUNCIL CHAMBERS
3:30PM FRIDAY, 20 DECEMBER 2013

1. DECLARATION OF OPENING/ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISITORS

1.1 Opening

The Chairman welcomed attendees, stating that the Group had selected the interim name of the 'South East Avon Council', however further work was required on determining a permanent name.

1.2 Announcement of Visitors

Invitations extended to:

- Ms Caroline Tuthill - Senior Project Officer - Department of Local Government.
- Mr Tony Brown – Executive Manager, Governance and Strategy – Western Australian Local Government Association.
- Ms Joanne Burges – Regional Cooperation Manager – Western Australian Local Government Association

Invitations were also extended to Cr T Boyle of York, and ex Councillors Graeme Cooper (Cunderdin) and Graham (*George*) Anderson (Quairading).

2. RECORD OF ATTENDANCE/APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSENCE

2.1 Present

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| Shire of Cunderdin | - Cr R Carter | - Shire President (Chair) |
| Shire of Cunderdin | - Mr P Naylor | - Chief Executive Officer |

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| Shire of Quairading | - Cr B Caporn | - Deputy Shire President |
| Shire of Quairading- | - Mr G Fardon | - Chief Executive Officer |
| Shire of York | - Cr M Reid | - Shire President |
| Shire of York | - Cr P Hooper | - Councillor |
| Shire of York | - Cr T Boyle | - Councillor (From 4:40pm) |
| Shire of York | - Cr D Smythe | - Councillor |
| Shire of York | - Mr R Hooper | - Chief Executive Officer |
| Western Australian Local Government Association | - Ms J Burges | - Regional Cooperation Manager |
| Dominic Carbone and Associates (DCA) | - Mr D Carbone | - Executive Officer |
| Focus Networks | - Mr D Staeck | - Managing Director |
| Focus Networks | - Mr D Cusens | - Operations Director |
| Focus Networks | - Mr M Smith | - Representative |

2.2 Apologies

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| Shire of Cunderdin | - Cr C Gibsone | - Deputy Shire President |
| Shire of Quairading | - Cr D Richards | - Shire President |
| Shire of Tammin | - Cr S Uppill | - President |
| Shire of Tammin | - Mr B Jones | - Chief Executive Officer |
| Shire of York | - Cr M Duperouzel | - Deputy Shire President |
| Department of Local Government | - Ms C Tuthill | - Project Manager |
| Western Australian Local Government Association | - Mr T Brown | - Executive Manager Governance and Strategy |

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| Cunderdin | - Mr G Cooper | - Invitee: Past SEARTG Chair; Ex Shire of Cunderdin President and Councillor |
| Quairading | - Mr G Anderson | - Invitee: Ex Shire of Quairading Deputy President and Councillor |

2.3 Leave of Absence

Nil.

3. DEPUTATIONS/PRESENTATIONS

3.1 Deputations

Nil.

3.2 Presentations

The Chairman advised that representatives from Focus Networks would provide the Group with a presentation during discussion on Report No RTG-024-13 – Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Systems Project.

4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

- 4.1 South East Avon Regional Transition Group Board Meeting held at the Shire of York Council Chambers on Thursday, 14 November 2013.

Correction:

Mr R Hooper stated that comments attributed to Cr M Reid on page 18 of the Minutes should be amended to read that these comments were made by Cr M Duperouzel.

With that correction, it was:

MOVED Cr M Reid, Seconded Cr B Caporn, that the Minutes of the South East Avon Regional Transition Group Board Meeting, held at the Shire of York Council Chambers on Thursday, 14 November 2013, be received.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Business Arising from Minutes

Nil.

5. ANNOUNCEMENT BY PRESIDING MEMBER WITHOUT DISCUSSION

The Chairman drew attention to Report No RTG-026-13 – Integrated Strategic Planning Projects which was provided following initial distribution of the Notice Paper, and confirmed that all Participants had received a copy of this document.

