



CNSRP ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

18th June 2014
Pentland Hotel, Thurso

Attendees: Cllr Drew Hendry (Chair), George MacDonald (CVG), Eann Sinclair (CNSRP), David Flear (DSG), Stuart Black (THC), Roy Kirk (HIE), Trudy Morris (CCoC), Seonag Campbell (SDS), Mark McKean (Crown Estate), June Love (HIE), Fiona Bruce (Secretary), Simon Middlemas (CDP), Billy Manson (Assoc of Caithness Community Councils), Bill Baxter (CCoC), Stephen Sutherland (CCoC), Cllr Gail Ross (THC), Sandy Mackie (SHT), Ken Nicol (DSRL), Donald McBeath (NHC), Anna MacConnell (NDA)

Apologies: Willie Watt (WHA), Frances Gunn (CVS North), William Gilfillan (HIE), Derrick Milnes (T&WTC), John Thurso MP, Lesley Cranna (SNH), Rob Gibson MSP, Cllr Roger Saxon, Cllr George Farlow, John Robertson (Crown Estate), David Sutherland (THC), William Sutherland (HIAL).

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Since the last meeting Highland Council have granted planning permission to Meygen, this is a significant step forward for the project. The names have been selected and announced for the two new schools in Wick. Significant progress is being made on the new Highland Council Office in Wick.

The Chair advised that Highland Council are continuing to work with Scottish Government to push issues such as Berriedale Braes, the Transport Secretary and Cabinet Minister are both supportive and are engaging in positive discussions about funding for infrastructure improvements in Caithness.

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.

RK advised that NHV are engaged with HIAL on the provision of a hangar for helicopters at Wick John O'Groats Airport. Real progress is being made with this as both parties realise the potential for more opportunities in the future.

A feasibility study is currently being conducted on the requirement for a rotary wing hangar at Wick John O’Groats Airport, the final report is due in August 2014 – this report will be shared with the Advisory Board members. The report will look at the rationale for this type of facility in the north, Sumburgh Airport is also being considered as a possible location for this.

3. PROGRAMME MANAGER UPDATE

Eann Sinclair highlighted the following items from the update report:

- Highland Council has granted planning permission to Meygen (onshore infrastructure) and Scrabster Harbour Trust (Business & Industrial Park).
- Transport Scotland announced the preferred option for Berriedale Braes Trunk Road alignment.
- HIAL and Chevron have announced the recommencement of the helicopter flights from Wick John O’Groats airport to Chevron fields in the North Sea. The initial contract is for 6-9 months but there is the potential that this could be extended.
- The Thurso based battery factory businesses are now under new management and they have plans to further develop the businesses.
- SSE’s Sustainability Fund approved grant support for joint MAKLab/Wick High School bid to develop a digital fabrication lab in Wick, and a mobile facility. It was suggested that the pupils from Wick High School should be invited along to provide a presentation at a future meeting.

4. INWARD INVESTMENT – PROGRESS REPORT

June Love provided an update on the activities that have been undertaken since the last meeting. The following items were of note:

April 2014

- Meeting have been held with various companies in London, one potential lead is being followed up.
- Follow up meetings have been carried out with various companies in Aberdeen.
- Supported a visit by senior Unite Trade Union official Kevin Coyne and Tom Greatrex, MP on a fact finding visit to the area. While in Caithness they visited Dounreay, as well as visiting Scrabster and Wick harbours. June Love and Eann Sinclair spoke to them about the CNSRP programme and highlighted some of the progress being made.

May 2014

- Offshore wind developer Moray Offshore Ltd (MORL) held a “meet the buyer” event in Wick. The event, held in association with CNSRP partner HIE and Scottish Enterprise, featured presentations from lead partner EDPR and Tier 1 supply chain company Global Energy Group, as well as offering businesses the opportunity for one-to-one discussions.
- Representatives attended the All Energy Conference and Exhibition in Aberdeen. This opportunity was used to engage in a number of meetings with companies as part of the ongoing programme of inward investment opportunity.

CNSRP Advisory Board – June 2014 minutes - approved

- Two further meetings were held in Aberdeen during May with two potential companies looking to set up a presence in the area.

