

Caithness & North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership

Executive Board meeting, Highland Council, Inverness 10th December 2013

Present: Sir Anthony Cleaver (Chair)
Anthony Standing, SDS (AS)
Alex Paterson, HIE (AP)
Stuart Black, Highland Council (SB)

Apologies: Roger Hardy, DSRL
Steve Barron, Highland Council
Nigel Lowe, NDA
Karen Jackson, Scottish Government

In Attendance: Eann Sinclair, CNSRP (ES)

1 Welcome

2 Previous Minutes/ Matters Arising

Previous minutes (16/09/13) agreed.

Annual Review

ES circulated copies of final Review document, which had been circulated via local press, and via CVS North in north Sutherland.

Wick JOG Airport

ES reported that an options study on hangar infrastructure was being tendered, with financial support from HIAL and HIE. The most recent condition report on the existing Highland Council owned hangar will form an important part of this assessment. The Study is expected to report by the end of March 2014.

3 Issues from Advisory Board meeting, 3rd December

Broadband

Advisory Board members discussed the roll-out of superfast broadband in the north, and had expressed some concerns about the pace of rollout to Caithness/ north Sutherland, and in particular to areas outwith the two main centres of population. It was agreed to issue a positive public message on the likely availability of superfast broadband in early 2015 for Wick and Thurso, and to express support for additional work to ensure wider coverage for areas outwith these two centres. Executive Board members agreed the value of issuing a joint press statement on behalf of the two boards, to reflect concerns raised and plans to address these concerns.

ACTION 1 – ES to work on press statement covering broadband discussions.

Marketing

Members had discussed this issue, and agreed that HIE was best placed to lead the attraction of new businesses. The development of marketing material which helped enhance community confidence in the area and its assets was also discussed, and it was agreed that there were opportunities for other CNSRP partners to support delivery. Executive Board members agreed that this was a sensible way forward.

ACTION 2 – ES to coordinate overall marketing messages and accountabilities to support delivery.

4 Programme Manager Update

Quarterly review

ES highlighted progress since previous meeting.

Members had previously felt that an assessment of jobs created/ retained would benefit from a parallel assessment of jobs lost. ES shared current informal estimates on jobs lost over the period of the Partnership's existence, in the wider context of progress with targets. It was agreed that future updates would carry this parallel assessment. The main source of new and retained jobs continued to be existing

company growth a new business starts. It was agreed that the increased resource on inward investment activity should continue, and that whilst progress in energy sector was very encouraging further work would be done on finance & business services. ES agreed to coordinate a meeting where Executive Board members from HIE and Highland Council could focus on key opportunities in this sector in relation to the north.

ACTION 3 – ES to coordinate meeting to discuss inward investment opportunities in finance & business services.

Priority projects

Scrabster harbour: the Harbour Trust is due to submit planning application for the Enterprise Area site. This will include a new access road.

Wick Harbour: a learning visit to an SSE offshore wind operations base took place. Scottish Government decisions on the applications from BOWL and MORL are awaited.

Skills: partners met to discuss priorities. General approach has been through three strands: existing workforce development/ transition; future workforce (schools and college work); new talent attraction. AS mentioned the Skills Investment Plan for Highland, and AP highlighted the potential for business/ academic collaboration. ES agreed to discuss workforce transition parallels in Moray. It was also agreed that a precis of skills issues should be produced for discussion.

ACTION 4 – ES to discuss workforce transition lessons with D. Oxley, HIE Moray.

ACTION 5 – ES to coordinate short summary of skills issues for circulation.

CNSRP 2014-17

ES outlined the revisions to jobs projections for the 2011-14 period as contained in Paper 4. These were agreed. It was agreed that further work should be done to detail enabling activities, and to quantify financial resources required to deliver these. ES agreed to work with partners to agree a revised paper for the Executive Board's March 2014 meeting.

ACTION 6 – ES to work with partners on revised enabling actions paper.

6 Any other business

ES said that the first meeting of 2014 would be in March. Confirmation of this would be circulated as soon as possible.

Summary of Actions

	Action:	Due Date:	Responsible:
1	work on press statement covering broadband discussions	17/12/13	ES
2	coordinate overall marketing messages and accountabilities to support delivery	Next meeting	ES
3	coordinate meeting to discuss inward investment opportunities in finance & business services	31/01/14	ES
4	discuss workforce transition lessons with D. Oxley, HIE Moray	31/01/14	ES
5	coordinate short summary of skills issues for circulation	Next meeting	ES
6	work with partners on revised enabling actions paper	Next meeting	ES