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17 Oct 2018

DPTI

Submission – The Barossa Council

Performance Indicators Discussion Paper

Closing date: 5pm Wednesday 17 October 2018

The paper states that the purpose of the current Systems Indicators is “to identify where and how adjustments in policies, legislation and administration could lead to greater efficiencies in the planning system”.

By its own admission, DPTI has stated that the data collected by the Systems Indicators is not accurate. Consequently, it is difficult to imagine that the data has been useful in generating ‘greater efficiencies’. To date, there has been no transparency in the data collected, or how in fact it has been used by the department. Any new system must be more reliable and transparent, so that it can be used by all within the industry. The Planning Portal has been promoted as being the source of the data. Consequently, it is essential that the portal is robust in its design to ensure that stakeholders can access and interrogate the data.

The usefulness of current and proposed system indicators is questioned on the basis of whether they are true indicators of performance. It is considered that there are two key performance factors that should be deployed in respect of the planning process. Firstly, in respect of timelines for assessment and decisions being issued, and secondly, in respect of accuracy of assessment where reference is made to whether decisions are upheld or dismissed on appeal.

The types of indicator measures need to be firmly identified in simpler terms

- Activity v Performance
- Efficiency v Effectiveness

The paper confusingly mixes the strategic target measures with development assessment aspects – e.g. Section 5 about refers to targets in regional plans but the subsequent discussion about the new System Indicators Scheme is based on assessment functions.

The number of components within the planning system which could be measured is significant – e.g. high level strategic targets set out in regional plans, development assessment activity (such as application numbers, times taken), inspections, appeals, assessment panel activities. It seems unrealistic that a single reporting scheme could accommodate all potential measures.

The System Indicators Scheme might be appropriate for development assessment but it seems some other scheme might be required for strategic measures to inform the Annual Report.

In designing any suite of measures it is necessary to ask who the audience is, how the information is going to be used, ease of collecting and analysing the information, ownership and responsibility, accessibility etc. Will the information be used to identify system issues and opportunities or to highlight and penalise poor performance within councils? Notwithstanding, a simpler indicators system that is publicly available for any interested party to access would demonstrate a proper commitment to transparency.