

Interview by Falklands Radio and MLA Roger Spink on the 2nd June 2026.

Traighana Smith

Will that include potential options and matters that could form part of a future tender?

Roger Spink

Yes. The work is intended to determine what the future structure should be, whether that is an open tender for a company to operate the system, a joint venture with government, government ownership of the assets, and so forth. Those issues should be covered in the ExCo paper which is expected in August.

Traighana Smith

Will that Executive Council paper be available publicly, or is it likely to remain confidential, as happened with the original report?

Roger Spink

I suspect it will not be made public because it is likely to include issues such as notice periods and whether or not notice will be served on Sure.

However, I hope that after those decisions are made we will start to see some movement on the future of telecommunications. I am sure there will be a press release, even if the full paper cannot be released because some parts are confidential.

Traighana Smith

The length of time since the report was completed has prompted concerns from the Connected Falklands Group about whether the work will be completed in time for notice to be served. Is that something that concerns you?

Roger Spink

Yes, it does concern me. We raised the matter with the Acting Chief Executive this morning.

I am concerned that we need to move ahead with this work with a certain degree of urgency, because every day that passes we continue to pay a very large subsidy to Sure and extend that period. So yes, I believe we need to get on with this work.

Traighana Smith

Telecommunications, together with hydrocarbons, was identified as a priority by the previous Assembly. Has that priority remained?

Roger Spink

There were only five of us around the table this morning, but I think everyone in this Assembly sees telecommunications as a priority.

We all expressed concerns that progress needs to be made. Of course, it is easy to declare something a priority; it is harder to do the work and bring everything together. But we are pressing officers to complete that work and bring forward an ExCo paper so that decisions can be made about the future of telecommunications.

Traighana Smith

The Chief Executive's response to Connected Falklands referred to engagement with various organisations. Was that always envisaged, or was it a consequence of the CMC report?

Roger Spink

I think it is a combination of both, together with opportunities that have arisen.

The CMC report has certainly helped, but we have also pursued other avenues where we considered them necessary. The recent experiences of St Helena and Ascension have made it worthwhile discussing the way forward with them.

Traighana Smith

Was that something that had been considered from the outset?

Roger Spink

Not particularly. Some of the issues that arose on Ascension, such as international dialling and IP address arrangements, have highlighted areas where problems can occur when telecommunications are transferred. We would obviously want to avoid similar difficulties in the Falklands.

Traighana Smith

There has been considerable interest recently in reports concerning an American company proposing a satellite gateway in the Falklands, together with speculation about possible fibre-optic cable surveys linking the Islands with South America.

Are these the kinds of ideas that might form part of future plans, perhaps through cooperation with other countries or by sharing resources?

Roger Spink

I am not sure whether we would necessarily partner with other countries to share resources, but we do receive approaches from a variety of organisations and individuals with ideas for the future.

Those ideas will certainly be taken into account and, when any tendering process takes place, I would expect interested parties to put forward proposals on how telecommunications in the South West Atlantic can be developed.

Traighana Smith

Turning to MC2 and Falklands IT, the company has ceased trading, but there are still projects outstanding involving a number of FIG departments, the Media Trust and Falklands Radio.

In the interests of transparency, Falklands IT had been engaged to supply equipment for the radio station's technical refresh project, and some of that equipment is essential to completing the work.

Three weeks ago you said discussions with the company had been progressing well, but there now appears to be something of a stalemate. Have MLAs been informed about the extent of the issue and who else may have been affected?

Roger Spink

I spoke to officers last week and was informed that progress had been made.

I am sorry to hear that there appears to have been little movement. I shall follow that up after this interview to establish the current position, because it certainly sounds as though the situation needs to be resolved.

Traighana Smith

Given the potential impact on the Media Trust project and possibly others, would you support releasing additional funds to allow replacement items to be purchased in the meantime?

Roger Spink

I think we first need to establish all the facts before supporting any further action.

We need to understand exactly what has happened, whether any money has already been paid under the contract and what the contractual terms are. Those are significant issues.

Once we have established the facts, we need to ensure that the project is not delayed unnecessarily.

Traighana Smith

Has the collapse of Falklands IT affected any other departments?

Roger Spink

Not that I have been informed.