



CNSRP ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

10th December 2014
JGC House, Janetstown, Thurso

Attendees: Cllr Thomas Prag (Chair), Eann Sinclair (CNSRP), David Flear (DSG), Stuart Black (THC), Roy Kirk (HIE), June Love (HIE), Ken Nicol (DSRL), Derrick Milnes (T&WTC), Willie Watt (WHA), David Sutherland (THC), Donald MacBeath (NHC-UHI), Cllr Drew Hendry, Cllr George Farlow, Keith Muir (HIE), Kateryna McKinnon (HIE), Calum Davidson (HIE), Rona Campbell (HIE), Anna MacConnell (NDA), William Sutherland (HIAL), Tom Pottinger (SHT), Simon Middlemas (CDP), Stephen Sutherland (CCoC), John Robertson (Crown Estate), Fiona Levack (CCoC), Mark Stuart (HIAL), Cllr David Flear.

Apologies: Cllr Gail Ross, Trudy Morris (CCoC), Alastair Ferrier (SDS), Sandy Mackie (SHT), Frances Gunn (CVS North), Roy Kirk (HIE), Lesley Cranna (SNH), Seonag Campbell (SDS), Cllr Roger Saxon.

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions round the table.

2. PREVIOUS MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

It was generally agreed that the principle of declaring interests at the start of a meeting would be useful. Members therefore agreed to adopt the paper as read and include this as a standing item on the agenda for the beginning of each meeting. **ACTION 1 – ES** to ensure standing item on future minutes

3. PROGRAMME MANAGER UPDATE

ES quarterly update distributed to everyone in advance of meeting.

SM - High level Programme – This is a communication tool between partners of CNSRP. At present some of the information within the plan were early assumptions. SM has asked for input and feedback on high level plan (copy circulated with Draft Minutes, 22/12/14). **ACTION 2 – ALL** to provide comments on High-level Plan

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See presentation attached to email.

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:

- Working on programme and scope of work for inward investment activities to fit into CNSRP high level plan. – Ongoing.
- Continuing to work on marketing collateral for area.
- Continuing to develop events diary to target various conferences (for leads), and events which could be sponsored or organised by us, via third parties.
- At present, speaking to 20 difference companies – at varying levels of engagement.
- Held an event in partnership with Subsea UK in Aberdeen to outline Caithness opportunities.
- Follow up to Subsea UK event was a visit to Caithness for over 20 Aberdeen companies.
- Discussions ongoing with various companies who attend the Caithness visit.
- HIE Chair and Chief Executive visited Caithness, they had a business breakfast with local companies.
- One company visited Caithness in December to explore further support provided by HIE to set up an office in the area.

5. FLOATING WIND OFFSHORE STUDY

Calum Davidson provided an update and advised that it is very much at a feasibility stage. There will be six months of focussed research – market, technical, financial, organisational. Calum Davidson will come back when there is more information available. ES agreed to circulate a copy of the Dounreay Floating Wind Test and Demonstration Centre presentation. **ACTION 3 – ES** to circulate presentation.

6. MEMBER UPDATES

Caithness Chamber of Commerce

- The Make The Right Connections programme ended in December and is currently being evaluated.
- Very close to achieving world host status for Caithness.
- Been working with colleges for an event on Wednesday 18th February.

Caithness Voluntary Group/CVS North

There were no representatives available to attend the meeting.

Cavendish Dounreay Partnership

- Shona Kirk is funded by CDP and is managing Community Sports Hub project.
- If CDP was investing in area they would look at infrastructure, cost of travel, etc.