6. REPORTS

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| RTG-023-13 | STATUS REPORT – OUTSTANDING BUSINESS FROM THE SOUTH EAST AVON REGIONAL TRANSITION GROUP (SEARTG) BOARD MEETINGS (File: rtg023-13) |
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The Executive Officer provided comment in relation to this item of business, detailed as follows:

| <i>Item</i> | <i>Comment</i> |
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| Preparation of Draft Memorandum of Understanding | No further action taken at this point. |
| Presentation of the Review of the Regional Business Plan based on a four local government amalgamation proposal. | No further action taken at this point. |
| Amalgamation Implementation Plans | Report anticipated for next SEARTG Board Meeting. |
| Interim Name for Proposed New Local Government | Details were provided the Local Government Advisory Board in this regard. |

Information and Technology
Systems (ICT)

Subject of a report on this Agenda.

Software Consideration

Both IT Vision (Synergy Soft) and LG Systems were advised of the SEARTG Board's decision of deferral.

There being no debate in relation to this item of business, it was then:

MOVED Cr P Hooper, Seconded Cr B Caporn, that Report RTG-023-13 – Status Report – Outstanding Business from South East Avon Regional Transition Group (SEARTG) Board Meetings, be received.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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| <p>RTG-024-13 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) SYSTEMS PROJECT (File: rtg024-13)</p> |
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The Chairman drew attention to this item of business, stating that this report was an update from Focus Networks on progress to date. Representatives of Focus Networks were then invited to make presentation to the Group, summarised as follows:

- Hard copy of documentation provided to Participants.
- Update on project schedule and planned works provided.
- First stage of cabling completed by Electek for the Shires of Tammin, Cunderdin and Quairading.
- Enabling of new circuits provided for Cunderdin and Quairading as part of the first stage.

Participants advised that to date power outages during works had been minimal, with little disruption. Mr G Fardon advised that an Electek staff member was provided with first aid following an accidental ceiling break through which would be repaired in the coming week.

Focus Networks continued with their presentation:

- Stage 1 York cabling works yet to be completed, with some minor variations to the designated works. A report will be obtained from Electek in this regard and distributed to Participating Local Governments.

- Stage 2 update provided by Electek that works due to commence on Monday, 6 January 2014 will move to Monday, 13 January 2014 to accommodate staff movements. Works will run from Monday to Wednesday with Focus Networks Technicians also in attendance to install power equipment such as UPS and switches. Confirmation of this change will be provided to all Participants.
- Following a query from Mr G Fardon, it was confirmed that Stages 1 and 2 will run concurrently to maintain equilibrium across all Participating Local Governments.
- Shire of York Administration Building required minimal wiring changes.
- Mr G Fardon was thanked for offering his compliments to the tradesmen involved for their professionalism and flexibility in dealing with staff.
- Apologies were extended for any outages that may have occurred as a result of works undertaken.
- Anything Telephones and Data (AT&D) are to begin installation of phone systems on Wednesday, 15 January 2014.
- Cabling works in Stage 2 are critical to installation of the phone systems.
- York site visit undertaken by Mr D Staeck, Mr D Cusens, and Andrew from Electek, in order to scope cabling works which will be quoted on as soon as possible.
- AT&D will commence data collection with contact already made with respective Administration Staff to obtain telephone lists etc.
- Telstra and AT&D have received required documentation, with nothing outstanding in this regard.
- Invoices for York Administration Building and Depot cabling, along with Tammin Depot works, have been forwarded.
- Cabling works for Stage 2 included an outage to enable powering of a new circuit; this is now complete for Quairading and Cunderdin.
- A date for this outage is yet to be determined for Tammin, with advice to be provided as soon as possible. This will occur outside of normal hours to minimise disruption to operations.
- Some disruptions will occur when the Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) is installed.
- York Recreation Centre is already operating on VoIP.

