

New Nuvia offices in Thurso



Nuvia, one of the biggest contractors on site at Dounreay, has made a welcome move towards establishing itself in Caithness beyond the eventual closure of the plant.



Sir Anthony Cleaver

Its new office space in Thurso was officially opened by Regeneration Partnership Chairman **Sir Anthony Cleaver**, who welcomed the positive message being sent out to staff and the wider community by relocating the company's base outwith the nuclear site boundary.

Learn more at:
www.nuvia.co.uk

Caithness & North Sutherland REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP

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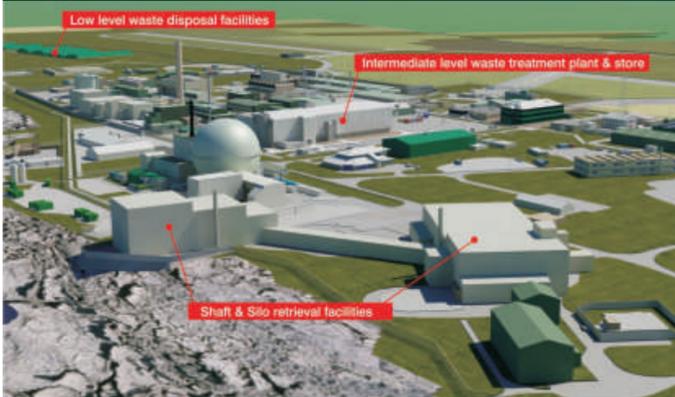


Caithness businesses at All-Energy 09



A number of Caithness businesses attended the international energy conference and exhibition in Aberdeen in May. Caithness Chamber of Commerce's stand at the exhibition drew much interest, as did stands from the Environmental Research Institute, the Pentland Firth Project and several local engineering companies.

Dounreay construction projects



Three of the biggest construction projects ever undertaken by the nuclear industry in Scotland are set to boost the local construction sector

– and signal the final large decommissioning projects on the Dounreay site. The major construction programme is the centrepiece of the work that remains to be done to complete the closure of the site.

"These facilities are the lynchpin of our site closure programme," explained Brad Smith, site project manager at Dounreay Site Restoration Ltd.

The three facilities will process and manage up to 200,000 tonnes of radioactive waste from the clean-out and dismantling of the redundant plant.

These are:

- A series of shallow vaults adjacent to the site for the disposal of low-level radioactive waste
- A treatment plant and store to condition the more hazardous intermediate-level waste.
- A retrieval and processing plant to take waste from the

underground shaft and silo and get it into a form that is safe for future generations.

DSRL says it is working closely with HIE and other partners to get the maximum benefit to the local economy from this work. In March, 100 different companies attended a seminar at Thurso organised by DSRL to outline the opportunities for work. Tendering for two of the jobs is due to take place by March next year, with contracts awarded a few months later.

While the construction opportunities are good news for local workers and the economy, it underlines how much the site closure programme has accelerated in recent years.

"The three projects will be among the largest ever undertaken in support of nuclear decommissioning in the UK and are key to completing the clean-up and closure of the site," added Brad Smith.

"The successful delivery of these projects for the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority is an opportunity for the industry to demonstrate performance that is world-class and for DSRL to fulfil its ambition of becoming the most successful site licence company in the UK."

Caithness & North Sutherland REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP



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North Highland College developments boost economy

Caithness continues to strengthen its growing reputation as the hub of the global marine energy industry with the recent announcement of a multi-million-pound investment package in North Highland College UHI.

The funding injection – totalling £14 million – will be ploughed into creating new state-of-the-art training and research facilities at the North Highland College's Thurso campus. And it is hoped this will lead to long-term benefits in terms of jobs and other economic spin-offs.

First Minister **Alex Salmond** believes the move, which will see two new centres and a major research project established at the college over the next three years, will help consolidate the country as the European leader in clean, green energy.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) and the Highland Council have teamed up through the



Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership (CNSRP) to co-ordinate the initiative which is targeted at developing new skills and expertise in the green-energy sector.

Mr Salmond said: "The Pentland Firth, Scotland's Saudi Arabia of tidal power, has been opened up for development in clean, green energy. The interest, the capacity and the opportunity in these waters is vast. Already, the Crown Estate has been approached by 42 developers to put wave and tidal test devices into the

Pentland Firth.

