

The Barossa Council Position on Town of Gawler Boundary Reform Consultation

Extract of the Minutes of the Council Meeting Held on 15 September 2020

7.2.1.2

TOWN OF GAWLER BOUNDARY REFORM CONSULTATION

B5538

The Chief Executive Officer clarified that the intent of the separation of boundaries along geographic lines should be referencing the South and North Para Rivers and that will be stipulated in any submission supported by Council.

MOVED Cr de Vries that Council approves the submission by the Mayor to the Town of Gawler Boundary Reform Consultation process and endorses that the submission be made on the themes outlined in this report and according to the strategic assessment of the principles of the Local Government Act Section 26.

Seconded Cr Johnstone

CARRIED 2018-22/239

PURPOSE

To determine if Council will make a submission to the Town of Gawler boundary reform consultation process.

REPORT

Introduction

The Town of Gawler (ToG) have commenced a phase of community consultation concerning their proposed boundary changes. Submissions are due on 7 October 2020.

Discussion

The ToG boundary proposal has received preliminary stage 1 feedback from the Local Government Boundaries Commission to proceed with development of a full submission should it wish.

The following areas are being considered for inclusion within the Town of Gawler:

- Concordia growth area;
- Hewett;
- a portion of Kalbeeba (including Springwood's rural living; and yet to be developed residential area);
- a portion of Gawler Belt;
- Evanston Park;
- Reid;
- Hillier.

The following areas are being considered for removal from the Town of Gawler:

- The small portion of Bilbaringa that is currently within Gawler;
- The small portion of Uleybury that is currently within Gawler.

At this time the analysis undertaken has been done so on a strategic basis. Further work is required to assess asset, financial and compensation matters as well as communities of interest and other section 26 matters in detail. It will be recommended to Council that any submission reserve these matters for further discussion.

Although it was provided with permission to submit a proposal, The Barossa Council decided not to proceed for now due to other priorities and a better utilisation of resources and budget. Unlike The Barossa Council, ToG have determined to proceed to a round of community consultation.

General Response

The area of Concordia and Kalbeeba (not including the Springwood development) are generally rural and regional areas associated with the southern Barossa and the GI (Geographical Indicator for the Barossa wine area). There is a natural distinction and delineation for adjoining areas through the South Para.

The area of Kalbeeba associated with the Springwood development has previously been supported for realignment on the basis that approximately 15-20% of the development falls in The Barossa Council area and therefore should have one administration supporting that future community.

The survey is a generalised survey and draws responses at a high level and is disjointed in its detail towards the conclusion where it seeks to understand 'why you object or support' which is disassociated with the specific components of the proposal earlier in the survey. This results in the survey not being able to assess components of the boundary change in their own right.

Interestingly the survey allows multiple responses per respondent and therefore seems to have limited control to ensure that respondents only make one submission. This could have the impact of skewing results significantly rendering the results inaccurate and undermining any such conclusions. There is also no control over the true establishment of those directly impacted by the proposal. This was raised with ToG and they have outlined this is their preferred method to ensure as many people can respond as possible.

Further, the survey and information provided for review is complex, disjointed with the need to read many minutes, agenda and papers, FAQ's and other documents and therefore it is difficult to understand the actual basis of the proposal, communities of interest, costs, benefits and compensation. This is likely to impact stakeholder's viewpoints. Until a case is made by ToG it is difficult to provide anything other than a general comment.

The correspondence outlined by the Commission suggested a "reduced consultation" process which is not supported. Any detailed engagement, should the process proceed, should be extensive, inclusive and through the provision of an independent and easily understood business case. The ToG is called about to absolutely reject such a notion. Further, should the ToG proceed it must provide a clear direction on its proposed consultation process.

Themes for Response

Preliminary review, is based on only those components that interface with The Barossa Council and on a strategic basis as assessed on the basis of Section 26 of the Local Government Act is in the following table:

1.	The resources available to local communities should be used as economically as possible while recognising the desirability of avoiding significant divisions within a community.	Current proposal will have economic impact on ToG and The Barossa Council in terms of revenue, asset maintenance and administrative costs. Further significant analysis is required should the proposal proceed. This will impact short term use of resources and long term financial changes. There are currently higher and better use of limited resources than pursuing administrative reform.
2.	Proposed changes should, wherever practicable, benefit ratepayers.	Still to be determined through broader engagement, again this would need to be undertaken should the proposal proceed past this round of consultation.
3.	A council should have a sufficient resource base to fulfil its functions fairly, effectively and efficiently.	Linked to 1 above.
4.	A council should offer its community a reasonable range of services delivered on an efficient, flexible, equitable and responsive basis.	No comment, further analysis required.
5.	A council should facilitate effective planning and development within an area, and be constituted with respect to an area that can be promoted on a coherent basis.	Effective planning especially land use planning is considered best linked to the communities of interest. The development of Concordia is a clear target for ToG, however it is argued that the Council best associated with and in support of the Barossa Brand is not the ToG. It is best placed with The Barossa Council to ensure a collaborative and appropriate development within the GI boundary and with a buffer to Gawler.
6.	A council should be in a position to facilitate sustainable development, the protection of the environment and the integration of land use schemes.	Linked to 5 above.
7.	A council should reflect communities of interest of an economic, recreational, social, regional or other kind, and be consistent with community structures, values, expectations and aspirations.	Clearly the areas of Kalbeeba (excluding the Springwood development area) and Concordia are associated with the southern Barossa and the GI, separated by distance and the south Para. The economic basis of the area for now and the foreseeable 10+ years is clearly associated with the Barossa.
8.	A council area should incorporate or promote an accessible centre (or centres) for local administration and services.	Agreed and this can be achieved through collaborative models rather than expensive and divisive ToG strategy.
9.	The importance within the scheme of local government to ensure that local communities within large council areas can participate effectively in decisions about local matters.	It remains to be understood how this will be achieved in the ToG proposal. The Barossa Council model sees all Councillors supporting the whole community rather than sections thereof.

10.	Residents should receive adequate and fair representation within the local government system, while over-representation in comparison with councils of a similar size and type should be avoided (at least in the longer term).	See point 9.
11.	A scheme that provides for the performance of functions and delivery of services in relation to 2 or more councils (for example, a scheme for regional governance) may improve councils' capacity to deliver services on a regional basis and therefore offer a viable and appropriate alternative to structural change.	Agreed see point 8.
12.	The extent and frequency of previous changes affecting the council or councils under this Chapter or the repealed Act.	Not applicable.

Summary

With the opportunity to provide comment and have input the above outlines the basis for a submission to the ToG on the matter of boundary reform.

ATTACHMENTS OR OTHER SUPPORTING REFERENCES

Attachment Correspondence from Mayor Redman

Link to Consultation Page

<https://www.gawler.sa.gov.au/your-council/boundary-reform>

Link to Survey

<https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/5789678/Gawler-Boundary-Reform>

COMMUNITY PLAN / CORPORATE PLAN / LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Community Plan



Natural Environment and Built Heritage



Community and Culture



Infrastructure



Health and Wellbeing



Business and Employment



How We Work – Good Governance

All

Legislative Requirements

FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

No resourcing or budget are set to assist in further analysis of any proposals. Council is electing at this time to not spend significant funds on boundary reform. Any work and response on the matter is being absorbed within existing resources. Should it proceed to a full process there are no resources available to support the process and would need either other activities to be deferred or additional resources to be sourced.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

ToG's current consultation outlined in the body of the report.