- Electek experienced some issues when completing data cabling for Quairading due to single brick walls restricting the running of old and new concurrently.
- During Stage 2 of the cabling works for Quairading, Electek and Focus Networks Staff will be on site to remove old cabling and install new with as minimal disruption to staff as possible. There will however be some disruption as works move from data point to data point. This work is confirmed for Monday, 13 January 2014 to Wednesday, 15 January 2014.
- Confirmation that repairs will be undertaken to the office ceiling of Quairading's Deputy Chief Executive Officer in the coming week.
- Possibility of some disruption to the Quairading Community Resource Centre on installation of new equipment. Details of the link between the Shire Offices and the Resource Centre PC's and printer are yet to be determined. Once established, that can be replicated in the new system.
- Mr G Fardon confirmed a known wireless connection from the Resource Centre to the Shire Office server, with Network Focus advising there is an additional link of some description which needs to be determined.
- Resource Centre Staff have advised Focus Networks that they do not want any of the existing network equipment housed in the communications cabinet to be removed.
- It has been established that there are three surplus switches in this cabinet, and the removal of one will not reduce capacity however will permit the installation of a new switch for the new system install. Mr G Fardon will assist with this matter.
- Ownership of subject switches is unknown at this point, with confirmation that IT equipment was purchased by the Resource Centre, however cabling was included in the building construction.
- A level of segregation will be maintained between the Resource Centre and Shire components, with only Shire staff accessing the newly installed communications switch.
- Mr G Fardon to provide contact details for "PCS" in order that Focus Networks may liaise on technical matters.
- Confirmation that "PCS" equipment is in situ across all Participating Local Governments.
- Active internet connection is now functioning for all Participating Local Governments following virus issues.
- AT&D undertake a considerable amount of work remotely which would be affected any such internet outages.

- Any further internet lockdown will impede phone system installation and possibly cause delays.
- Mr G Fardon advised that Quairading would not seek to retain any of its old telephone equipment.
- Alternative uses may be found for some old equipment, such as UPS.
- The Chairman confirmed that old equipment be returned to each individual Participating Local Government for a decision on its retention, redeployment or disposal.
- Returned equipment to include: phone system, network switches, power protection, and UPS items.
- All items have been invoiced, with the exception on minor variations from Electek which require approval prior to invoicing.
- Mr R Hooper advised that approval had been provided by email for the York Administration Building variations.
- Comment provided on costs for the York Library and Depot, and Tammin Depot.
- Costing for depot sites have been greater than expected and proved labour intensive, eg: solid ceilings requiring 6-8 manholes; York's Depot essentially being a building within a building, etc.
- Quairading's Depot has been excluded from the programmed works, as consideration is being given to its demolition in the coming 12-18 months. Any new construction will include new technology with advice sought on cabling standard to link with current works.
- Telephones within Quairading's Depot will remain, as this system is essentially a stand alone and will not lose functionality as a result of the Administration Building upgrade.
- The Quairading Depot communications would remain as is if an amalgamation were to go head until such times as the infrastructure was upgraded to link to the new system.
- Costs to upgrade the Quairading Depot prior to demolition are considered prohibitive, with this investment lost on redeveloping the site.
- If ADSL is available at the Depot Site, a phone could be linked to the new Administration system as an interim communication measure.
- Depot phones have been allowed for in the new system, in preparation for redevelopment of this site.

- The Chairman suggested that should amalgamation occur, funds would be made available for upgrading the Quairading Depot in relation to communications.
- Attention was drawn to the timeline provided, with advice that dates have changed for the Stage 2 cabling. An update to be distributed as soon as possible.

Mr R Hooper raised the matter of Electek not being a WALGA preferred supplier, resulting in Tammin and York Depots being withdrawn from the project in order to remain compliant with tendering regulations.

The Executive Officer advised that the Group were well on track in relation to acquitting the grant funding in relation to these works.

The Chairman took the opportunity of thanking the Focus Network representatives for their report and presentation, and extended an invitation for them to stay for the remainder of the meeting.

There being no dissent from Participants, it was taken that Report No RTG-024-13 – Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Systems Project was received prior to debate on Report RTG-025-13 – Financial Statements for the Period 01 July 2013 to 16 December 2013.

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| RTG-025-13 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD 01 JULY 2013 TO 16 DECEMBER 2013 (File: rtg025-13) |
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The Executive Officer drew attention to this item of business, confirming that Participants were able to view the Statements, then advising that:

- There had been no change to Connecting Local Government, with the exception of updating Local Laws and Tammin's Asset Management Plans.
- Asset Management Plans have been audited, with this project is now finalised.
- The Regional Business Plan is now at zero, with acquittal complete and some additional information to be provided to the Department in this regard.
- The Shire of York will undertake the appointment of Auditors to audit the Regional Business Plan.
- The Strategic Business Plan has been audited and finalised.

