

# MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

held on Friday 19 April 2024 at 09:00 in the Liberation Room, Secretariat

<b>Present:</b>	Andy Keeling	CE	Chief Executive (Chair)
	Becky Clark	DDCS	Director of Development & Commercial Services
	Steve Dent	DDDCS	Deputy Director of Development & Commercial Services
	Matt Mitchell	DIT	Director of Information Technology
	Ian Stewart	IS	Construction Sector
	Roma Stewart	RS	Sure
	Dan Palmer	DP	BFSAI
	Gareth Goodwin	GG	Chamber Technology/Retail Lead
	Paul Brickle	PB	SAERI
	Jack Ingledew	JI	SAERI
	Lewis Clifton	LC	Rural Business Association
	Zachary Franklin	ZF	FIDC
	Karen Lee	KL	Falkland Islands Tourist Board
	Brian Jamieson	BJ	Community Representative
<b>Apologies:</b>	Synergy Representative	SR	
	Simon Young	aCR	Acting Communications Regulator
	Pippa Christie	PC	Minerals Representative
<b>Minutes:</b>	Tessa Berntsen	SOM	Secretariat Office Manager

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## Action

### 1.0 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Meeting Held on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2024

- 1.1 Page 1 – DDCS noted that she had sent apologies for the meeting, however this seemed to have been missed off the minutes.
- 1.2 Page 2, item 4.1 – “DDDCS asked if the Internet utilisation graph could be split for Stanley and Camp?” RS noted that she had checked and this could not be done.
- 1.3 Page 3, item 5.0 – “Terms of Reference” – DDCS said that the TORs were done, they had been widely circulated, he noted that these could now be verified, he said that these would be tidied up between himself and SOM, and then they would be put on the website.
- 1.4 IS said that his concerns regarding MLA Pollard being in charge of the department looking after telecoms was concerning on the basis, he was previously a long-term Sure employee, hadn’t been minuted and he asked for this to be noted.
- 1.5 IS said that his question on the what happened with the data from the Sure data probes? RS confirmed that the data collected is sent to the regulator monthly.

### 2.0 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting Held on the 12<sup>th</sup> January 2024

2.1 N/A

### 3.0 Sure Update

- 3.1 RS introduced herself as the new CEO of Sure, saying that she had taken over from Justin on 1<sup>st</sup> April. She explained that Justin had been based more with the technical team, whereas RS was

more commercially based. RS explained that due to this the technical team were now being overseen by Mark Herron.

### **3.2** Lower Latency Update – slide 2:

**3.2.1** RS explained that the system was up and currently being tested which would continue for a number of weeks, meaning it had been delayed being rolled out to the general public. RS noted that Sure was now approaching customers and asking some business customers to trial, which she hoped would start the week commencing 22/04. RS noted that she wanted to target businesses that used cloud-based systems, that would be happy to go on the trial, noting that once the trial was finalised then the new system would be rolled out to customers. RS advised for customers to contact either herself or Sarah Clarke to be included in the trial.

**3.2.2** IS asked if the new system would only be bringing lower latency? RS noted that the general public would see a difference in the lag time. CE asked if the update was successful would Sure be looking at increasing the capacity? RS said that yes this would happen, currently there was a specific capacity that Sure was utilising however, there was an option to buy more.

**3.2.3** LC asked if although the update was currently being utilised to lower latency, was the ultimate aim to remove latency? RS said that currently Sure were discussing with businesses to enable channelling traffic to the lower latency and then start opening this to the general public. IS asked what the lowest latency that has been tested to. RS confirmed this as 300 milliseconds, which LC asked if this would then reduce to 0? RS noted that 0 couldn't be achieved, but their aim was to get it lower than the initial speeds. DP noted that latency would be reduced as low as possible however, zero was impossible to reach. He noted that if information was still moving through geo-based satellites it would take longer which is how the older Sure system worked so he believed the new system was already an upgrade from previous systems. IS noted that on Starlink he was able to get latency to 30-40 milliseconds and in the UK even on a fibre optic cable you'd only be able to reduce to 5 but never 0.

### **3.3** What's coming – slide 3:

**3.3.1** RS noted that there were plans to bring in extra capacity, noting that the new broadband packages would change the speeds and capacity that households have. RS also noted that there would also be a mobile package revamp noting that this was last looked at in 2017 so both data and pricing would be looked at.

