

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

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 15th DECEMBER 2009 AT WICK AIRPORT

Present: Sir Anthony Cleaver (Chair)
Alistair Dodds, THC (AD)
Randall Bargelt, NDA (RB) *present for items 1-4 only*
Greg Allan, Scottish Government (GA)
Charlotte Wright (in place of Sandy Cumming) (CW)

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

1. Apologies

Sandy Cumming. He hopes to attend the next meeting in March.

2. Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting of 15th December 2009 were approved.

HMRC – FM spoke to Peter Wolfenson, they will not be considering opening any call centres in next 9months-2 years. Suggest review annually.

IFMIF – HIE will respond next week to Scottish Government's request for further info on waste output. If Scottish Government respond positively HIE will put a plan in place with Highland Council.

Nuclear Medicine – Explore support from medical community.

- **ACTION (1) Chair** contact John Savrille, ask him to contact RK.
- **ACTION (2) GA** pass name of Chief Medical Officer to RK.

Wick Airport – Under pressure, no increased budget. Presently suggests that even if the set-up costs could be covered, running costs may still prevent progress.

- **ACTION (3) GA** to ask Martin McCloskey to contact RK.

John O' Groats Masterplan – Chair took brief to Clarence House where it was well received.

Future snapshots barometer – Was not in snapshot 9, but will include in snapshot 10. Scottish Government have a template and facts and figures collated for Highlands and Islands which may not be detailed enough for this purpose.

- **ACTION (4) GA** to get colleague to pass template to RK.

Caithness Conference – Due to various changes throughout next year such as sea bed leases being awarded, Dounreay competition conclusion and changes at Nigg there is an opportunity to revamp the Caithness Conference, perhaps develop into a ‘Pentland Firth conference’ while still fulfilling the existing intentions of the Caithness Conference. There will be a number of new companies with an interest in the area who may attend.

- **ACTION (5) RK/ES/RB** discuss strategy.
- **ACTION (6) ES** secure meeting date with John Thurso.

3. Issues from 27th November Advisory Board

The Advisory Board received a presentation from Babcock and National Nuclear Archive.

- The DSG rep raised concerns about rate of progress with the Pentland Firth Project. A draft Pentland Firth route map has been prepared and can be passed to advisory board as soon as partners have agreed to it. There will hopefully be a press story pre Christmas.
- Advisory board has agreed to take on the role of advisory board for the Pentland Firth Project which should assist in community engagement.
 - **ACTION (7) ES** Establish which group in Orkney would be equivalent to the CNSRP Advisory Board to ensure joint working remains.
- CNSRP now has an independent communications resource 3 days per month. First story will be Advisory Boards new role in Pentland Firth Project, three other stories in pipeline. ES is managing the contract.

4. Programme Manager Update

Feedback from Jim Murphy after his attendance at the Caithness Conference was that he was impressed by how joined up the area is. This is an image that partners have worked to create and are pleased to have succeeded.

John O’ Groats masterplan was well received by agencies and community but met some scepticism. HIE are in discussion with a potential investor. First phase should include private investment and public works. HIE and HC have been working together.

Caithness Engineering have taken a big step since initial discussions at the Caithness Conference and now have the website live (www.caithnessengineering.com). They plan to produce a capability statement for potential investors and the marine industry.

Vision document – small steering group are liaising on text which will be final by first week in December in order to be ready for Dounreay Industry day.

Programme has been prepared to encapsulate all ongoing works, timescales and resources. Have now received CE and HIE programmes and tourism data which is to be added and should be circulated in draft next week to board. The original Action Plan was to cover 2007-2010 so perhaps this newly created programme will be implemented as part of 2010 onwards plan.

- **ACTION (8) ES** circulate pdf of programme to board

Telecoms Connectivity group progress – Recent announcement that 6 exchanges in the area will receive an upgrade. Access to FarIce cable may be easier than first thought. Pilot is planned with one local company to create business case.

Consideration has been given to co-locating the CNSRP staff into an office with one of the partner organisations as part of a cost saving. At present the most likely option would be co-location with HIE.