- The Long Term Financial Plan is complete, with the exception of some minor changes. This grant can now be acquitted, audited and finalised.
- The only outstanding project is the Amalgamation Planning and Implementation Grant, with \$140,000 committed to this project. Additional items require inclusion, such as Electek, Delegations and Policy review.

Following the Executive Officer's confirmation that the Financial Statements were in order, Cr M Reid requested that the Minutes detail his request for Financial Statements to be provided one week prior each SEARTG Board Meeting, as he considered a shorter timeframe as being unreasonable.

Participants advised that the Agenda and Financial Statements had been received via email, with the Executive Officer clarifying that an initial Agenda was forwarded to Participating Local Governments via email, with a subsequent email the following day which carried a revised Agenda and Financial Statements.

Cr M Reid advised that he had not received the emails via his personal email address, with confirmation from Participants that Participating Local Governments had received the subject correspondence.

The Executive Officer advised that email distribution lists would be revised to include Cr M Reid's personal email address.

It was then:

MOVED Cr P Hooper, Seconded Cr B Caporn, that the following Statements of Receipts and Payments for the period 1 July 2013 to 16 December 2013, be received:

- ***Connecting Local Government and Structural Reform Implementation Grant;***
- ***Strategic Planning;***
- ***Regional Business Plan;***
- ***Asset Management Plans;***
- ***Financial Planning; and***
- ***Amalgamation Planning and Implementation.***

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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| RTG-026-13 | INTEGRATED STRATEGIC PLANNING PROJECTS (File: rtg026-13) |
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The Chairman drew attention to this item of business, advising that Tammin Chief Executive Officer, Mr B Jones, had raised concerns on the preparation of the Strategic Community Plan, Long Term Financial Plan, Asset Management Plans, and Corporate Business Plan. Further, that the Executive Officer will circulate the report relating to this matter.

Following the Chairman's suggestion, and without dissent, the Meeting then stood adjourned for 3.5 minutes to permit Participants time to read the disseminated information.

Mr R Hooper offered extensive comment in relation to this matter, summarised as:

- This matter highlights the uncertainty of Local Government, where Tammin has unfortunately had three Chief Executive Officers over the period of developing these reports.
- The most recent Chief Executive Officer has been out of the Local Government Industry for some time and has not been aware of the processes undertaken.
- Believed that the matter should be put to the SEARTG Board at this Meeting in order that all Participants were made aware of Mr B Jones' concerns.
- One issue relates to the Long Term Financial Plan being modified as quickly as it is adopted, and the removal of the Country Local Government Fund after it had been included.
- All Participating Local Governments had money removed without notice under Round 5 funding for Regional Development Australia.
- The Treasurer's announcement that \$70M will be removed from Regional Road Funds over 3 years has also had an impact.
- Documents adopted by Participating Local Governments are invalid as a result, which has been raised by this Group.
- The State Government does not have any forward projections; they are asking Local Governments to "guess" then advising that the guess is incorrect.
- Understands everything to be now finalised with Tammin.
- There is an expectation that the Executive Officer write a plan without any direction from Council.
- Requirement for Council to advise the Executive Officer or other consultant whether the project is deferred or otherwise.

The Executive Officer then provided comment on the following:

- There is a line to be drawn in relation to such matters.
- For example with the Long Term Financial Plan, a cut off point must be determined.
- All plans were correct at the time of presentation.
- Legislation permits annual reviews.
- Things do, and have changed.
- Cut off point for Financial Statements is 30 June, and plans need to be set in the same manner.
- Unfortunately there are "moving targets"; however a line must be drawn at some point.
- There was no anticipation of potential road grants losses.
- Discussion with the Department on this matter confirmed that importance is placed on the document being in place.
- Documents will be fine tuned over a period of time, after which each will become a reliable working document.

