



CNSRP ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

3rd December 2013
Mackay's Hotel, Wick

Attendees: Cllr Drew Hendry (Chair), Cllr Thomas Prag, George Hamilton (Highland Council), George MacDonald (CVG), Connie Bremner (JCP), Alastair Ferrier (SDS), Bill Baxter (CCoC), John Robertson (Crown Estate), Eann Sinclair (CNSRP), David Flear (DSG), Derrick Milnes (T&WTC), Cllr Roger Saxon, Alastair MacDonald (Cavendish Nuclear), Fiona Bruce (Secretary), Ken Nicol (DSRL), William Sutherland (HIAL), Trudy Morris (CCoC)

Apologies: Roy Kirk (HIE), June Love (HIE), Lesley Cranna (SNH), Susan Johnson (JCP), Stuart Black (HC), Gordon Jenkins (NHC), Cllr George Farlow, Cllr Gail Ross, Frances Gunn (CVS North), Anna MacConnell (NDA), Seonag Campbell (SDS), Sandy Mackie (SHT).

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the considerable effort that has been put into moving a number of key actions forward.

2. PREVIOUS MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true record of the previous meeting by those members present.

3. PROGRAMME MANAGER UPDATE

Programme Summary

Eann Sinclair provided the Advisory Board members with a presentation on progress. For the period of 2011-14 to date 401.25 jobs have been created/ retained and 208 jobs have been lost. Looking forward to the next phase of 2014-2017 job projections are within a range of 330-467 jobs. The CNSRP Delivery Team are currently looking at what needs to be done now to secure these future jobs i.e. looking at enabling projects that may require funding. A piece of work is currently being undertaken by HIE to look at inward investment opportunities for the hangar at Wick JoG Airport. Progress is being made at Berriedale, and it is hoped that a 'shovel-ready' plan will be in place next year. Discussions are also being held with Highland Council about the deterioration of the road at Moss of Kilmster which is a vital route for a number of businesses. In terms of

digital connectivity there is a lot of work currently being undertaken but there are also a number of questions that need answers. Work is ongoing on marketing, to try and identify what activities that are already being undertaken and what funds are available.

During the discussion about job predictions John Robertson advised that the Crown Estate have developed some new software/methodology to predict GDA and future employment figures. He did state that the software will not provide 100% accuracy but it is a starting point for developers. The software is not yet fully developed, but John agreed to make it available to CNSRP for comment at this stage of development.

Action – J. Robertson to provide E. Sinclair with access to the Crown Estate’s newly developed software for GDA and Employment predictions.

Cllr Drew Hendry noted that the work currently undertaken on job predictions does not necessarily represent the average wage value of the displacement of jobs from Dounreay. This is a factor that must be taken into account when planning for the future.

A number of questions were asked with regard to timescales for the delivery of super fast broadband in Caithness & Sutherland. The HIE Broadband Team met with members for of the CCoC last week to advised them that work has already begun on updating the exchanges in Caithness and Sutherland, and superfast broadband will be ready to go live in early 2015. It was noted that there are some areas that will not be able to receive superfast broadband through the two main exchanges. Alternative options and being considered for these areas – one area of particular concern is John O’Groats. The HIE Broadband Team agreed to respond to a number of actions raised at this session and will meet with the group in the near future to provide an update on progress. The group agreed that there are a lot of positives in terms of the work that is currently being undertaken and the eventual end point. It was noted that there are a number of major construction projects being undertaken in Caithness that will allow the opportunity to install good underground fibre connections.

Action – Cllr D Hendry to discuss super fast broadband availability at John O’Groats with HIE and BT.

Communications

The level of media coverage is consistent with previous years however there is not enough proactive media coverage across the Partnership. It was suggested that a press release should be produced following Advisory and Executive Board meetings to keep the public abreast of what activities the partnership are supporting. **Action – FB to add ‘media cover – press release’ to future agendas.**

Action – E Sinclair to draft press release about December Advisory Board discussions/highlights.

It was noted that a number of the partners are starting to use ‘The Right Place, Right Time, Right People’ strap line. It was agreed that a discussion needs to be held at a strategic level to confirm that partners are comfortable using this as a means of encapsulating the area’s offering – particularly in the energy sector.

Action – Cllr D Hendry to discuss usage of the ‘Right Place, Right Time, Right People’ strap line with Highland Council colleagues and HIE.

Derrick Milnes advised that the Trades Council provide Eann Sinclair with early sight of any press releases to ensure he is fully briefed. It was suggested that other partners should follow suit.

4. INWARD INVESTMENT – PROGRESS REPORT

Unfortunately there were no members of the Inward Investment Team available to attend the meeting. The team were in Aberdeen hosting a business event and meeting with potential inward investors. Similar events are planned for London and Edinburgh in the next few months. Attendance at key business conferences/seminars is also being reviewed to ensure that the right events are targeted.