**3.3.2** GG noted that everyone in the SSL office all said they were using more mobile data more quickly than usual, and asked if there was a reason for this? RS noted that the team could check this individually.

**3.3.3** RS noted that whitelisted sites for education sites were now having the details finalised with the supplier. DDDCS asked about whether the YouTube videos that were embedded into those sites would these be whitelisted too? RS noted that there would be a clear message circulated on what was being whitelisted, although if a link was followed that wasn't whitelisted this would revert to coming off the person's internet allowance, although if the video didn't take you off the site, then it would be allowed without taking up individual data, under the whitelisting scheme.

**3.3.4** DDDCS asked for a timeline for the work to be complete and the updates being implemented. RS noted that the broadband packages would be June/July, Mobile Packages would be October and the Whitelisted sites would hopefully be April.

**3.3.5** PB asked is there was a set of rules or terms of reference on how whitelisted sites were determined, as he was looking at the local access to the data centre and how could SAERI look at having this taken off their data usage rather than researchers? RS wasn't sure how the whitelisting of sites would work outside of Education although noted that she would discuss this

with PB outside of TDG. LC noted that he thought this was a positive development that Sure had made.

**3.3.6** RS noted that there had been issues on calls and SMS, which Sure currently had an engineer looking into. She noted that there would be an investment into the mobile service to improve the quality.

**3.3.7** DIT asked if the new broadband packages would also go up in speed? RS noted that some of the packages would go up to 15mb per unit. IS noted that he was impressed with the increase, saying that the public had been asking for these increases for years, therefore thought this was a positive change. LC requested that this was minuted as he believed this would be positive for both FIG and Sure's PR.

**3.3.8** IS said that he had previously asked the former Sure CEO about newer packages and he said that there were no changes planned. RS confirmed that these changes had been in the pipeline for months and that she had not made these changes since starting in role. IS said that although it was great that the packages were being increased, they still wouldn't be at a similar stage as the rest of the world. He explained that One Web had been introduced in Antarctica and Scotland and their speeds were much higher than Sure were offering. RS noted that Sure were buying extra capacity which is what was able to give to 15mbps, and she was unsure how much extra capacity these places were buying to be able to deliver those speeds.

**3.3.9** BJ asked whether Wi-Fi calling would be looked at for those areas that don't have mobile coverage. RS agreed that she would take this away and look into it.

#### **3.4** Camp Network – slide 4:

**3.4.1** RS said that camp was moving to a 4G based solution for camp, moving from FWA to LTE, however, she noted that there had been issues in some locations therefore both systems were being set up to run together until the issues were ironed out.

#### **3.5** Serving the Business Community – Slide 5:

**3.5.1** RS explained that some business customers had purchased residential packages, however, there could be bespoke packages made for businesses should they require it. RS noted that Sure were pushing for businesses to discuss with Sure to see what they can offer.

**3.5.2** RS said that one business was being moved onto VDSL, and also onto MiFi units, meaning they weren't only relying on house Wi-Fi. PB asked what sort of packages a MiFi unit would bring? RS noted that this would depend on what is required and needed then Sure could work out a bespoke package for each unit. She did note that it would be more expensive than the current post-paid packages as they were pre-paid but that they would be in the realms of what is already offered. RS explained that these units were aimed at short term visitors, and when they leave the Islands, the box would be returned to Sure to be used by another customer. RS said that she had met with customers allowing a trial service, so that Sure could then see what does and doesn't work.

**3.5.3** RS said that if there was anything that she was not aware of then to contact her so she could look into it. IS noted that RS represented a change in the tone of conversation, which was welcome. RS noted that she was able to look at things from a different angle, being more commercially minded.

#### **3.6** Behind the Scenes – Slide 6:

**3.6.1** RS explained that Sure offered a program to all employees called 1-1-1 meaning all employees were allocated 45 hours of mandatory training annually. She also explained that FICS and FI

College kids were attending Sure for work experience, noting that many returned in the Summer to do more work experience.

#### **4.0 SAERI Update**

##### **4.1 Aims – Slide 3:**

**4.1.1** JI explained that SAERI's aims were to use open data and provide open data where possible which reduced duplications with their work. He noted that a lot of work is done with overseas territories and were also trying to promote the use of spatial data.

##### **4.2 Services Provided – slide 4:**

**4.2.1** JI explained that the data portal was the core pillar between SAERI and FIG, noting that this is where the records of data is held showing what had previously done. He noted that a lot of the metadata that SAERI had been given was also stored there. Noting that there was also an offsite back up.