The Chairman suggested that forward financial planning for any business will change, with Cr P Hooper offering comment on the following points:

- Discussions were held when the first "murmurs" of the required financial planning emerged.
- Every Council expressed the same opinion on the difficulty of what was being asked.
- If the State Government can guarantee their information, this Group could guarantee the development of these documents with figures that will work.
- The Treasurer's announcement of reductions in the Local Government Fund, and Federal Government funding reductions will affect this Group dramatically.
- There is a need to express the view, that if the expectation is that this Group are to produce meaningful documents, they can only be meaningful if they are based on consistently correct information provided.
- Known rate bases allow the prediction of increases.

- Long Term Financial Plans can not be determined with continual Ministerial changes.
- Strong desire to express to the Minister, that to publicly say that this Group's documents are incorrect, when they are based on information provided by the Department, is unfair.

The Executive Officer commented on:

- There has been no assessment on the Shire of Tammin's Long Term Financial Plan by the Department.
- The only change was the inclusion of the ratio for own resource.
- There was a late ratio that came in; originally there was six, with the correction made to seven, ensuring Tammin's compliance.
- Tammin had a query on the ten year period which includes the budget.
- The 2012/2013 Budget was the only information to work with, with a nine year extension provided.
- As a result of concerns surrounding compliance, the Chief Executive Officer requested an additional one year extension to this, which is now being progressed.
- This requirement was not communicated by the Department.
- Tammin did not receive feedback on compliance with this, or the Strategic Community Plan, where the date of adoption is to be included on the front cover and a small paragraph stating the need to consider the Workforce Plan.

Mr P Naylor advised that the same request had been made of Cunderdin, with the date included and matter concluded.

Further comment was provided by the Executive Officer:

- The consultant who undertook the Strategic Community Plan work liaised with the Department in this regard.
- Printing would not have occurred without the Department's approval, which was received at the time.
- The change is minimal and has been undertaken.

Mr P Naylor commented on:

- Mr B Jones has commenced as the third Chief Executive Officer in a short period of time.
- Appointment occurred after the date where all such matters were expected to have been complete and compliant.
- Mr B Jones is attempting to "find where everything is at", and understands the complexity in doing so.
- Mr B Jones has not been a part of the SEARTG process which has unfolded over time.
- The Department is aware of the status of the Group's documents and that finalisation may be a little later than expected.

The Executive Officer advised that discussions with the Department had confirmed that the suggested presentation of Corporate Business Plans by Participating Local Governments in February 2014 was acceptable, with formal advice in this regard to be provided accordingly.

Ms J Burges clarified the following:

- Compliance issue was not on the quality or content of the Strategic Community Plans.
- The Group being part of the random selection process for audit is what has raised this issue.
- What Mr B Jones is referring to as "compliance", is about the review process and lifting the Plans to the next level.
- The Corporate Business Plans were not part of this matter.

The Executive Officer advised:

- There appears to be some confusion.
- Contact was made with Mr B Jones this morning, with discussions centring on two issues.
- Awaiting correspondence from the Department in order to provide the same addendum as given to other Participating Local Governments.

- This Group were the first to undertake Strategic Community Plans, with the Department still trying to finalise requirements at that time.
- The Department have now determined additional requirements.

Mr P Naylor advised that the required amendments were minor, and did not take long following the provision of a word version of the document. The adoption date was included along with information on "our resources in the workforce". This was then emailed to the Department, with advice received that the document was now compliant. This document will be put to Council in February 2014 for adoption and advertising in order to finalise.

Mr R Hooper advised it was disappointing that Cunderdin had received advice without notification to the remainder of the Group. Further, querying if all should assume that similar requests will be made, and therefore amend the Strategic Community Plans in line with Cunderdin's, and put the documents to Council's February 2014 Meeting.

Mr G Fardon advised that other Participating Local Governments had made arrangements for the PDF version of their Strategic Community Plans to be amended by Mrs L Gyomorei and returned accordingly.

Mr R Hooper advised that, as raised by Cr M Reid at a briefing session on Monday, 16 December 2013, due to the Department's changing requirements, York's Road Asset Management Plan and Long Term Financial Plan have had clauses inserted advising the Department that these documents are under review. Further, suggesting that the Group adopt this approach for all such documents.