"The Scottish Government is happy to support this £14m investment to develop new training and research facilities at the North Highland College UHI in Thurso. It is imperative that we continue to support the development of skills, research and infrastructure to ensure we exploit Scotland's full potential in renewable energy and help, building on our strengths, to support a strong economic recovery. This project will significantly strengthen

Scotland's well-established reputation as the European leader in clean, green energy."

The development is expected to yield long-term benefits for the Far North to help counter the rundown of Dounreay, and play a crucial role in ensuring the area gets maximum benefit from the drive to harness the massive energy reserves in the Pentland Firth.

Learn more at:
<http://www.johnogroat-journal.co.uk/news/fullstory.php/aid/6765/>

T3UK launches training centre

At a recent launch evening Janetstown-based commercial training provider, t3UK, set out their stall with the latest developments in their already broad-based commercial and industrial training catalogue.

The well-attended event was given an introduction outlining the current activities at the t3UK campus, including an overview of facilities and capabilities of the site. T3UK is an engineering trials, training and testing campus servicing the nuclear, offshore and marine renewable energy markets.

The Janetstown site includes the main Trials Hall and a large wet/dry test shaft plus extensive classroom, lecture and conference facilities.

The main purpose of the launch evening was to bring the local business community up to date with developments at t3UK regarding an increased range of training programmes to better suit client requirements from shop-floor to senior management. Typical examples were given of the engineering trials and testing activities carried out in the main trials hall and the support capability of owner-operator JGC engineering and technical services.

T3UK Commercial Manager, **Hugh Mackay**, outlined the company's four areas of training and professional development -

Health and Safety, Industrial Training, Management and Office, and Specialist and Leisure programmes.

Detailed presentations were delivered by **Martin Smith** of TTS and **Rob Murray** of ITP Solutions, both of whom offer specialised training programmes in their respective fields in partnership with t3UK. Martin explained TTS philosophy towards technical competence and realistic industrial training, whilst Rob outlined the ITP e-portfolio assessment toolkit for management and supervisory qualifications.

The theme throughout was of consultation with industry to identify training needs, flexibility in course content, delivery and assessment and of co-operation with specialist providers to ensure the best possible training outcome.

T3UK are committed to training delivery that is tailored to the client's needs and business model, either in the classroom, by workplace competence assessment, distance, or online learning, or indeed a mixture of all to suit the client and candidate.



Learn more at:
www.t3uk.co.uk

Farr Woodcraft

Farr Woodcraft from Farr High School competed against 16 other teams from around Scotland to take the top prize.

They were also awarded first place for their business presentation and runners-up prize for their business report.



Young Enterprise Scotland held their Company Programme Finals event in Glasgow, and for the second year in a row the Award of "Best Company" in Scotland went to a Highland-based team.

The team manufacture and sell Adirondack chairs to a design created by their Company Secretary **Lorna Stewart**. They also ran a night class to teach local adults how to make their own chairs and footstools. Last night the chairs (and the team) were the talk of the evening and we were all delighted and proud when they were announced as winners.

Farr will now travel to London to compete against other regional winners from around the UK.

Farr Woodcraft was initiated as part of the Young Enterprise Scotland Company Programme – a scheme which has been running in Highland for over 20 years and allows young people to experience real business and work-related learning through setting up and running their own real company for a year. Students are given the opportunity to develop leadership, management, teamwork and communication skills whilst working in their company teams. They develop attitudes for enterprise such as problem solving, decision making, innovation and commitment.

The company comprises eight students from Farr High School, who are mentored by their teacher **David Charnley** and business adviser **Paul Lewis** from the Ben Loyal Hotel in Tongue. The group set out originally to manufacture Adirondack chairs – originating on the east coast of America around 1903, designed by **Harry Bunnel**. As part of her S4 Craft

and Design project the Company Secretary, Lorna Stewart, adapted the original extravagant design (requiring large quantities of wood) to one that was easier and lower in cost to produce.

The original chairs offered by the company were made in pine and available with or without preservative coating. From here the team developed a matching footstool, made chairs and footstools from red cedar, and ran a night class for the local community to learn how to make their own chairs. Sales have been strong, with some chairs sold as 'flat pack' and shipped as far as Bristol.

All schools in Highland and Moray who take up the YES scheme are supported by the Highland Area Board of YES, a group of volunteers from business and education, who organise training events, a trade fair at Christmas, and the awards evening at which Farr Woodcraft this year took the top prize. The company will now go on to represent our area in the Scottish final in Glasgow, where they will compete against 16 other teams from around Scotland. This is a great achievement for the company, and for the school who are running a Young Enterprise team for the first time.

