



CNSRP ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

25 September 2015
The Norseman Hotel, Wick

Attendees: Cllr Alasdair Rhind (Chair), Roddy Bailey (SDS), Stuart Black (THC), Gordon Doull (WHA), Cllr George Farlow, David Flear (DSG), June Love (HIE), Sandy Mackie (SHT), Simon Middlemas (Cavendish Dounreay Partnership), Derrick Milnes (T&WTC), Ian Mitchell (SNH), Trudy Morris (CCoC), Ken Nicol (DSRL), Cllr Matthew Reiss, John Robertson (Crown Estate), Cllr Gail Ross, Cllr Roger Saxon, Eann Sinclair (CNSRP), William Sutherland (HIAL)

Apologies: Shirley Baker (JCP), Bill Baxter (CCoC), Cllr Margaret Davidson, Rob Gibson MSP, Frances Gunn (CVS North), David Haas (THC), Roy Kirk (HIE), Donald MacBeath (NHC-UHI), Anna MacConnell (NDA), Gill MacVicar (NHS Highland), Billy Manson (ACCC), Dr Paul Monaghan MP, Kristin Scott (SNH), Neil Smith (CVG), Mark Stuart (HIAL) David Sutherland (THC), Stephen Sutherland (CCoC), Willie Watt (WHA)

1. WELCOME

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

2. PREVIOUS MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

One amendment request: Cllr GF said he had not made the comments about the swimming pool on the bottom of page 10.

Otherwise, minutes approved.

Outstanding actions complete, except:

- ES has a meeting in November regarding the increase of press activity;
- Roddy Bailey, SDS will present at the next (December) meeting.

2b. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Advisory Board members.

3. WICK HARBOUR AUTHORITY (WHA) – UPDATE PRESENTATION

The Chairman welcomed Gordon Doull, vice-chairman of WHA who gave an update presentation on both the proposed and completed/in progress developments at Wick Harbour.

Key Points:

- There are two offshore wind farm projects in development: Beatrice Offshore Windfarm Ltd (BOWL) and Moray Offshore Renewables Ltd (MORL). BOWL is further developed.
- Since a harbour revision order in 2005 a lot of improvements have been made to Wick harbour: The creation of a commercially-successful marina; dredging; slipway clearing; the removal of the redundant ice plant etc.
- Discussions are taking place regarding the construction of an Operation & Maintenance (O&M) base (primarily for the use of the above-mentioned offshore projects).
- Much depends on pointing out to businesses that Wick is closer (thus more cost effective) than other sites along the Moray Firth.
- Designated Port Status was lost several years ago, which means not much white fish is landed at Wick.
- Currently a business case is being constructed to support the attainment of a high-water protection gate; WHA considers this is a high priority in order for Wick to be a valid option for the offshore projects.
- A 'pop-up' car park is being considered to meet car parking requirements.
- Future longer-term options for land reclamation, to expand the size of the quay and provide a deep water area, are being explored.

Questions:

- SB enquired about the role of colleges and training in relation to these upcoming offshore projects. GD confirmed that WHA have been in talks for years with relevant companies such as Siemens and colleges' apprenticeship programmes. Companies are increasingly looking for technicians who can cover all areas (as opposed to staff with one particular skillset).

4a. PROGRAMME MANAGER UPDATE – PROGRESS REPORT

ES quarterly update report was distributed to everyone in advance of the meeting, and some verbal updates were discussed.

Key Points:

- A new project (Skills 3) has been added to the official project list; this is the Developing the Young Workforce project recently launched by CCoC. TM confirmed funding from NDA and Scottish Government for this long-term, North Highland region project. BOWL is one example of an opportunity for which young people can be trained in the area. The main challenges include timetabling, transport, and work experience. ES commented that, now that it is on the project list, updates will be available, enabling the group to contribute, and there are clear KPIs.