General discussion followed, summarised as:

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| Cr M Reid | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• These are living documents and are reviewed in a timely manner. |
| Mr G Fardon | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Documents are reviewed earlier than the statutory review time. |
| Cr P Hooper | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suggested that the Department's original intention was that the documents were living documents to be reviewed.• The Department could not expect the document to be developed without review in the ten year period. |

- Mr R Hooper
- This is a step away from the Plan for the Future, where if a project was proposed in Year 3, the Council would be held to account if this did not occur.
 - This is a ten year plan, and to exactly forecast out to Years 9 and 10 is very difficult.
- Chairman
- Suggested that this is an unrealistic expectation.
- Ms J Burges
- A review of the guidelines for the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework is underway, which will outline the "how to" for the Corporate Business Plan.
 - The guideline review will provide "best practice" for the process.
 - Process is about continual improvement, which is what the Department would be looking for.
 - Plans prepared were the best that could be done with the information provided.
 - "Interesting cards" have been dealt to Local Government in the last few months as far as funding is concerned.
- Chairman
- Requirements need to be kept "real" without wasting resources.
- Mr G Fardon
- Discussion held with Cr D Richards, Quairading Shire President in relation to Mr B Jones' letter and observations.
 - Cr D Richards' commented on the rapid changeover of Chief Executive Officers at the Shire of Tammin.
 - Discussion queried if Tammin in its own right, if it had not been part of the RTG, have been compliant, or have been any more advanced than what the rest of the Group is, and the answer would be "no".
 - The strength is in this Group working together, and having common documents, and importantly, having the Executive Officer and his Associates undertaking the work.
 - It is acknowledged that Mr B Jones has the right to ask the questions raised, particularly as he has not been a part of the process to date.

- Executive Officer
- Did not go into the details as to why there had been delays.
 - There were a number of circumstances why particular targets were not met.
 - The original aim was to have this work completed by 30 June 2013.
 - Need to move forward to achieve the outcomes required, with the Group well placed to do so.
- Mr P Naylor
- The important thing is that the work will be complete prior to the review process.
- Chairman
- Queried if Mr B Jones' concerns had been addressed adequately.
- Mr R Hooper
- Believed that the Executive Officer's discussions with Mr B Jones today has addressed those concerns.

Following the Chairman's reading of the recommendation detailed in the Notice Paper, and comment by Mr R Hooper in relation to the template provided, the Executive officer advised that the recommendation addressed the requirement to notify the Department. Further, that some Forward Plans had been finished, however the Department is to be notified of those that are to be presented to Council in February 2014.

It was then:

MOVED Cr P Hooper, Seconded Cr B Caporn, that:

- 1. That Report No RTG-026-13 – Integrated Strategic Planning Projects, be received.***
- 2. That each Participating Local Government be provided with a copy of the report.***
- 3. That each Participating Local Government be advised to provide the information requested by the Department of Local Government.***

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Following Mr G Fardon's query, the Executive Officer advised that the subject template will be distributed to each Participating Local Government for their completion and submission to the Department.

7. BOARD MEMBERS' MOTIONS OF WHICH PREVIOUS NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

Nil.

8. NEW BUSINESS OF AN URGENT NATURE

Nil.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Rural Review of Structural Reform

- Cr P Hooper
- Correspondence received from WALGA advising of Cr P Hooper's inclusion on a panel to review rural structural reform.
 - Panel consists of 24 Elected Members and 6 Officers.
 - Has put forward some ideas, with those being drawn from SEARTG discussions acknowledged as such.
 - Chief Executive Officers would be aware that Mr T Pickard formed this panel to look at matters from a rural perspective, particularly as the Premier and Minister have advised metropolitan Local Governments will be amalgamated.
 - Put name forward for the panel so that this Group at least had "a voice at the table".
 - Discussions from the panel will be relayed to the SEARTG Board for advice.
 - Sees participation on the panel as representing the SEARTG Group.
 - This Group has "done the hard yards" which should be acknowledged with a voice at the table.

