



CAITHNESS & NORTH SUTHERLAND REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP (CNSRP)

MINUTES OF ADVISORY BOARD MEETING HELD 13th SEPT 2010 AT THE PENTLAND HOTEL, THURSO

Present:

Cllr Sandy Park (THC - Chair); Roy Kirk (HIE); Stuart Black (THC); Eann Sinclair (CNSRP); Duncan Mackay (CE); Neil Rafferty (Scottish Government); Anna MacConnell (NDA); June Love (DSRL); Frances Gunn (FNWCC); Lesley Cranna (SNH); Marcus Mennie (NHC); Trudy Morris (CCoC); Lynne Johnstone (SDS); John Green (Caithness Partnership); Ian Clark (T&WTC); Steven Sutherland (CCoC); William Manson (ACCC); Simon Middlemas (DSRL); Cllr George Farlow (THC); Neil Robertson (CCoC);

Welcome and Introductions

The chairman welcomed members to the meeting of the Advisory Board and asked members to briefly introduce themselves. He said that previously George Junor attended on behalf of Skills Development Scotland, but in the future it will be the SDS Area Manager Ian Carse who will attend. In his place for this meeting is Thurso-based Lynne Johnstone.

Apologies for absence

Ronnie Johnston (DSG), Ian Carse (SDS), Gordon Jenkins (NHC), Cllr Katrina McNab, Cllr David Flear, Cllr Ian Ross, Ian Hargrave (THC), John Thurso MP, Willie Watt (WHA).

Previous Minutes/ Matters Arising

Agreed as true record of 31st May meeting, with one amendment to include John Green to list of attendees. All actions have been completed.

Pentland Firth Delivery Group presentation:

Neal Rafferty, Senior Policy Adviser in the Renewables Team at Scottish Government gave a presentation outlining the present status of the marine energy industry and how it related to the Pentland Firth. Scottish Ministers have invested the highest levels of support in the UK in renewable energy to encourage investment in Scotland. He outlined funding schemes that have been made available since 2007 to accelerate

development to commercial and pre commercial level. He explained the various development groups all of which feed back to the Energy Advisory Board.

Short term expectations:

- An event to bring together the developers with the supply chain is planned for November in Inverness: details will be sent to the Chamber.
- Licensing and consenting guidance will soon be published. An announcement will be made on the Inner Sound lease within a few weeks
- A week of local information days will be held in w/c 8th Nov, 2 days in Thurso, 2 days in Orkney. Developers will be present along with Crown Estate, Scottish Government and Marine Scotland
- Consultations are being run by Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission Ltd in Spittal and Watten this week re proposed HVDC converter station near Spittal.
- Pentland Firth delivery group will publish minutes and ensure A.B. has sight
- Three further grid applications from marine energy companies are anticipated by the end of this year.

Inward Investment presentation, Roy Kirk, Area Manager

- A review over the last three years shows 70 potential investors in marine energy have visited the area. HIE together with SDI have undertaken many profile raising activities aimed at developers and companies relevant to the industry.
- There is future potential for data centres as carbon charging comes into force.
- HIE has agreed a framework contract with three companies (Caithness Chamber, Lucid and Optimat) to support inward investment research, market testing and evaluation.
- New SDI marine energy post will include a remit to engage with the Advisory Board
- Plans to develop the idea of Caithness Ambassadors to provide constructive feedback and referrals and all businesses have a part to play
- The importance of positive press should always be remembered

Programme Manager Update

ES has circulated a written update, and provided a verbal update on activities:

- Already circulated is the document containing high level plans including agreed priorities, job number aspirations. The partners agreed in a July workshop the potential to achieve up to 2050 jobs by 2020.
- Recap of last three years as we are reaching end of current plan suggests 120 job creations per year over last three years, this will need to be nearer 200 per year to reach target.
- A document updating on the last three years will be in draft by late October. The next three years plan will be circulated in the next few weeks.
- An important achievement of the Advisory Board is the smaller short term groups which have been set up such as the workforce transition group and the connectivity group which fed into HIE's recent bid for a pilot programme to rollout superfast broadband in the area. Members also pointed out the £800,000 Leader scheme for broadband enhancement, to which the Caithness Partnership was helping 3 local communities make applications.

