

**CAITHNESS & NORTH SUTHERLAND  
REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP (CNSRP)**

**MINUTES OF ADVISORY BOARD MEETING HELD 8<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2011  
AT t3lUK, JANETSTOWN**

Present:

Cllr AS Park, Highland Council - (Chair)  
Cllr Ian Ross  
Cllr David Flear  
John Green, Caithness Partnership  
Ken Nicol, DSRL  
Derrick Milnes, Thurso & Wick Trades Union Council  
Trudy Morris, Caithness Chamber of Commerce  
Neil Robertson, Caithness Chamber of Commerce  
Frances Gunn, Association of N&W Sutherland Community Councils  
Ronnie Johnson, DSG

In attendance:

Eann Sinclair, Programme Manager, CNSRP  
David Sutherland, Ward Manager, THC  
Stuart Black, Director of Planning and Development, THC  
Roy Kirk, HIE  
Eilidh Gunn, CNSRP (Minutes)

**1 Welcome and Apologies**

The chairman welcomed members to the meeting of the Advisory Board and asked members to briefly introduce themselves.

Apologies from: Cllr George Farlow, Steven Sutherland (Caithness Chamber of Commerce), Gordon Jenkins (North Highland College), Anna Macconnell (NDA), Ian Carse (SDS), Billy Manson (Association of Caithness Community Councils), Lesley Cranna (SNH), Willie Watt (WHA), Sandy Mackie (SHT), Simon Middlemas (DSRL).

**2 Previous Minutes**

Actions from last meeting:

- Delivery plan – now being designed, Eann will circulate when available  
**(ACTION 1 – E Sinclair)**
- Socio-economic impact study – awaiting next draft following comments from commissioning group.
- Feedback on marketing plan – complete
- NHS Highland meeting – 5 or 6 actions came out of the meeting. Assessment of socio economic impact was raised with NHS Highland officials, questions will be answered in December.

- Crown Estate post / info flow from PFOW leadership forum – HC sits on PFOW Leadership forum, Stuart Black will push for info at next meeting as well as passing minutes. (**ACTION 2 - S. Black**)

### **3 Scottish Power Renewables (SPR) - Presentation**

Laura Watson, Steven Lindsay (SPR) and Richard Hunt (Energy Hunt) gave a presentation (separately circulated) on SPR's plans for the marine renewable site at Duncansby drawing on their experiences developing their tidal site at Islay and their onshore wind farms. SPR are keen to work with CNSRP through the Advisory Board on issues including technology development, deployments, community benefit and jobs. It was agreed that it would be useful to bring together a subgroup based on the CNSRP Advisory Board to support this engagement. **ACTION 3 – E Sinclair** to bring group together.

### **4 Programme Manager Update**

#### **Action Plan – project-level priorities**

Following discussion and recommendations from CNSRP Delivery Group, ES will be presenting a paper to the Executive Board on Friday. The paper seeks endorsement to take forward discussions on how best to support a range of identified projects. This will also include lessons learnt from funding arrangements for previous projects.

The recent announcement on the future of the Vulcan facility will be a high priority. DSRL's socio economic team have had no contact from Rolls Royce. However, Rolls Royce has previously indicated that it sees a future for its business in Caithness. Highland Council will raise questions through political channels (**ACTION 4 – Cllr AS Park**)

#### **CNSRP Communications**

ES had circulated a summary of press coverage during 2011. It was agreed that this represented a real improvement on the volume and theme of previous year's coverage. It was also noted that the current issue of the Executive Magazine has good stories on Caithness and the Caithness Chamber.

### **5 Inward Investment**

Simon Coles was unable to attend as he is at the national Contact Centre convention. He also plans to attend the Tidal Today summit next month.

R. Kirk said that recent referrals have been received from the Caithness Ambassadors and HIE would encourage anybody with a contact to put them in touch.

HIE would welcome working with SPR in particular to establish which of their business requirements would benefit from being close to the tidal resource.

The joint meeting held in Caithness between representatives of Aberdeen and Caithness Chambers was very positive and holds out considerable scope for joint work. There are also outline plans to hold a Caithness/ North Sutherland event in

Edinburgh in 2012, perhaps building on the marine energy event held in “Our Dynamic Earth” in 2008, at which Alex Salmond spoke about marine energy.

## **6 Member Updates**

**DSRL** – has been awarded the sword of honour for its safety record – one of 54 that have been awarded. Work on the construction of the low level waste facility has commenced and the associated Caithness and North Sutherland fund has been launched. A socio-economic information room has been opened on site providing information on future opportunities, a display stand will also be moved around the county, in particular to secondary schools. Preferred bidder to become the next Dounreay PBO will be announced on 23<sup>rd</sup> Nov. DSRL are in consultation with DSG re its 2012/13 socio economic plan.

**Caithness Chamber** – Scottish Chamber network can influence politicians so should engage nationally re enterprise zones. Scottish Investment bank have up to £10m loans available for businesses. An opportunity through Debbie Gray is that Northern Ireland cannot get enough IT skills, trained IT people tend to leave Caithness so perhaps this could become coordinated. Town Centre Development Officers are in place and are looking at having a shoppers’ loyalty scheme up and running before Christmas, as well as websites for each town. Make the Right Connections programme is examining how it can support tourism and food and drink businesses. Supply Chain diversification programme “Marketing to Diversify” workshops will be running until May.

**Federation of N&W Community Councils** – Assisting with the Caithness and North Sutherland Fund and LEADER applications. Wind farm groundwork is due to start soon at Melness community wind project. F. Gunn will be standing down from the Community Councils on 18<sup>th</sup> November.

**Caithness Partnership** – Caithness Partnership has been discussing future funding support with Highland Council. Koreen Macdougall will be assisting applications for the new Caithness and North Sutherland fund. Potential Ministerial visit next year to discuss transport.

**Thurso & Wick Trades Council** – Recent press release re Berriedale Braes. Trades Council and DSG has invited Fergus Ewing to visit Caithness.

**Highland Council** – Cllr Flear attended a Transport Conference in Aviemore where Berriedale was mentioned to Transport Minister. National Nuclear Archive open day in Wick attracted over 70 people. S. Black noted Business Gateway’s start-up figures to date in 2011/12 – 29 business starts, three of which have been put forward for HIE Account Management. Workshops on procurement are continuing. Highland Council is working closely with Orkney Islands Council on development planning. SHETL have applied for planning consent for the construction of a converter station at Spittal, plus existing Dounreay-Beaully upgrades.

**HIE** – Crown Estate are holding another public open day/information sessions on 28<sup>th</sup> November. Over 400 attendees went previously so hopefully turnout will be just as positive.

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible person</b>	<b>Due date</b>
1	Circulate published version of CNSRP Delivery Plan	E Sinclair	asap
2	Discuss Crown Estate post and information flow between boards	S Black	16/12/11
3	Bring together group to work with Scottish Power Renewables	E Sinclair	02/12/11
4	Discuss future of Vulcan with Scottish/ UK Govt	Cllr AS Park	Next Meeting