- Chairman
- Met with the Minister at the Great Eastern Zone Meeting recently.
 - On querying when country mergers will occur, the Minister replied "probably not in this term of Government".
- Ms J Burges
- The President forms Policy Forums from time to time.
 - The President has formed the Country Reform Policy Forum, along with a Metropolitan Reform Implementation Policy Forum.
 - The Forums are designed to assist the President in forming an opinion to take to the Metric (Committee).
 - The President is looking at "getting in on the front foot" in regard to country reform.
 - Metropolitan Forum resulted in the "Wise Agreement".
 - President is looking for assistance in formulating a position to move forward.
 - Diverse membership of the Country Reform Policy Forum will bring challenges, along with broader viewpoints and matters of interest, which is a healthy position.
 - A total of 58 expressions of interest were received in relation to the Country Reform Policy Forum.
- Mr P Naylor
- Reiterates the Minister's statement that rural structural reform will not occur in this term of Government due to the metropolitan workload.
 - A "collective sigh of relief" with Councils thinking they have another couple of years before they need to worry about it.
 - Believes the thought should be that the reform will happen, start planning now.
- Chairman
- Stated that this Group commenced such discussions four years ago.

- Cr P Hooper • Provided comment in relation to the diverse collective membership of the Country Reform Policy Forum.
- Chairman • Given this diversity, the Minister may need to provide directives.
- Cr P Hooper • Reiterated that Forum matters would be presented to the SEARTG Board for consideration.

2. Structural Reform Submission, Petitions and Public Meetings

- Executive Officer • Advice received from Mr R Earnshaw of the Local Government Advisory Board that a report will be presented to the Minister in the coming weeks, either late December or early January.
- Chairman • Confirmed that the Group were close to schedule in this regard.
- Mr R Hooper • This Board needs to advise the Minister of their dissatisfaction that rural structural reform has been "put on the back burner", particularly given the many years of solid work.
 - The Local Government Advisory Board is not meeting its own statutory timeframes in relation to this Group's application.
 - There were indications from the Minister that an announcement would be made before December, with poll dates in March 2014.
 - Today's meeting was primarily called on the expectation that correspondence would have been received from the Minister, placed on the table, and a program of communication commenced with our communities.
 - It might be done in January, or February, if at all?
- Chairman • Recalled discussions held with the Advisory Board which suggested it would be in this Group's favour to delay, rather than rush the application through.

- This perspective was taken from the point of view that everyone will become more aware of where amalgamations are heading, and in regard to public opinion.
 - It is becoming more evident that amalgamations will occur, and that may get the application across the line.
- Mr R Hooper
- Stated that this was a deferment to September, and it is now December.
 - There have been three indications from the Board saying that presentation of their report is imminent, saying it is ready to be given to the Minister.
 - That was November, the beginning of December, and now the end of December, and yet the report has not left the Board's desk.
- Mr P Naylor
- Frustration on the delay process was raised with the Minister last week.
 - Newsletters are forwarded to keep the community informed, only to have continual delays.
 - Hesitation in sending more newsletters given the expectation of an announcement.
 - This has created a stop/start situation which does not reflect well.
 - The process has dragged on too long.
- Chairman
- Delays stifles the enthusiasm.
- Cr B Caporn
- Voiced concern in being seen to "push" the matter with the Advisory Board.
 - Considers it best that the community hears the news direct.
- Mr R Hooper
- Did not wish to get the Advisory Board off side.
 - Concerned that an announcement will be made when the majority of the community were on holidays and absent from the district, and the impression this would give.

- Chairman • Queried what the timeframe would be from the announcement to the calling of polls.
- Mr G Fardon • 30 Days to get the poll up.
- Mr P Naylor • 30 days in which a petition may be lodged.
- Mr R Hooper • Preparation of the poll.
- Cr P Hooper • Assured the Group, that if there was an announcement, it will be on the front page of the West Australian Newspaper.
- Mr G Fardon • The Banksia Bulletin was distributed yesterday, with a notice expected to appear in all local publications, stating that valid petitions are ready with sufficient numbers in each of the four towns.
- This was a block statement from the "Concerned Citizens Group".
- Will email a copy through to Participants.
- There are no names detailed other than the "Concerned Citizens Group".
- Cr P Hooper • If the petitions have been prepared in York, he is unaware of them.
- Mr G Fardon • Queried if there was required wording for calling of a poll.
- Executive Officer • Advised that there is a prescribed form.
- Mr G Fardon • Queried the validity of the wording of petitions that have circulated in Quairading.
- These documents have not been seen.

