

# MEETING OF THE TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT GROUP PUBLIC SUMMARY

Wednesday 19 April 2023

<b>Present:</b>	Andy Keeling	CE	Chief Executive (Chair)
	Becky Clark	DDCS	Director of Development & Commercial Services
	Vacant Post	DDDCS	Deputy Director of Development & Commercial Services
	Matt Mitchell	CIO	Chief Information Officer
	Ian Stewart	IS	Construction Sector
	Justin McPhee	JMP	Sure
	Sian Davies	SDa	FIDC (Representing ZF)
	Karen Lee	KL	Falkland Islands Tourist Board
	Stephen Dougan	SD	BFSAI
	Simon Young	aCR	Acting Communications Regulator
	Lee Summers	LS	Chamber Technology/Retail Lead (Gareth Goodwin deputy)
	Nick Pitaluga	NP	RBA Rep – deputising for Lewis Clifton
<b>Apologies:</b>	Lewis Clifton	LC	Rural Business Association
	Synergy Representative	SR	Information Technology
	Vacant	-	Community Representative
	Paul Brickle	PB	SAERI
	Gareth Goodwin	GG	Chamber Technology/Retail Lead
	Zachary Franklin	ZF	FIDC
<b>Minutes:</b>	Tessa Berntsen	SOM	Secretariat Office Manager

Action

**1.0 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

1.1 The minutes of the meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2022 were confirmed as a true and accurate record.

**2.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting Held on the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

Item 2.2 - JMP confirmed that there were 2800 subscribers with the 4g sim card, and on the old 2g network there was 617 customers, this number drops monthly. JMP did confirm that he wasn't sure if all customers with the 4g sim used it every month, they all have the capabilities to use this feature.

Item 3.1 – JMP explained that the MOD welfare Wi-Fi was a separate discussion to be held with SD. SD explained that the point he had been trying to make was that he was hopeful that customers were receiving form the increase would also benefit those that use the MOD welfare Wi-Fi however, agreed with JMP that this was a separate conversation to be held between them,

**Verbal updated JMP**

JMP noted that Sure had broken ground at the earth station for the new equipment, JMP confirmed that they are well through the planning stages for the new 9m dish and one-web constellation. In preparation of the construction for the new satellite there has been a lot of work happening behind the scenes, there is a contractor in site and the station has been ordered. This

is being manufactured in Canada, should arrive in the islands in late August with a build planned for late August/early September. The plan is currently to have testing held in September with a plan of going live in October.

IS asked if there is a plan for what the consumer will see from the new antennas? JMP explained that the overall capacity increase was carried out in December, the additional satellites are mainly to be for resilience and reliability. The larger one will provide resilience and bring ability for there to be future expansion. The smaller one, one-web will give a speed benefit. CIO asked that as a company would the extra dish bring extra capacity? JMP confirmed that yes it would, as customer numbers increase, this will bring the ability to sell more. The overall design is built to carry double what it is currently going to be carrying, meaning there will then be a commercial upgrade rather than a technical upgrade. IS thought that to the average consumer this would appear to be a lot of work with no change for them. JMP & CIO both explained that it isn't that nothing would be changing but that resilience is important.

DDCS said that although packages won't be changing however if a consumer wanted to go and talk to Sure about additional capacity this might be something that could be provided under a new agreement. JMP agreed that this could potentially be a commercial opportunity. CE asked, which he noted might be an unfair question, if increasing capacity is an option, is it a commercial consideration to deliberately ration packages a way of keeping prices up or not? JMP said that this isn't the case no. There is currently a single link to the satellite and with the upgrade this will be now landing on three different satellites, all of which land in different areas of the world.

LS asked with the capacity that Sure currently hold is there any time where max capacity is reached? JMP said that it hasn't gone back to how it was pre-December, coming to month end there is still pressure with customers trying to use their allowances up, but overall when looking at the tracking the upgrade has given head room for businesses, JMP noted that early evening will always be the pinch period. He also noted that proportionally the overnight traffic has dropped as customers are able to do more in normal hours than they used to be able to.