- A “wash-up” meeting is planned for those who participated in the Cumbria learning journey to discuss lessons learned. ES said his main learning point was the partnership agreement between NDA, PBO and SLC at Sellafield, and how agreeing a similar one at Dounreay might have implications for the way the wider Partnership worked. SB felt the marketing and profile of Britain’s Energy Coast offered learning points for CNSRP too. JL said that the DSG representatives on the trip had similar views, and asked if this would be on the agenda for the next Executive Board. ES agreed that it would, and that an assessment of the Partnership’s structures will be undertaken in the light of the agreed focus on energy and business services. **ACTION 1 - ES to feed comments to Executive Board.**
- Members agreed that there were a number of good positive stories such as the improved streamlined HC planning process and 20 new jobs in Castletown
- S Sutherland mentioned the Orkney learning journey. Orkney find that Harbour infrastructure is a major key to success and he suggested Caithness look to Scrabster. Orkney views are that Caithness will provide the engineering base whilst Orkney may benefit from supplying R&D **ACTION 2 - ES to invite Scrabster to present at next meeting.** S Black suggested that Scottish Government should consider co-ordinating bids that involve bids from a number of their bodies **ACTION 3 – N Rafferty will pass comments on Scrabster Harbour to the relevant Scottish Govt departments.** T Morris felt that this was a failing on the part of CNSRP as the Exec Board has a direct route into government for issues such as this and should learn this lesson to better deliver in future.
- The second part of the National Renewables Infrastructure Plan has been published by HIE and Scottish Enterprise. It focuses on offshore wind, but contains a section on wave and tidal. The report (<http://www.hie.co.uk/highlands-and-islands/key-industries/energy/n-rip.html>) is open for consultation until 10 November, and responses should be sent to nrip@scotland.gsi.gov.uk. **ACTION 4 - ALL read and comment on NRIP2 report.**

6 Reports from members

Ian Clark, Thurso & Wick Trades Council – T&WTC will resume political lobbying re services at Dunbar Hospital in Thurso.

June Love, Dounreay Stakeholder Group – Working with NDA on PBO competition. Cumbria learning journey, 3 bullets to feed in. Also looking for an update on the Pensions Administration Office. **ACTION 5 – JL to seek update from Pensions Administration Office.**

George Farlow, Highland Councillor – Councillors recently attended a pre-scoping meeting with Pelamis Wave Power. Pelamis are keen to utilise liaison groups to smooth out small issues such as salmon netting at Armadale. Suggestion for George Farlow to take back to Pelamis that they might want or consider talking to local primary schools such as Farr about what they will be seeing going on as the N Sutherland site develops.

Trudy Morris, Caithness Chamber of Commerce – The Chamber held a members' breakfast event in Wick to allow businesses to meet with SeaEnergy regarding its offshore wind proposals in the Moray Firth, with a view to potentially securing work. The Chamber will be taking a Stand at the Renewable UK event in Glasgow in November. Preparations are also being made for the 38th Chamber dinner for 150 with Scottish Secretary of State as keynote speaker.

Steven Sutherland, Caithness Chamber of Commerce – Subsea7 has landed two major contracts, and some of this work is being delivered through local subcontractors. Query over National Nuclear Archive, is it still going ahead? **ACTION 6 - Eann to seek written update from NDA.**

Billy Manson, Association of Caithness Community Councils – Duncan Mackay had given a very good presentation to the Association last week. BM noted there seems to be public perception that Orkney is 'getting everything' in the marine energy industry important to feed into press the ongoing achievements in this area.

Anna McConnell, NDA – NDA has three projects in final funding stages and a few in the pipeline. She circulated a document entitled Dounreay competition – Socio-Economic Update, and said that an accompanying document will be available next week.

Duncan Mackay, Crown Estate – Continue to work with developers with a focus on consenting. Anticipate an announcement on the inner sound within a few weeks. Also planning developer info days which will include schools. Plan to publish a 'build out story' this year which will inform the supply chain how to get involved as was done for offshore wind.