Melness community wind energy project

The community of Melness and Tongue on the North coast of Sutherland has now reached an advanced stage in the development of a 2.7MW community-owned wind farm.

Planning permission and grid capacity were secured for the project in 2008 after many years of dedicated hard work by the local community, as well as substantial financial and technical support from Community Energy Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Highland Council, Big Lottery, the Scotland Rural Development Programme and the Scottish Government.

The Melness and Tongue Community Development Trust now aims to commence

construction in 2011, with substantial community benefits to accrue by 2014.

Over the years, Melness and Tongue has suffered from a high out-migration of its young people, particularly because of a lack of local social and economic opportunities. The MCWEP therefore aims to deliver a range of important new local regeneration projects, including a new three-phase electrical infrastructure across the Kyle of Tongue, the redevelopment of Talmine Pier, a new sports and recreational facility, and local energy efficiency measures throughout the community.

The Trust aims to generate



substantial profits from the wind farm for at least 20 years to ensure the delivery of a regeneration programme, as well as to establish a sustainable

community enterprise for the longer term. Overall, the Trust aims to retain and create up to 20 local jobs in the next five years.

SGURR Energy

Following a successful Recruitment Day which was part funded by HIE, SgurrEnergy is now gearing up for an expansion drive at their new office in Scrabster Harbour, adding to their global network of offices which currently includes the US (Boston), China (Beijing), Canada (Vancouver), India (Pune) France (Paris) and Ireland (Wexford).

The office is headed up by Caithness-based energy engineer **Richard Hunt** and focuses on wind, biomass, wave and tidal energy systems where SgurrEnergy offer full project life cycle services from feasibility studies and site search right through project design, implementation and operations and maintenance advice.

Annemarie Monteforte, Head of Business Development at HIE area office said: "HIE's support in funding the Recruitment Day provided SgurrEnergy with the confidence to create a permanent base in the North of Scotland and in the knowledge that the public sector recognises the importance of attracting new business to Caithness."

Richard Hunt has more than 16 years experience in the conventional and renewable energy sectors added 'Our recruitment day was a success, we had a steady flow of interested candidates throughout the day. We attracted a mix of skills some entry level and some very experienced engineers. We went on to shortlist and interview eight of these candidates and have since offered three jobs, one full time position and two part time engineering roles. We are confident we will capitalise on the green energy focus in the Highlands and hope to reach a complement of six engineering staff within the next 12 months possibly more depending on contract wins in the region.'

He said: "SgurrEnergy expects to see an increasing demand for our expertise to service the rapidly expanding renewable sector in the Highlands and Islands in the coming months. It therefore made perfect sense to expand and create a permanent base in the North of Scotland.

"The new Highlands office has plans for expansion and is currently seeking both mechanical and electrical engineers preferably with experience in the energy sector.

"SgurrEnergy's decision to open its Scrabster office was based on the location benefitting from close proximity to a number of wind, wave and tidal developments and excellent transport links to Orkney,



Inverness and further afield."

"We have already capitalised on our location by winning work in the marine and wind sectors, most notably survey work, resource measurement and site selection for large and established utilities and wave and tidal generators. SgurrEnergy has identified a number of significant renewable energy opportunities in the Scottish Highlands."

NDA's £120,000 boost for Caithness businesses

The NDA has awarded the Caithness Chamber of Commerce £120,000 to boost business development in Caithness and North Sutherland.

The funding, which will be administered over three years, will be used to support the Chamber of Commerce's work in raising the profile of businesses in Caithness.

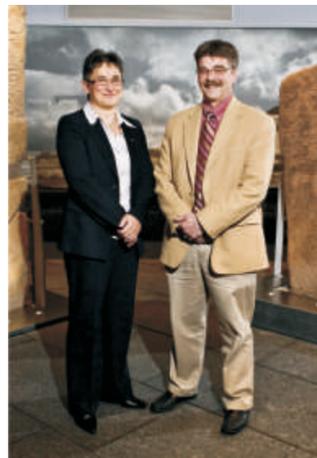
The Chamber of Commerce was recently awarded £150,000 funding from Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) to appoint a Chief Executive with the aim of supporting the business sector to focus on reducing the community's dependence on Dounreay.

With site closure scheduled for 2025 and jobs decreasing as this date draws closer, it is vital that the community in Caithness continue to work towards a sustainable future.