IS said that he was baffled, it appeared to him that Sure were doing the most complicated way to provide nothing additional to the customer by the end of the year. Government are providing millions of pounds and the customer won't be seeing a benefit. He noted that he had a play station that required a 20gb update, and although he had plenty of internet to be able to carry this out it is unable to be completed. IS explained that there are millions being spent on technology but the customer isn't going to see much of an improvement.

NP explained that as both a rural and Stanley user and with speaking to others, a vast improvement has been seen with regards to speeds in town, yet with using the same equipment at camp there is still a noticeable lag, although he did note that since the breakdown in December it is slightly improved. JMP noted that those customers are on WiMAX do have a constrained service, although it does depend on the technology that is used. He did note that Sure have started to move customers off the older technology, half of which has happened, and the rest will be moved over the next few months. NP explained that he was one of the customers that had been changed to the new network, but he hadn't seen a noticeable change. He explained that he has the same package over multiple houses and the camp connection is worse than that in town. JMP explained that the line rate may have been provisioned differently. The speed connection is configured via the line, so if a modem off a higher internet package is connected to one with a lower package the internet speed received will be that of the lower package due to the line connection. LS asked if something could be drafted from Sure that could be shared so everyone is aware of this. Whilst JMP thought that this was already commonly known it was agreed that both he and NP would pick this conversation up away from TDG.

JMP explained that the testing for the 4g roll out to camp has been completed with some customers testing this service, Sure are now in a position to replace the current WiMAX system with the 4g fixed wireless access. KL asked if this would allow for more Hot spots to be sold? JMP

explained that this would come separately, as Sure were still experiencing back order issues. JMP explained that there would be an engineer from the Isle of Man coming to the Falklands to aid the team, and this would include being a Wi-Fi refresh. JMP explained that the idea is to have this ready before the next tourist season.

### **3.0 Sector Presentation – FIG – Summarising Output and Next Steps**

CE explained that the presentation had been built by trying to pull together feedback.

DDCS explained that they had tried to capture the key issues that had been noted in the various presentations. She explained that the key issues that had been picked up were speeds, data allowances and reliability/resilience.

With regards to the speeds there has been a benefit however, user habits adapt very quickly and this is now proving to not be enough. As the update was advised in advance of the changes the satisfaction isn't as high as anticipated, in turn data heavy applications are becoming the default. The mobile system was also brought up in various presentations, data allowances specifically in two and was mentioned in others. DDCS explained that the impact of limited mobile and broadband services may impact the growth of certain types of tourism, such as walking/hiking due to coverage not being available Island wide. CE thought that the underlying assumption was that the main issues are price and cost, which he thought needed to feature in FIG's presentation. DDCS noted that this hadn't been mentioned in the presentations that had been given.

AG said that those presenting may not be honest about those not wanting to pay for an improved service, the businesses that are paying residential rates for internet but expect faster speeds aren't going to be forthcoming with that information. CE explained that for FIG cost and price is an issue, how does FIG make sure the cost and price isn't too high for both the supplier or the customer as this is linked.

CIO explained that there are vast differences within Stanley for internet speeds, the speed doesn't seem to be consistent Stanley wide. JMP noted that this has been raised, the speeds have been increased and also line shortening has been happening. This is the work that is being carried out to push the equipment closer to the consumers. JMP noted that with this happening, real line faults have been occurring. The older lines were suitable for the lower speeds however, now that the speeds have been increased this has become a problem.

DDCS noted that the most key areas not including price was:

- Resilience
- Local traffic
- Increased Speeds
- Data Usage

DDCS asked if the meeting thought this felt heard from the presentations that had been given already. LS noted that the business climate survey that had gone out, had a list of barriers included of barriers to business growth, he noted that 2 or 3 of the top 10 all mention that the issue is the resilience speed of data is the issue.

DDCS explained that FIG would be bringing down expertise to be able to look at internal FIG networks but also to look at external connections as well. By doing this it would show if Starlink would be able to suitably offer the services expected to the Islands or not. The expert would be able to aid an informed decision is made by looking at all options. CIO said that he had a vested interest in this as he thought it sensible to have alternative options.