Roy Kirk had asked for the updated HIE Caithness & North Sutherland Marketing Plan to be circulated to members for comment. The Chair expressed that he felt the strategic thread of the plan was unclear. **Action: All members to provide comments to Roy Kirk on HIE Caithness & North Sutherland Marketing Plan.**

Cllr Thomas Prag suggested that some simple marketing practices are being missed, things that are often taken for granted by local residents. He suggested that better use could be made of Twitter. A number of positive comments were made with regard to the CNSRP Weekly Blog as a tool for sending out positive messages.

5. MEMBER UPDATES

Association of Caithness Community Councils

- There was no representative available to attend the meeting.

Caithness Chamber of Commerce

- A Jobs event is due to be held in Wick on 8th February. To date 28 businesses have signed up to the event.
- The roll out of World Host training continues.
- The CCoC are administering the Caithness Business Fund. The Caithness Business Fund is currently funded solely by the Baillie Wind Farm but the CCoC are seeking other businesses to contribute towards the fund.
- The AGM of the NDA-funded North Highland Regeneration Fund was held in November. NHRF is managed by the Chamber. In advance of the meeting a number of local school young enterprise groups participated in a 'Drangon's Den' style challenge to pitch for additional funding for their enterprise. There was also an opportunity for the groups to listen to some inspirational speakers who have successful local businesses.
- The NDA-funded Caithness & North Sutherland Fund AGM was also held in November. Fund continues to be successful, and has approved around £900,000 to community projects so far.

Caithness Voluntary Group/CVS North

- There were no items for discussion.

Crown Estate

- Site development continues, Scottish Power Renewables is working on its Sound of Islay tidal project (the pre-cursor project to its proposed Ness of Duncansby project).
- The latest seabed leasing round is due to conclude in March 2014.
- Investment is being made in the first wave and tidal arrays projects to support industry development to the next level.

Dounreay Stakeholder Group

- The DSG are continuing to engage in conversations related to super fast broadband connectivity.
- Caithness Conversations continue regarding community benefits from onshore wind energy and how they are used across the county.
- Discussions are ongoing with the NDA regarding disposal of land issues related to the former Viewfirth site.
- A meeting was held recently with Highlife Highland regarding the creation of a community sports hub in Thurso.
- The group continue to engage with the NDA on the National Nuclear Archives project. The appointment of a commercial partner is awaited.
- A request has been made by the Magnox competition team for David Flear to speak to their stakeholders about the experiences during the Dounreay bid process.

DSRL/NDA/BDP

- Some work has been undertaken to modify the procurement section of www.dounreay.com. The webpage now includes links for potential bidders to find out about what services/resources etc are available locally.
- Some work has been undertaken to develop the Socio Economic Plan 2014/18, a draft paper will be circulated around various stakeholder for input shortly.
- A draft report has been received from the consultant working on measuring the impacts from socio economic activities carried out by DSRL, NDA and Cavendish Nuclear. A summary of this report will be circulated to the members in due course.
- A discussion paper has been produced on potential opportunities in Life Sciences sector. Some other work is also being carried out on opportunities in other sectors.
- Ken Nicol has been in discussion with a company looking to relocate to Thurso. A major issue for them is the unavailability of 24 hour courier service. There was some feedback around the table that 24 hour courier service is available through some firms. It was agreed that Highland Council would investigate the status on courier services. **Action: G Hamilton to investigate the status of 24 hour courier services to Caithness.**
- Work continues on the Marketing Proposal.
- Representatives attended a Wick Harbour workshop recently. The focus of the workshop was to gain clarity on what is required at Wick Harbour to enable it to secure new business for the future. They are working on a business case for what is needed.

- The NDA have contributed to a lot of projects/infrastructure improvements locally. They need to plan in advance what funds they need in future years across their geographical remit and Caithness needs to ensure it makes best use of these funds whilst they are available.
- Some work is currently being undertaken to understand the Dounreay workforce position in terms work transition.
- Alastair MacDonald has been asked to Chair the Oil & Gas Skills Workforce as part of the Energy North Task Force.

Highland Council

- A total of 22 jobs have been created as a result of new business start-ups.
- The Council have issued 11 employment grants.
- 1 Graduate placement has been offered.
- The Dounreay Planning Framework is now out for consultation.
- Council staff have supported the ongoing development of a Pentland Firth & Orkney Waters Marine Spatial Plan.
- The Caithness and Sutherland Local Plan is currently being produced, Cllr Thomas Prag expressed the importance of ensuring local input is received at this stage of development. He asked the members to encourage local communities to get involved and feed in their ideas. It is very important that this exercise is carried out properly with full engagement to ensure everything is included in the plan.
- Work is ongoing on the North Highland Visioning document.
- Involved with Marine Scotland regarding consents.
- David Flear raised a long standing issue related to drainage problems in Halkirk. The issue is still outstanding with Scottish Water. **Action: G Hamilton to follow-up drainage issue in Halkirk with Scottish Water.**
- The Chair advised that during his recent attendance at the General Assembly discussions state subsidies for air and sea travel was high on the agenda, as was digital connectivity.