- Chairman
- This will become apparent at public meetings.
 - Processes will be explained to the community.
 - Clarified the timing is 30 days from the announcement.
 - Queried if public meetings would follow quickly after the announcement.
- Mr G Fardon
- There is no provision for public meetings.
- Mr J Burges
- Clarified that public meetings have been held.
- Executive Officer
- If the poll is received, and it has valid numbers, then the Advisory Board will indicate when the poll is to be conducted.

Cr T Boyle entered the Chambers at 4:40pm, and was welcomed by the Chairman and Participants.

- Mr G Fardon
- There appears to be some confusion on the calling of additional public meetings.
 - Quairading has chosen not to have any further public meetings until the Advisory Board's recommendation to the Minister, and the distribution of more information on the process.
 - A decision will be made at that point whether to have additional public meetings or not.
- Cr P Hooper
- Queried if the Advisory Board recommend amalgamation, if reasons will be provided for this decision.
- Executive Officer
- Advised that he had not seen this done previously.
- Cr P Hooper
- Suggested that the reasons for an amalgamation from the Minister would form the basis for a public meeting.

- Believes that on such an occurrence, the President would address a public meeting detailing the recommendation and reasons for it as provided by the Minister.
- Executive Officer
- Suggested that a public meeting would address the various criteria set in relation to the inquiry undertaking.
 - This would be based on the opinion of common interest, etc.
 - Will investigate the detailing of reasons by the Minister.
- Mr G Fardon
- Queried if the Advisory Board would prepare the poll question.
- Mr P Naylor
- The Advisory Board set the question on the ballot paper.
- Mr G Fardon
- Understood that the Advisory Board would prepare a "for" and "against" case with some comment from the Local Government concerned.
- Chairman
- A problem may arise if the announcement is made the last week in December 2013.
- Cr P Hooper
- Believes that if the announcement has not been made today, the earliest would be in the week after the New Year.
- Chairman
- Issue with timing, given holidays, staff availability, and communication with the community.
- Cr P Hooper
- Stated that the Minister has his commitments, and that today is the last day for Parliament until the New Year.
- Ms J Burges
- It would be surprising if an announcement was made prior to the New Year, given no notification has been received to date.
- Cr P Hooper
- Suggested the Minister will not see the recommendation in his office until January 2014.

- Mr G Fardon
- Suggested that this would mean a poll at the end of February 2014.
- Chairman
- Queried if there is any response that can be pre planned assuming that the recommendation will be in the positive.
- Cr P Hooper
- Suggested that the Group wait until the announcement, then work from that.
- Ms J Burges
- The matter is out of the Group's hands at this point.
 - On acceptance by the Minister, this would trigger the next stage of the process.
 - The communities would be made fully aware of the decision and process.
 - The Act will assist in clarification in this regard.
- Chairman
- Suggested that the SEARTG Board should have one last comment to the community advising the positives of the proposal.
 - Announcement may call for quick action to be taken in this regard.

The Chairman then formally welcomed Cr T Boyle to the meeting, stating that it was important to have extended invitations to Cr T Boyle, and Mr G Cooper and Mr G Anderson, given their considerable input to the SEARTG Board over time. Further, suggesting that arrangements be made to meet when all three were available so that the Group could express their sincere appreciation.

9. NEXT SOUTH EAST AVON REGIONAL TRANSITION BOARD MEETING

As agreed at the SEARTG Board Meeting of 5 April 2013, meetings will be held on the first Thursday of each month, unless there is insufficient business to address.

10. CLOSURE OF MEETING

The Chairman took the opportunity of thanking all for their attendance, in particular the Focus Networks representatives, whilst confirming that the next meeting would be determined by the Executive Officer and may following a Ministerial announcement.

Attendees were then advised that the "3 BOB Band" were playing at the Beverley Platform Theatre On Saturday, 21 December 2013 as part of the Christmas Celebrations.

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the Meeting closed at 4:48pm.