- The project list currently has quite a few ambers, reflecting the complexity of the challenge faced by Project Owners. But partners continue to discuss sharing of resources to support delivery.
- A Community Council has agreed to help progress the Community Sports Hub by assisting with the planning application; a public drop-in session is being held on 6 October.
- A discussion was held regarding the objection to the Berriedale Braes project. Transport Scotland are responsible for moving this forward and it is hoped that a resolution may yet be reached before going to the (time- and money-consuming) process of public enquiry.
 - **ACTION: ES** to follow up with Transport Scotland
- SB updated the group on the Inverness City-Region Deal, stating that funding is also focused on sizeable population centres outwith Inverness. It is possible that some funding connected to the Commonwealth Games Legacy Project may be available to support the Sports Hub in Thurso. He also intends to highlight the required high-water protection gate at Wick harbour as a significant regional opportunity at a meeting on 7 October. It is not expected that a decision will be reached, however, before spring 2016.

4b. INWARD INVESTMENT – PROGRESS REPORT

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

- While the O&G sector continues to face uncertainties, she and RK have been maintaining key relationships with businesses/industry in Aberdeen and London.
- The Communications Plan has progressed a great deal and she expects it to be finalised in coming month. She is revisiting existing brochures/literature for potential update and is focusing on what key messages may arise that will be best suitable for 'selling' the Partnership.
- Two major projects have been in focus: One is related to the Wick Harbour/Offshore project and the other, while still confidential, is moving along and will hopefully be made public following confirmation of some data to be available at the end of October.
- Members of the group raised some concerns about progress with some projects (particularly the Accommodation Study, Talent Attraction, and Business & Industrial Land) being delayed. DSRL funding for the coming years may also be affected by this.
 - **ACTION: RK** to update at next CNSRP meeting.

4c. COMMUNICATIONS – PROGRESS REPORT

ES referred the group to the distributed list of CNSRP media coverage. 'Milestones' being extracted from project plans and reported upon in media is ongoing. It is also possible for some stories to 'join up' to fit a wider context.

JL and DSRL have prepared several posters, designed to encapsulate some of the key messages under the headings of General, Skills, Energy, and Infrastructure. Figures have been checked but the group was asked to examine these following the meeting and use post-it notes to leave comments, suggestions or corrections. The plan is for these to be displayed in certain key, public areas which have been identified. There will also be electronic versions for ES to use in public presentations. A list of proposed places/times for display is yet to be finalised; once it is complete:

- **ACTION: JL** to distribute list.

DF pointed out that some 'negative' messages, e.g. relating to NHS, aren't coming from CNSRP but from NHS themselves. JL pointed out that this relates to TM's comments regarding the Talent Attraction study being of high priority. ES commented that he had a meeting with the Health Minister, among others, and she expects the NHS to build its own talent as well and not simply rely on local organisations to do it for them. TM offered an example of some proposed NHS nurse training to be held in the Western Isles themselves to increase the skills pool in that area, maybe something similar can be done with C&S.

6. MEMBER UPDATES

Written updates were distributed to the group in advance of the meeting. The following points were discussed further at the meeting:

Crown Estate

JR mentioned a 'slow-burn' programme that has recently launched in which seabed rights can be applied for by small-scale operations.

DSRL

KN reported that they continue to work with procurement colleagues. They have recently taken on 15 graduates from the local area.

DSG

DF mentioned the recent Nuclear Archive launch event that went well; he also mentioned that a company called Crimson has committed to creating an office base for staff in Caithness. Due to a Government Corporate Spending Review, NDA funding could potentially be cut by as much as 40%. More will be known after 25 November.

The Highland Council

SB confirmed that the new Wick premises will be in use from mid October. They are also consulting on onshore wind energy guidance. ES confirmed ESF funding.

Scrabster Harbour Trust

Sandy Mackie discussed plans for service hub for O&G; Phase 1 has been completed; other aspects subject to some review due to changes since the original 'vision' was planned in 2008. It is likely that the budgets will be reduced and public support will be required. The Trust's AGM is being held on 2 October, at which he will report their record revenues for 2014/15, which has been a successful year. They need strong cash-flows to service the existing debt of £5m, which is quite an amount for a small organisation to have taken on for the region. O&G developments at Scrabster are encouraging; July was a record month for the Harbour. They are also active on social media and are working with Denvir Marketing to help deliver 'good news'. The main boost has been due to increased activity in the West of Shetland. There are also 9 confirmed and 1 provisional booking for cruises into Scrabster next year, a total of approximately 6,000

passengers. S Black discussed collaborative work that has been undertaken between the Ranger Service and the cruise ships coming into Invergordon, in terms of creating organised opportunities for passengers to experience walking, wildlife etc. in the area; he suggested something similar could be done with Scrabster and Caithness.