IS thought that this seemed to be Sure going down the complicated routes to be able to keep profits up. CE explained that FIG had entered into an exclusive license with Sure, and if this was

broken it could end in a substantial legal battle. CE explained that FIG is in a bind as FIG need to make sure the next provider also offers all services, mobile etc as well not just the internet.

SD thought that any solution that is decided upon between now and 2027 needed to be compatible and usage for the whole community, he agreed that the expert coming down seemed like a sensible step to be making.

AG explained that a lot of work needs to be done for the future. DDCS agreed and explained that the procurement of inhouse experts will be done before anything is retendered or re-let.

DDCS explained that in large the presentations that were received were consistent with the priorities, FIG will revalidate through FIG and a consultation will be put together for the tender making sure it is user informed. Hopefully this will bring various options.

SD asked what the timeline for this work to be done would look like as it didn't appear that there was much time for this to happen. DDCS explained it is hoped that FIG wanted to bring the expert in within 12 months. CE explained that when this has been done the project plan can be scoped out. JMP agreed that it didn't make sense to leave this too late, it will take longer than anyone would expect.

DDCS noted that the sequence of events is likely to be internal testing to proceed on a parallel timeline with the expert being an intelligent client being key, following this will come the legislation, financial decisions, the consultation and then the on going tendering.

#### **4.0 Review of the Terms of Reference**

DDCS thought that the TOR's should be reviewed annually. She explained that the TOR's could be enhanced to look at making more robust options looking at the state of user requirements. The meeting requires a degree of confidentiality and also a mutual agreement to share information. She also explained that the membership could also be looked at as AG commented that TDG as it stood was very organisation focused not very consumer focused. CE commented that there was an empty community rep space that could be refilled if it was deemed suitable. CE agreed that the TORs could be expanded if the group is moved more into a developmental phase. CS noted that he believed that as it was currently, TDG had served its purpose.

After some discussion CE noted that there was broad support to morph TDG into a group that looks into the future rather than the present. IS asked if the current telecoms provider would be in the room and while there would be some conversations held without them in attendance, most of these conversations would be made public anyway.

#### **5.0 How LEO Services can best benefit our community & economy**

LS asked what benefits could LEO bring to the Islands, would Standard Chartered be able to offer more services so to speak? He was querying the understanding of how these services might best benefit local companies.

JMP confirmed that 10% of the bandwidth will be LEO, this will mean utilisation of the network will be used against those who will not benefit from lower latency internet such as streaming services. JMP explained that LEO services will be able to look at traffic and use intelligent routing. JMP explained that the staff have just had the training for the smart routing boxes, as this is built up there will be work done over time.

The other element was that although this is only a 10% growth, there is place to have commercial discussion, and the 10% is not the end of the capacity, there is room for growth.

## 6.0 Any Other Business

LS noted that he had received feedback regarding the format of the minutes and the public summary, previously the presentations were added to the end of the public summary. CE explained that this could just be a miscommunication in the office and would be rectified going forward.

SD thanked DDCS and JMP for agreeing to support work with ITT to look at connectivity's in the air terminal, all MOD checked have been completed and there is nothing running in the background that would explain for the speeds being so slow, he noted that he was grateful for the support that had been offered.

IS asked about the regulator role and how this was working. AG explained that David Rogerson has been doing the work with the intention of being appointed as a regulator but this just hasn't got to this level as yet. AG also explained that he agreed that a visit could be useful.

CIO noted that CE had asked about getting a FIG hotspot in the Chamber of Commerce, he noted that he could work with someone in Sure to look at this. *\*post meeting note SOM asked about having a connection put into Harbour Lights conference room as well\**

NP noted regulatory issues – he explained that there is a consultation process in the workings. He noted that there was considerable concern that proposals were being suggested to cut out the use of radio equipment where there isn't sufficient coverage by another provider. Farms and many businesses in camp use 2-meters to work ships and aircrafts. AG explained that this is more about enablement rather than restrictions, those channels that are used are amateur radio channels not business channels.