June 2014

- Attended an Aberdeen/Stravanger networking event with a number of HIE colleagues. Over two hundred people attended from the energy sector.
- Roy Kirk and Eann Sinclair attended an influencers' event, run in association with SCDI which attracted 80 business representatives from the energy sector and featured guest speaker Robin Watson, Chief Executive of Wood Group PSN. This is a continuation of similar events in Aberdeen and London.

Future Events

- Two position documents for companies have been produced.
- A further three position documents are nearing completion.
- Two general brochures – oil and gas/renewables – are being finalised.
- Continue to work with two companies to consider HIE interventions.
- Events calendar is being updated.
- Discussing potential for 'lunch and learn' events in Aberdeen, in association with Subsea UK

5. MEMBER UPDATES

Association of Caithness Community Councils

- On behalf of the Community Councils Billy Manson requested an update on when the traffic lights would be removed from Berridale. Gail Ross was able to advise that the damaged wall has now been repaired and the traffic lights are expected to be removed on 19th June 2014.

Caithness Chamber of Commerce

- They are in the process of recruiting a marketing and strategy graduate through the HIE scheme.
- The Business Development post also needs to be filled.
- Discussions are in place with Wick High School about a work experience placement.
- Continuing to work with Wick and Farr High Schools on young enterprise work. Discussions are being held with Thurso High School to get them involved too.
- The Chamber have been invited to attend Thurso High School assembly in September to talk about business opportunities and entrepreneurship.
- MtRC have awarded a tender for a career and mentoring scheme, working with local companies. The aim is to encourage young people to get involved and to have 20 people through the scheme by the end of the year.

Caithness Voluntary Group/CVS North

- CVG continue to provide advice on constitution, funding, training and a range of office services.

Crown Estate

- Meygen - Lots of work is being undertaken to make sure they are in position for the first phase of their project.
- Pelamis – progress is being made on support of their project. They have held public meetings and work continues on their device.
- The Crown Estate is currently running a leasing round – an announcement is expected by the end of June 2014.
- The Crown Estate is considering their first investment in the first tidal array devices.
- MORL – planning consent for 1866 MW.
- Working with schools on green energy projects, this has been written into the curriculum in Caithness schools.
- The Crown Estate now have an MOU with the University of the Highlands & Islands taking forward a number of themes on engagement, research, education and opportunities. This will include placement student opportunities for post/under graduates and summer placements.
- Working with ERI on some fishing research.
- They plan to hold a careers fayre locally at the end of the year. Seonag Campbell advised that SDS is hosting a UKAS convention at the end of September 2014 – it was suggested that the two events could be combined. Mark & Seonag agreed to discuss the options outside of the meeting.

Dounreay Stakeholder Group

- The decommissioning plan is being revised, an update is expected in December. This is likely to have an effect on the timeline and staffing profiles.
- Since the last meeting discussions have been held with Dounreay on the breakdown of spend against the socio economic budget, an update is expected in September.
- The National Audit Office carried out an audit for the NDA Site Facing team for Dounreay. David Flear was interviewed from a stakeholder perspective.
- Discussions have been held with the Mayor of Pinowa in Canada – their site is going through a change very similar to the setting up of an NDA and site licence company. David Flear and Eann Sinclair held a teleconference with them to talk through the socio economic aspects of decommissioning. They took a lot of our messages on board and are in the process of setting up a partnership approach similar to that of CNSRP.
- A presentation on socio economic activity will be provided by DSRL at the September DSG full meeting.
- A phone conversation with Commodore Corduroy clarified that Vulcan will continue its trials programme until 2015.

DSRL/NDA/BDP

DSRL

- The number of DSRL apprentices has increased to 10 this year, compared to 7 last year.
- DSRL have plans to recruit 4 interns this year.