- **ACTION (9) ES** to look at logistics of co-location.

5. Pentland Firth Route Map

Draft route map circulated last week. will be a moving document and will continue to come back to CNSRP board for comment. Calum Davidson could be invited to provide update on HIE's other energy work including Pentland Firth progress. Work is being out by an independent consultant on jobs estimates. Suggestion to add extra column for outcome and responsible person.

- **ACTION (10) CW** to request Calum attend next meeting and make suggested alterations.

6. Inward Investment Update

Fiona Macpherson gave a verbal update:

- Recent attendance at Tidal Today conference shared with SDI. Various follow-ups. Particular interest in office space, engineering alliance, vessel availability, harbour info.
- Shortly to commission hi-energy study to investigate hi-energy users and their likelihood to establish a base in the area.
- Escape Technology have established a network operations centre in T3UK, moved in 1st Dec, currently 3 staff, possibility to increase.
- Early stage inquiry from bio-mass investor looking for further information.
- Atlantis are very interested in the ongoing connectivity works.
- Tourism accommodation study has been received in draft and includes various positive suggestions which will be followed up.

7. Economic Situation

Business gateway figures show no dip in business start ups.

Chamber have noticed some issues with existing business performance particularly decreased level of investment, most likely due to difficulty getting credit from banks. Highlands and Islands continue to fare better than Scotland however future public sector cuts could have serious effects.

Unemployment in Wick continues to increase, however still on par with Scotland figures. There is currently little engagement between CNSRP and Job Centre Plus.

- **ACTION (11) GA** provide details for right level contact within Job Centre Plus to Eann.

8. Any other business

- This will be Greg Allan's final meeting as he is moving on to Marine Scotland. The board wished to convey thanks for all his support and hopes his successor will prove as committed.
- Highland Council procurement scoring policy has been altered to treat large and small firms with equal merit. This was in response to John Thurso and the Chamber representing the views of their members.
- The quality of tenders from local firms was questioned. Highland Council put on procurement roadshows which were poorly attended in the Caithness area.
- Berridale feasibility study funding package is being revised and resubmitted to NDA for consideration.
- STEM funding package is being revised and resubmitted to NDA for consideration.
- Tourism accommodation study has been received in draft and includes various positive suggestions which will be followed up.
- North Highland Connections have sent a brief which was prepared for the Culture Minister to the board for information.
- New communications contract opens opportunity to take stock of achievements so far eg industry changing announcements in grid, round 1 sea bed leasing.
- National nuclear archive – presentation to NDA from architect last week.
- CNSRP to be used as model for other area with effects of decommissioning. They may be invited to CNSRP executive board in the future.

Summary of Actions

Ref:	Action:	Due Date:	Responsible Person:
1	Contact John Savrille, ask him to contact Roy Kirk re establishing whether there would be medical community support for nuclear medicine.	ASAP	Sir Anthony Cleaver
2	Pass name of Chief Medical Officer to Roy Kirk re establishing whether there would be medical community support for nuclear medicine.	ASAP	Greg Allan
3	Ask Martin McCloskey to contact Roy Kirk re Wick Airport	ASAP	Greg Allan
4	Get colleague to pass template to Roy Kirk on investment barometer/job count.	ASAP	Greg Allan
5	Discuss strategy for future Caithness Conference.	ASAP	Roy Kirk Eann Sinclair Randall Bargelt

6	Secure meeting date with John Thurso to discuss Caithness Conference.	ASAP	Eann Sinclair
7	Establish which group in Orkney would be equivalent to the CNSRP Advisory Board to ensure joint working remains on the Pentland Firth community engagement.	Next board meeting	Eann Sinclair
9	Circulate pdf of programme to board	23 rd Dec 09	Eann Sinclair
10	Look at logistics of staff co-location.	23 rd Dec 09	Eann Sinclair
11	Request Calum Davidson attend next meeting and make suggested alterations to Pentland Firth road map.	ASAP	Charlotte Wright
12	Pass details for right level contact within Job Centre Plus to Eann.	ASAP	Greg Allan