- **ACTION: Stuart Black / Sandy Mackie**

Thurso & Wick Trades Council

Trade unions are watching progress as UK Government approaches its spending review. Considerable implications for Dounreay and wider Caithness economy if 40% budget savings are implemented across UK Departments. Trades Council contacting Paul Monaghan MP to ensure visibility of this. TM highlighted imminent meeting with Dr Monaghan.

Skills Development Scotland

RB confirmed that they have appointed Seonag Campbell as Regional Skills Planning Lead. will be in touch soon. This appointment will also have relevance to the Talent Attraction study. Scottish Government has released new “participation” measures which alter the way in which data on school leavers etc. is reported. Information is only broken down as far as Local Authority level; however, 91% of 16- to 19-year-olds are classified as participating in work or further education. Of the 8.4% not engaged, some of these are simply unconfirmed. The week commencing 16 November is focused on promoting apprenticeships etc. and SDS and local employers will be visiting schools directly.

Scottish Natural Heritage

IM referred to the Flows to Future project, which has a local contract for the new centre. There has been much positive feedback regarding the new viewing tower at Forsinard. He also mentioned an upcoming Interpretative Contract; three-quarters of involved sites fall within our area.

HIAL

WS confirmed that the hangar doors have been re-clad and it is making a huge difference. They are currently looking for parties interested in advertising on the space. The concrete has been poured for the new apron so that project is underway. He also confirmed that they have some new, local staff recruits; some are about to begin and some are in training. WS confirmed that the new MP had accepted his invitation to view Wick-JOG airport and was very interested in their story. The airport is also involved with the BOWL project. The satellite-based navigation procedures have been submitted for approval; it is hoped that these will be approved soon. The HIAL magazine has changed its name to Connect, and its first two issues have featured Caithness stories.

Cavendish Nuclear

SM reported on some personnel changes that had taken place recently. He also wished to reinforce comments regarding the importance and urgency of several HIE-led projects mentioned previously (as well as the A9/Berriedale development and NHC), as they link into the DSRL budget.

7. AOB

Cllr GR brought up the recent issue regarding the announcement that Stagecoach will be cancelling some services due to low demand. There has been some negative press which she will address publicly. The group discussed the need to highlight to Stagecoach the adverse effects this will have upon the Caithness community (particularly elderly and disabled who depend on bus services for transport to Raigmore Hospital) and to ensure that future services are not also cut simply because of a failed bid for a public sector tender. CCoC are conducting a survey to gain more details from the community regarding when and for what purposes the route is utilised.

SB reported that they are receiving positive feedback about NorthCoast500. Visit Scotland say that 650 million people are aware of due to online marketing, social media etc. It was also featured in the United Airlines in-flight magazine, which reaches approximately 22 million people. ES commented that this was discussed at CNSRP Delivery Group recently, particularly with a view to increasing understanding and involvement among local businesses (product development).

It was agreed that a short press summary of the meeting would be issued, and that it would focus in particular on the presentation by Wick Harbour Authority; and on the launch of the Caithness Chamber “Developing the Young Workforce” initiative.

- o **ACTION: ES to draft and circulate a press summary**

Date of Next Meeting: December (date to be confirmed, ES will issue an Outlook invitation)

Summary of actions:

	Action	Lead	Due	Status
1	Present on SDS at next meeting	RB	Next Meeting	
2	Increase of press activity to be discussed (column, Chair meeting press, sub-meeting, etc.)	ES	Next meeting	
3	Follow up Berriedale status with Transport Scotland	ES	Next meeting	
4	Update on key studies linked to Programme	RK	Next meeting	
5	Circulate distribution list for posters	JL	Asap	
6	Discuss HC Rangers involvement in Cruise ships	SB/ S Mackie	Next meeting	
7	Draft & circulate a press summary of meeting	ES	28/09	