

**CAITHNESS & NORTH SUTHERLAND REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP
(CNSRP) – EXECUTIVE BOARD**

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD
10th September 2009, Mackay's Hotel, Wick**

Present: Sir Anthony Cleaver (Chair)
Greg Allan, Scottish Government (GA)
Charlotte Wright, HIE (CW)
Stuart Black, Highland Council (SB)
Anna MacConnell, NDA (AM)

In Attendance: Roy Kirk, HIE (RK)
Ian Hargrave, THC (IH)
Eann Sinclair, CNSRP (ES)
Fiona Macpherson, CNSRP (FM)

1 Apologies:

Alistair Dodds, THC; Randall Bargelt, NDA; Sandy Cumming, HIE

2 Matters Arising:

HMRC: Sir Anthony passed on contact details for Paul King of HMRC to Fiona Macpherson. FM to make contact with Paul King to raise awareness of opportunities to make greater use of the Wick resource. **ACTION 1 – FM.**

Fusion: IH said this was ongoing within Highland Council, but that a briefing paper would help. ES said that DSRL had drafted a paper, and he would ask for it to be passed on to Highland Council when he met Ken Nicol of DSRL. **ACTION 2 – ES.** GA and RK also agreed to speak to Jim Mather about his views when he was in Caithness on 14th September. **ACTION 3 – RK and GA.**

HIAL: RK reported that HIAL Chief Executive is currently looking at Wick Airport as a whole, and is in discussions with both HIE and the NDA regarding funding. It was suggested that Scottish Government would have considerable influence on HIAL's ability to take forward plans, and RK and GA agreed to seek Jim Mather's view on this when he visited Caithness on 14th Sept. **ACTION 4 – RK and GA.**

John O' Groats: RK outlined progress. The Masterplan for John O' Groats was being launched today, with a public meeting during the day and a meeting with the Community Council at night. The plan will have 4 phases, which may enable Phase 1 to go ahead even in the current financial climate. There remained some land ownership issues to address, but Phase 1 would include developments around the current hotel facility. The Chairman said he had been approached by Clarence House re the John O' Groats proposals. RK offered to draw up a briefing note for the Chairman before he met with Clarence House representatives. **ACTION 5 – RK**

3 Issues arising from 7th September Advisory Board meeting

Pentland Firth issues: This had been raised by Chamber of Commerce representatives concerned at the perceived lack of progress, and fears that the area would lose out to sites in Ross-shire and Orkney. The Chairman reported that he had spoken to Jim

Mather re: the current structure of the Pentland Firth project. GA reported that the Minister would visit Caithness on 14th September following his Sutherland Summit visit. He will meet with Dounreay TU representatives and HIE. The Chairman asked if CNSRP would be involved in this. RK felt this would be possible. The Chairman asked if it would be useful for CNSRP Executive Board to write to the Pentland Firth project coordination committee to help move on with project delivery. It was agreed that the Partnership could play a key role in helping agree delivery solutions.

ACTION 6 – ES to draft letter to coordination committee. RK noted that the coordination committee continues to work on issues, and highlighted the forthcoming ports & harbours study due in October. SB felt that the issues for the project had parallels with those at Nigg. He outlined the Council's joint approach to this with HIE, via a Masterplan that brought together all partners with Ministerial involvement. It was agreed that an overall masterplan for the PF project was crucial, and could attract Ministerial involvement to launch the delivery of key actions. CW agreed to discuss this idea with HIE colleagues. **ACTION 7 – CW.**

4 Programme Manager Update

ES highlighted changes to the format of the Action plan since the last Snapshot, including the colour coding of individual actions and the inclusion of key progress as a narrative at the start of the document. The Advisory Board meeting had broadly endorsed this approach. SB commented that it would be useful to have some form of investment barometer or jobs tally issued either with or in parallel to the Snapshot.

ACTION 8 – ES

GA noted that the Scottish Government keeps a weekly jobs monitor, and offered to pass this on for information. **ACTION 9 - GA**

ES also said that UKAEA's offer of additional support with programming of the planned actions had been accepted, and ES had met with UKAEA's Andrew Hindle to commence this work. A joint CNSRP/ HIE/ HC/ DSRL/ NDA workshop would be held on 5th October to discuss the immediate outputs of this work.

ES said that a draft version of the area Vision document would be circulated for discussion at the Caithness Conference on 1st October in Wick. The breakout sessions of the Conference would focus on refining the vision statements under the themes of energy; engineering; tourism food & drink; enterprise & innovation; enabling activities. ES, with considerable help from AM, had successfully applied to the NDA for £30,000 to deliver final document and web content based on these themes.

The Conference will have an update session from CNSRP, at which ES will present on progress to date. The Crown Estate will also give a presentation on progress with the Round 1 leasing competition for the Pentland Firth. As per last year's event this will be followed by a question & answer session with the CNSRP Executive Board. Keynote speaker Jim Murphy MP will follow on from this. GA felt that Scottish Ministers would need to be given more notice if they were to attend any event next year. ES agreed to raise this at the conference wash-up meeting to be held in late October/ early November. **ACTION 10 – ES**

ES has started work on the CNSRP presentation, and will circulate to members as soon as possible. SB suggested the inclusion of a small number of projects that best represented joint agency action. **ACTION 11 – ES** to circulate draft presentation.

5 Inward Investment Update

FM updated on recent work. This included discussions with an IT company relocating to Caithness from Aberdeen. Initially bringing 3 jobs but with the potential to grow, and a range of contracts with large oil & gas companies. Also continuing work with marine developers, trying to better understand individual development needs. It was agreed that without early understanding of these needs the industry's potential impact on the local economy could be severely constrained.

Work also continued with Atlantis Resources Corp. to take forward the Data Centre proposal associated with tidal devices. FM welcomed the announcement that consultancy firm Partrac were to set up an office at Forss Business & Technology Park, with the express intention of capitalising on marine energy opportunities. Several immediate jobs are likely to be created here.

A tourism accommodation study is underway, looking at the potential for budget chain hotel provision in Caithness, and assessing the impact such provision might have on the industry.

A revised draft of the Inward Investment Marketing Plan has been produced, and electronic copies will be circulated to members for comment. FM has also set up monthly meetings with Scottish Development International to ensure that the local area is deriving maximum benefit from the international SDI network.

6 Economic Situation

CW raised the potential impact of Government spending plans for the coming years.

Date of next meeting:

15th December 2009, Meeting Room, Wick Airport.

Actions List:

Ref	Action	Due Date	Responsible Person
1	Make contact with Paul King, HMRC	28 th October	FM
2	Pass on "capture plan" for IFMIF to Highland Council	25 th September	ES
3	Discuss IFMIF with Jim Mather	14 th September	GA/ RK
4	Discuss Wick Airport/ HIAL with Jim Mather	14 th September	GA/RK
5	Draw up brief on John O'Groats for Sir Anthony	25 th September	RK
6	Draft letter to PF Coordination	7 th October	ES

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7	Discuss PF Masterplan approach	7 th October	CW
8	Include investment barometer/ job count with future Snapshots	December	ES
9	Pass on weekly jobs barometer format to ES	25 th September	GA
10	Raise diary issue for future conferences	Next Conference Group meeting	ES
11	Circulate draft Conference presentation	24 th September	ES