##### **4.3 Open-Source Solution – Slide 5:**

**4.3.1** JI noted that open-source solutions were used within SAERI were possible, which SAERI found worked well on their systems, although did note that there wasn't a good open-source software for drone imagery as yet.

##### **4.4 Issues Faced: Internet Speed – Slide 7:**

**4.4.1** JI said that the main issues currently faced are slow download and uploads, noting that while working with the cloud this can be a major issue. BJ asked how long it takes to upload footage? JI explained that with large amounts of data it does take a long time, which in turn reduces efficiency. JI explained that when trying to download satellite images he schedules these to happen overnight. JI explained that local data transfer between FI organisations is slow, which DDCS thought shouldn't have to be obtained from the satellite and so could potentially be looked at on a similar arrangement to MiPlayer, using a local network.

##### **4.5 Issues Faced: Data Allowances – Slide 8**

**4.5.1** JI explained that data allowances were expensive, noting that there also no reduced rates for local data transfer within the FI. RS asked if this had been taken to Sure to look at, which PB confirmed they had however, Sure had requested a business case. IS asked if Sure couldn't provide what SAERI required then is there a reason they didn't apply for a VSAT license? PB explained that the fee would take them over budget, and also it didn't allow FIG and conservation access to the data centre as they wouldn't be able to download the data.

##### **4.6 Working Examples of Issues – Slide 9&10:**

**4.6.1** JI explained that a current issue that was being faced was that field work data had to be collected offline, and data from camp and satellite images had to physically be sent on hard drives as they couldn't be emailed or transferred via cloud-based systems due to upload and download limitations.

##### **4.7 Current Workarounds – slide 11:**

**4.7.1** JI explained that the current workarounds included two servers being set up, one locally and one internationally, to allow people access.

4.7.2 JI explained that the current way to check a satellite image was correct was to download them, so sometimes SAERI request someone in UK to download it to confirm the information is what SAERI are after prior to downloading it themselves.

#### 4.8 Thermal UAV – Slide 13:

4.8.1 JI explained that SAERI had won a grant to buy a newer drone that included a thermal image camera as well, which he gave an overview on and showed some footage to the meeting. DDCS thought that there might be an idea to discuss between DCS and SAERI to get some employees skilled on how to use one of these drones, which could then be used potentially in emergency response situations such as wildfires.

#### 5.0 **FIG Telecoms Consultancy Tender**

5.1 DDCS explained that the purpose of circulating the draft tender specification was to gather views from all the groups represented on the TDG. As such, TDG members were asked to circulate it to their organisation for comments. DDCS explained that comments should recognise that this tender is for consultancy support to make FIG an intelligent client. It is not a description of the eventual approach to telecommunications after the current exclusive license period. It deliberately avoids describing an outcome, instead of focusing on engagement to create a tender pack for market engagement that represents the needs and aspirations of the Falklands, not any particular technological solution.

5.2 DDCS noted that the consultancy specification recognised limits on what could be investigated: universal service obligations remain, and the idea of a cabled connection is not directly referenced. DDCS noted that although the specification included a review of the contractual and regulatory position at present, this was to inform future developments, not with a view to reviewing the situation before the end of the exclusive license. DDCS explained that it was possible that the contractual and regulatory work may require a separate consultant. It was noted that if this was an outcome of tender enquiries, the tender would be split into two lots as appropriate.

5.3 DDCS asked TDG members to provide comments back to her by COP 3<sup>rd</sup> May, with a plan to review and sign off the tender in mid-May. FIG would then issue it on proactis and TDG members should then suggest companies or individuals to whom it could be flagged as part of that open tender process.

#### 6.0 **Emergency Communications**

6.1 DDCS noted that DESIS had since asked for this item to be removed off the agenda as he believed that the existing technology in the Islands can be used. DDCS noted that at Sea Lion the technology used was two-meters but there was a need to talk to the current provider to see what could be provided prior to going elsewhere.

#### 7.0 **Any Other Business**

7.1 LC noted that he felt there was a lot of positive information flow during the meeting, much lacking in previous years. He also complimented DDCS/FIG on having confidence to circulate the consultation paper and seek feedback from group members and their wider constituencies.

7.2 IS said that he believed that the lack of regulator was an issue which CE noted he believed this should be a meeting held with him directly rather than raised in TDG.

#### 8.0 **Confirmation of Date of Next Meeting: 21<sup>st</sup> June 2024 1330-1530**