- Work is ongoing to deliver the second Ready Steady Work Programme. This is a 4 day course in the summer holidays to give practical skills to move into employment. It includes CV writing, industry visits, interview practice. A course will be run in Wick and Thurso (previously it was only Thurso). Over 30 students have registered to date.
- Progress is being made in gaining Socio Economic Benefit through procurement:
 - We are working with 3 of our suppliers on a decommissioning operative scheme. There are currently 5 trainees on the programme with plans to recruit a further 3 later this year, with the potential for more in future years.
 - Companies bidding for the Professional Services contract at Dounreay have been asked to produce their own socio economic plans and to support the development of local labour through internships.
 - Companies bidding for the supply of heavy fuel oil have been asked to address a socio economic question as part of their tender. We are in the midst of the assessment process.
 - Other opportunities are being investigated, including catering services and a new construction project.
 - Our suppliers have been asked to contact local hauliers and use the existing DSRL framework agreements.
- It was noted that Simon Middlemas is now the local socio economic representative for Cavendish Nuclear. Simon will lead on some aspects of the Dounreay SE plan.

NDA

- Profiling is on track for the National Nuclear Archives. Four companies are bidding to become the commercial partner. A meeting has been held with Highland Council and Highlife Highland about what the new facility will look like and what services will be provided.
- Two funding requests have been approved:
 - Venture North - £150K towards developing a programme of activities to improve tourism.
 - Scrabster Harbour Trust - £280K towards preliminary work for the enterprise park at Scrabster Farm.

Cavendish Nuclear

- Simon Middlemas is providing support to the CNSRP Programme and Support.
- Cavendish Nuclear are looking at business opportunities in the area and how things might develop in the future.
- Cavendish Nuclear is providing other support via Shona Kirk to work with Simon and to assist in the Thurso Community Sports Hub.

Highland Council

- The local development plan for the area is expected to be ready by September 2014, it will go out for consultation in October.
- Business Gateway has supported 11 business start-ups in Caithness and 7 in Sutherland during quarter 1.

HIAL

There was no representative available to attend the meeting.

HIE

- Work is ongoing on company growth, this continues to be very important. There is an increased level of optimism amongst existing businesses.
- Recruiting new people in the area continues to be an issues, HIE are working with Caithness Chamber of Commerce to try and make improvements in this area.

North Highland College

- On behalf of the members the Chair congratulated Donald McBeath on his appointment as Principle at North Highland College.
- Development of the North Highland Rural Facility at Dale Farm is now complete. This facility covers equestrian, gamekeeping, wildlife studies and veterinary nursing. There are currently 150 students using the facility – it attracts a lot of student out with the Highlands. The facility will be officially opened on 31st July 2014.
- The new curriculum will be in place from September, this now includes a HND in computing, Sports qualifications and an employer lead programme in construction skills.
- NHC are hopeful that 40 bed student accommodation will be secured in Dornoch. A second and third phase of the accommodation strategy is planned. A feasibility study about what is needed in terms of student accommodation in the Caithness Area will be carried out.
- Work is ongoing on a new framework for advanced apprenticeships with SDS and DSRL.

Scrabster Harbour Trust

- It has been one year since the new pier has become operational.
- Fishing revenue has increased by 25% from last year.
- Oil & Gas activity has increased by 55% from the last year.
- General cargo activity is good.
- Planning permission has been approved for Scrabster Farm, discussions are being held with HIE and NDA about how to take this forward.
- Progressing quayside development and reclamation area at the pier.
- The port staff have all obtained a NVQ Level 2 Port Operations Qualification.
- SHT through the Highland Council employability has been able to support some work experience opportunities for the unemployed. This work experience has led to some individuals being offered work at the Harbour and other areas.

Scottish Natural Heritage

There was no representative available to attend the meeting.

Skills Development Scotland

- School leavers destination follow-up reports continue to remain above average for both Thurso and Wick. There is an increase in positive destinations, some work is being undertaken to drill down which sectors and what types of roles these are.
- A programme called 'Go for it' has been introduced in schools aimed at student who have had poor attendance.
- SDS have been working the North Highland College on future apprenticeship opportunities, this has included input from DSRL.
- SDS have been working with Inverness College and Hydrosun to include work experience as part of the curriculum.
- An engineering HNC qualification has been added to the curriculum in the Northern Isles High Schools. The members were in agreement that more vocational qualifications should be added into High School curriculums Donald MacBeath advised that North Highland College are in discussion with the local schools about how vocational qualifications can be added into curriculum for future years.
- SDS have been engaged with Oil & Gas events across Scotland to raise awareness about potential opportunities.