The NDA, a member of the Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership, is fully committed to supporting this transition and has already committed to spend over £10 million on various projects throughout the community, including the North Highland Regeneration Fund, Caithness Horizons, Wick Harbour and the National Nuclear Archive.

This latest award to the Chamber of Commerce will fund one full-time post to support the Chamber's Chief Executive. The post will be responsible for promoting and operating a marketing programme for local business and working with the Chief Executive on a range of programmes and events to support the business community.

Caithness Chamber of Commerce Chief Executive, **Trudy Morris**, said: "This award is great news for Caithness. A vibrant Chamber will have a significant positive impact on businesses throughout Caithness. It will not only help to safeguard existing jobs and help create new jobs for Dounreay workers, but will also be key in attracting new businesses to the area."



Annemarie Monteforte, Head of Business Development at HIE said "It is great to see NDA's funding support match the funding already awarded by HIE in September 2008. This funding package will enable the Chamber to drive forward their aspirations and plans for the next three years and beyond. To date, the Chamber has successfully attracted over 70 members; held 8 events and developed a user friendly web site with up to date news/events and forums."

Randall Bargelt, the NDA's Regional Director, said: "Although the safe decommissioning of Dounreay is our main priority, we are very aware of the impact this will have on the local community. We are working hard to minimise this impact through the identification and support of projects which we believe will have a long-lasting impact. The Chamber of Commerce is an excellent example of this, and we look forward to partnering with all interested groups to take forward the Caithness and North Sutherland Partnership initiatives."

The NDA has officially handed over a cheque for £40,000 to the Chamber of Commerce and the additional £80,000 will be disbursed over the following two years.

Learn more at: www.caithnesschamber.com

Thurso-based Pensions Administration Office contract extended

The NDA has awarded the UKAEA Pensions Administration Office (PAO) an extension on its contract to manage the Combined Nuclear Pension Plan (CNPP).

This was done following a recommendation from the scheme Trustee. The NDA's Chief Financial Officer, **William Roberts**, made the announcement following a CNPP meeting in Thurso in June.

The UKAEA PAO was initially awarded the contract to manage the CNPP - an industry wide scheme - following a competitive bidding process in 2006. The CNPP was developed to ensure that existing nuclear sector employees were not adversely affected by the NDA's competition process and their subsequent transfer to a Parent Body Organisation (PBO) pension scheme.

Since being awarded the CNPP contract the office, based in Brownhill Road in Thurso, has successfully completed the transfer of over 11,000 employees to the scheme.

The NDA's Chief Financial Officer, **William Roberts**, said: "The NDA is committed to supporting the Caithness and North Sutherland area to develop a diverse economy - particularly as the Dounreay closure date draws nearer.

"The extension of this contract for a further two years will enable the PAO to continue to grow - and as it does so this will bring more jobs and opportunities to the area."

UKAEA's Head of Pensions, **Richard Stoneham**, said: "PAO is a vibrant, dynamic, growing business in Caithness. We value our existing client base and are therefore delighted that the NDA has recognised the quality of our service and commitment in administering the Combined Nuclear Pension Plan by choosing to extend the existing contract. We look forward to continuing to work with them into the future."

Engineering skills group

The Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership has brought together a group of engineering skills representatives to discuss the future provision of education and learning opportunities in the area.

The group has heard how HIE and The Highland Council are working together on ambitious plans to help local schools enhance teaching and learning in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects.

Eann Sinclair, the Partnership's Programme Manager, said "If we are to fully capitalise on some of the opportunities in emerging fields such as renewable energy then we need to plan for the needs of future workplaces. Working through the Curriculum for Excellence we hope that the

plans from HIE and the Highland Council will allow pupils increased opportunities to learn, with greater access to industry representatives through the local network of STEM ambassadors."



Learn more at: www.cnsrp.org.uk/downloads

Thurso High School wins Scottish Greenpower Race

The Greenpower challenge is for pupil teams to build and race an electric car.

The 5 Thurso electric cars managed an amazing combined total distance of 317.5 miles, with Team Roadrunner's car managing 76.25 miles to take first place.

Five of the top eight teams in the race were from Thurso, with the winners going on to compete in the UK final at Goodwood later in 2009.

Learn more at: www.greenpower.co.uk

Teams from Thurso High School came home with top prize from the Scottish heat of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers' "Greenpower Race" in June.



Wick marina opens for business

Wick Harbour's new marina had a very successful launch with the staging of Wick Harbourfest 09 in late June. Three days of activities in hot summer weather drew large crowds who saw the marina full of local and visiting yachts.