Simon Middlemas, DSRL – Working on lifetime plan, looking at end date of 2032 depending on funding and new PBO. Some old figures may be in circulation as snapshots were required for competition.

Francis Gunn, NW Federation of Community Councils – Caithness, Sutherland and Lochaber have had the most LEADER funding awarded so far in Highland. As a result of the Sutherland Summit David Whiteford NHI is to meet with North Sutherland crofters and small producers to discuss opportunities for inclusion in the Mey Selections brand and possible eco-tourism initiatives.

Lesley Cranna, SNH – SNH restructure means North Highlands and Northern Isles will now be one area which will have a positive effect on the Pentland Firth projects. A central team specialising in marine renewables is being established.

Roy Kirk, HIE – Melness, Tongue and Strathy have become one joined community for account management purposes. HIE is also considering help with plans to re-open the cinema in Thurso.

John Green, Caithness Partnership – Caithness Partnership has met its three year targets. Transport study for Berriedale is ongoing. Working with community councils to help local groups apply for the £800,000 available through the LEADER broadband fund.

Lynne Johnstone, SDS – Circulated update on behalf of Ian Carse

Our main priorities are to meet our obligations for the NTPs and targets related to the delivery of an effective all age skills development strategy across Scotland with allowances and or variations to suit local circumstances and economic circumstances including information, advice and guidance on career development and employability matters

A key driver with this approach is to work with partners on the identified targets for economic development and employment in each local authority area and to thread skills development through agreed strategic plans – key partners include Highland Council, HIE, JC+ and key sectoral and or employer groups

CNSRP is a key group because we are keen to ensure that we develop the strengths of the current workforce in terms of ensuring a smooth transition from their current employment into other work and or careers that the employees themselves consider suitable and practical given their personal skills, inclinations and circumstances. We are also keen to play our part in considering with CNSRP other training and employee development that needs to be put in place to make the transition as effective as it can be and in line with effective de-commissioning in the given economic circumstances, and that, where possible, there is a lasting benefit to the community.

The agreements that have been reached when discussing the current ESF bid is a good example of the benefit we see in effective partnership working with CNSRP and how we would like to take things forward into the future.

Stuart Black, HC – Highland wide development plan out to consultation, positive message for Caithness, will be an important planning document. Princes Foundation event at the castle of Mey will be followed up at the end of the month. Have been pushing Business Gateway to get business start up stories into the press.

Neil Robertson, Caithness Chamber of Commerce – SME's continue to struggle with bank lending. NHRF welcomes working with Business Gateway. Young Chamber is very important. He also congratulated HC for its streamlined planning process for the biomass plant at Georgemeas which will have positive effect on forestry. NRIP2 is lacking in detail for this area – Neal Rafferty agreed that this would be addressed for wave and tidal.

Marcus Mennie, North Highland College – Centre for Energy and Environment scheduled to be complete by 15th Nov and functioning by 10th Jan. Currently looking at an opening ceremony in spring 2011. The Engineering Centre which is progressing with an operational date of mid April will enhance the curriculum capability. The College's dual-fuel heating system currently uses a supplier in Invergordon, but NHC is looking to secure a local supplier. NHC will have 8 Hi Definition VC suites by next year. Student numbers are up in engineering and construction. NHC is also discussing a partnership with Orkney College.

Date of Next Meeting:

Tuesday 16th November, 10.30am at T3UK, Janetstown, Thurso.

Actions List

Ref	Action	Due date	Responsible person
1	Feed comments from Cumbria journey to Executive Board	23/09/10	ES
2	Invite Scrabster Harbour Trust to next Advisory Board	Next meeting	ES
3	Pass comments on Scrabster Harbour to relevant Scottish Govt departments	Asap	N Rafferty
4	Read and comment on NRIP 2 report	10/11/10	ALL
5	Seek update from Pensions Administration Office	Next meeting	J Love
6	Seek written update on Nuclear Archive from NDA	Next meeting	ES