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Dounreay Stakeholder Group

- Continue to be updated by the NDA and DSRL on their contribution to socio economic activities.
- Have agreed a process for DSG early input into funding applications.
- NDA nuclear archives – visited the pre-planning exhibition.
- Off-site accommodation: continue to speak with DSRL and HIE to ensure that off-site accommodation continues to progress
- NDA are developing a document outlining their contribution to the Caithness economy since their inception in 2005.
- Had a good presentation from DSRL's Commercial Department who outlined the work they are doing to bring socio economic benefit into procurement. Good to see NDA support continues to both harbours – Wick and Scrabster.
- Was involved in the STUC visit organised by local union reps in November.
- Continue to represent DSG on the Caithness Transport Forum – want to ensure Berriedale is kept high on the agenda – especially after the recent announcements of the emergency department in Caithness General hospital being closed.

DSRL/NDA/BDP

- NDA Nuclear archive planning process is ongoing, should be completed by the end of this month. .
- Venture North aim to promote Tourism in North website.

Highland Council

- Supported 41 businesses (as attend of November).
- 100 businesses with advice and marketing plans.
- Update on capital investment projects nearing completion.
- Town Hall back in operation, which has rooms to rent out.
- Children's home opened earlier this year.
- In March 2015 council staff will be moving into the new building.

Crown Estate

- Uncertainty in renewables industry, Siemens indicated that it wishes to pull out.
- MeyGen is a pioneering piece of work not without its challenges.
- The Crown Estate role will be changing when devolved powers to Scottish Government.

HIAL

- The new helicopter hangar is now operational, with HIAL, NHV and Chevron support. Successful contract with Chevron which has now ended. Work ongoing to attract others to the airport.

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HIE

- Business as usual. Our team are supporting business growth through account management.
- Battery factory has been turned around and the workforce has increased.

North Highland College

- Number of projects under way at the college.
- Early discussions with a business partner.
- Curriculum developments under way and 8 new full time courses next term.
- First class ETEC building and will be transforming rest of campus.
- College won a national award last week, 500 learners across Scotland. Only college to win award in Highlands & Islands.
- Look at health and what do families need up here.

Scrabster Harbour Trust

- Scrabster are doing very well this year with an increase in activities. The cruise season ended in August 2014 and have 6 vessels already booked in for 2015 which will be 3500 passengers.
- 86 port calls from Oil & Gas vessels.
- Infrastructure needs improvement, road, rail and airways. Recent report indicated that the road to Scrabster is very poor from Dornoch upwards.

Wick Harbour Authority

- Wick harbour has increased its workforce.
- There is a zoning plan for the harbour which splits it into commercial, offshore, wind, residential.
- Disappointed in Highland Council CAS plan meeting as only 2 people attended.
- A couple of Aberdeen based companies been in touch about the future.
- Things are very positive in Caithness.

Scottish Natural Heritage

There was no representative available to attend the meeting. Lesley Cranna is retiring from SNH, and her replacement will be Kristin Scott.

Skills Development Scotland

There was no representative available to attend the meeting. Seonag Campbell has moved on within SDS, and her replacement will be Roddy Bailey.

Job Centre Plus

- The rate of job seekers stands at 500.

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- Are now co-locating with NHS, been based there for 3 months to move people off of ESA and move them back into work. There will be a roll out in February next year, initially open to single job seekers.
- Universal credit replacing a few benefits. Inverness already has this in place and we will learn from them.

Thurso & Wick Trades Council

- Take forward transport infrastructure. New Scotrail timetables and price of flights to Aberdeen are particular concerns.
- Withdrawal of out of hours emergency surgery at Caithness General is a real cause for concern, and feels like the scale of issue last experienced when maternity services were under threat. It was agreed that ES would table at next week's Executive Board meeting. **ACTION 4 – ES** to raise at Executive Board meeting

7. AOB

The Chairman thanked the members for attending.

Date of Next meeting – to be confirmed.

Summary of actions:

	Action	Lead	Due	Status
1	Ensure Standing Item on Conflicts of Interest on future Agendas	ES	Next meeting	
2	Provide comments on High-level Plan	ALL	08/01/15	
3	Circulate copies of presentation	ES	24/12/14	Complete
4	Raise Caithness General at Executive Board	ES	17/12/14	Complete