HIAL

- Wick JoG Airport has recorded its busiest summer trade ever. This has been both in terms of Chevron contract and increased scheduled passenger numbers. The introduction of the extra Edinburgh flight has proved to be a success.
- The Chevron contract ended on 15th November, the Chevron CEO for UK and Europe flew into Wick JoG Airport on the last day of the contract to personally thank the airport team for all the help they provided during the duration of the contract.
- William Sutherland advised that Wick JoG is in a good position to potentially gain business from the West of Shetland Oil Fields. Great progress has been made in terms of business development at Wick JoG Airport through partnership working.
- The airport and facilities will be used this week as part of a new car launch for Mazda.
- A positive visit was made to Lowestoft – there are some real potential new business opportunities at Wick

- Discussions continue with potential inward investors at Wick Airport. HIAL representatives continue to push the availability of land and facilities at the surrounding industrial/business estates. Bill Baxter also raised the issue of use of land at the Airport Industrial Estate during the meeting.

HIE

- There was no representative available to attend the meeting.

North Highland College

- There was no representative available to attend the meeting.

Scrabster Harbour Trust

- There was no representative available to attend the meeting. However ES did advise that the Harbour Trust will be submitting a planning application for vehicle access to the Scrabster Farm site later this month – there are still a few issues that need to be resolved with Transport Scotland. It was noted that this is a major milestone for the development of the Scrabster Farm site.

Scottish Natural Heritage

- There was no representative available to attend the meeting.

Skills Development Scotland

- A UCAS Event for all Highland Schools is due to be held in Wick in September 2015. This event will be organised by SDS.
- The school-leavers' destination report was released to Highland Council last week. There has been an increase in positive destinations at Wick High School with both Thurso and Farr seeing a very slight decrease. Overall the numbers were encouraging.
- Good feedback has been received from employers and teaching staff about the S4 employability programme (Wick & Farr participated). An exercise is currently being undertaken to secure funding to roll this programme out to other schools.

Job Centre Plus

- The unemployment register in Caithness has risen to 770, this is an expected trend mainly due to seasonal employment.
- A sector-based work academy event to promote hospitality is planned for early next year.
- Discussions are being held with local employers regarding the benefits to be gained from World Host training.
- Additional resource has been provided to support employer engagement activities.
- There has been a slow up take on employability fund applications. A meeting is due to be held shortly to try and understand why this is the case.

Thurso & Wick Trades Council

- Engaged in Broadband talks, keeping Eann Sinclair up dated on any PR.
- An update on what the position regarding the opening of the Harmsworth Unit in Wick was requested. There has been talk about the Unit opening over the winter but there is presently no sign of this happening. There have been issues in the past regarding staff shortages but yet there has never been any recruitment adverts placed locally. It was suggested that it may be a good idea to ask a representative for NHS Highland to join the Advisory Board. **Action: G. Hamilton to enquire about a suitable NHS representative to join the Advisory Board.**

6. AOB

David Flear welcomed the current improvement works at Wick Town Hall, and commented that it will be great to see the Town Hall back in use and accessible to all.

Eann Sinclair mentioned that Mi Scotland town centre app creators have been in touch regarding the possibility of creating an app for Caithness.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and for the positive progress that is being made.

Key Messages for the press

Connectivity – report on the positive progress that is being made to add value.

7. SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

	Action:	Lead:	Due Date:	Status:
1	Provide Eann Sinclair with access to the Crown Estate's newly developed software for GDA and Employment predictions.	J. Robertson	13/12/13	Compl
2	Discuss super fast broadband availability at John O'Groats with HIE and BT.	Cllr D. Hendry	Next Meeting	Open
3	Add 'media cover – press release' to future agendas.	F. Bruce	Next Meeting	Open
4	Draft press release about December Advisory Board discussions/highlights.	E.Sinclair	13/12/13	Compl
5	discuss usage of the 'Right Place, Right Time, Right People' strap line with Highland Council colleagues and HIE.	Cllr D. Hendry	Next Meeting	Open
6	Provide comments to Roy Kirk on HIE Caithness & North Sutherland Marketing Plan.	All	31/01/14	Open
7	Investigate the status of 24 hour courier services to Caithness.	G.Hamilton	Next Meeting	Open
8	Follow-up drainage issue in Halkirk with Scottish Water.	G.Hamilton	Next Meeting	Open
9	Enquiry about a suitable NHS representative to join the Advisory Board.	G Hamilton	Next Meeting	Open