Job Centre Plus

There was no representative available to attend the meeting.

Thurso & Wick Trades Council

There was no representative available to attend the meeting.

6. AOB

The Chairman thanked the members for attending and contributing to an engaging and inspiring discussion. The work being undertaken is of high quality and there are great opportunities across the board.

JOINT MEETING CNSRP ADVISORY & EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

18th June 2014
Pentland Hotel, Thurso

Attendees:

Executive Board

Sir Anthony Cleaver (Chairman), Karen Jackson (Scottish Government)

Advisory Board

Cllr Drew Hendry (Chair), George MacDonald (CVG), Eann Sinclair (CNSRP), David Flear (DSG), Stuart Black (HC), Roy Kirk (HIE), Trudy Morris (CCoC), Seonag Campbell (SDS), Mark ? (Crown Estate), June Love (HIE), Fiona Bruce (Secretary), Simon Middlemas (CDP), Billy Manson (Caithness Community Council), Bill Baxter (CCoC), Stephen Sutherland (CCoC), Gail Ross (HC), Sandy Mackie (SHT), Ken Nicol (DSRL), Donald McBeath (NHC), Anna MacConnell (NDA)

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Sir Anthony Cleaver thanked everyone for their continued support to CNSRP. He felt very encouraged about what is happening in Caithness and North Sutherland. Real progress has been made in the Energy and Business sectors. A big challenge ahead is understanding the new timeline for decommissioning. There is a concern that if the Dounreay timeline is extended then momentum to find something new might falter.

Karen Jackson advised that Scottish Government have recognised the work that is going on in Caithness and North Sutherland and they are committed to the area.

The discussion is summarised in the bullets below:

- There is a need for a better communications strategy, the local message is not as positive as the message that is going out externally, with a co-ordinated support maybe either in the form of resource or funding to support a new resource.
It needs to be agreed who the responsible person is to pull this together – funding will be needed to make sure this happens. Negative storylines need to be challenged in a positive way. It was noted that there have been some really good news stories related to infrastructure improvements. If the Berriedale Braes project gets final approval to proceed this will be a really positive news story that will help build community confidence. **ACTION 1** – It was agreed that CNSRP Executive Board would discuss at its meeting.

- Need to think about where we can attract business from – open up to the wider market i.e. international hubs such as Amsterdam and Dublin, via the scheduled air links from Inverness.
- Progress has been made on the infrastructure:
 - Berriedale
 - Railhead
 - Airport
 - Harbours
- Growing commitment to education and skills, increased engagement with schools, college, universities etc.
 - Sir Anthony Cleaver advised that he is involved with a project called Primary Engineers, the project works with primary school children to start engaging at an early age on engineering projects, it was suggested that some consideration should be given to linking this project with local schools as this would be extremely advantageous with the engineering skills that currently exist in the county.
 - Advanced Apprenticeships
 - Vocational focus
 - Science Academy for the Highlands
 - SCDI Engineering Competition in primary schools
 - A survey is being conducting with early high school students asking them about what their perceptions are regarding employment opportunities in the energy sector.
 - Encouraging links with colleges for vocational qualifications. NHC are looking to develop more workplace links for vocational qualifications. Need to make sure that schools and colleges engage with businesses to understand what future career options may be available.
 - Positive feedback has been received on the fantastic work that is being undertaken in Wick High School. They have been involved in business enterprise activities and won awards a number of awards. Farr High School have also had success with their business enterprise activities and have won awards.

Sir Anthony Cleaver summarised that there is a real potential for Caithness & North Sutherland to secure a vibrant and diverse economy for the future. The potential for tidal power is tremendous, it will take time to secure the funding to fully implement but the area has to make sure the infrastructure and skills are in place to secure the work. There are also real opportunities for Caithness and North Sutherland in the oil and gas sector.

Actions:

	Action	Lead	Due	Status
1	Discuss communications resource requirements	Executive Board	16/08	Complete