HarbourFest Chairman **Gordon Doull** declared himself delighted with the new marina:

"Visiting vessels arriving for Harbourfest were amazed and impressed when they came in and found our new haven. Many skippers commented on the quality and the space to manoeuvre and said "we'll be

back". A few stayed an extra night or two and new ones arriving are now saying, for example "oh yes, we heard about this on Orkney". So it's all good business for us and more so for Wick because of all the crew spend ashore on food, stores, fuel, etc. Already it's looking like a very good investment."



New homes for Thomas Telford town

Derelict buildings in an area of Wick designed by the famous engineer and architect Thomas Telford are to be turned into new homes.

Dumfries-shire born **Telford** laid out **Pulteneytown** in the 1800s. It includes what **Pulteneytown Townscape Heritage Initiative** say was the world's first industrial estate.

The Highland Council has approved £297,836 of funding towards the £1.5m project to build 11 properties. The Scottish Government is also contributing funds. Highland Housing Alliance is heading up the redevelopment. The local authority's funding is being provided under Historic Scotland's Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme grants programme.

Government support is coming out of its vacant and derelict land fund.

Ian Ross, chairman of Highland Council's planning, environment and development committee, said the project would bring back into use a derelict and vacant lot set out by Telford in the early 19th Century.

He added: "By restoring an important historical area of Wick we are not only maintaining its distinct identity and making improvements for the people who live, shop and work there but the redevelopment will also provide a welcome boost to the local construction industry and support new tourism opportunities, linked with Wick Harbour."

Local councillor **Bill Fernie** said: "This is great news for Wick as it will help keep the momentum up of the redevelopment of the Pulteneytown area. I am particularly pleased that it will give a boost to the construction industry locally."

Town centre regeneration

Moves to help Wick and Thurso town centres survive recessionary times are continuing despite a funding disappointment.

Both towns saw bids made on their behalf by Highland Council to a £60 million Town Centre Regeneration Fund set up by the Scottish Government. Whilst neither bid was successful in the first round of the scheme Highland Council is considering submitting revised bids to round two.

At a recent Chamber of Commerce event on town centre regeneration, local traders were urged to view the bids as the first step in a concerted drive to regenerate the two centres. The guest speaker at the breakfast event was **Andy Kennedy** of the

Association of Town centre Managers.

Following the event Thurso Community Council, working with the Chamber of Commerce and the Regeneration Partnership, brought local traders together to discuss the potential to encourage shoppers into the town centre with late night opening. As a result the traders are running a series of late opening nights on Thursdays during the summer. Discussions also continue with Highland Council officials regarding funding opportunities for town centre work.



EnergyHunt Ltd – Richard Hunt

A local company has announced the purchase of a new vessel to service contracts in the developing marine energy industry in the Pentland Firth.

EnergyHunt Ltd is a specialist marine fishing and renewable engineering company. It specialises in providing a marine working platform through to full marine surveys as well as general access, safety and logistical services.

The MV "Sealg Brigh" is a working fishing boat (WK197) and a MCA coded workboat to category 3 (MCA Cat3) with maximum crew of 4, allowing

sailing to 20 miles offshore, 24 hours in favourable weather. She is normally moored at Harrow Harbour on the Pentland Firth but has a bespoke trailer allowing rapid retrieval and launch from any suitable slipway.

Skipper **Richard Hunt** is an experienced and qualified workboat skipper, diver and engineer.

2009 Scotland Food and Drink Awards

The winners of the Scottish food "Oscars" were announced at a presentation ceremony and dinner in Glasgow in May attended by Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment **Mr Richard Lochhead** and more than 300 leading figures from the food and drink industry.

Two companies from the north were celebrating success after the ceremony. Cocoa Mountain from Durness was the people's choice for the award for Food Tourism (sponsored by VisitScotland). This category was voted for by viewers of STV, and led to an appearance on STV's "5.30 Show". Also celebrating was Caithness business Berry Good, whose "Vodka Infused with Scottish Berries" won in the Best Drink category.

produce, and in Homecoming Year what better time to be spreading the message that Scotland truly is a land of food and drink.

"We will shortly unveil the next stages of Scotland's first-ever National Food and Drink Policy. It will aim to boost business, put even more Scottish food on consumers' plates and deliver major health and environmental benefits."

Learn more at:
www.berry-good.co.uk
www.cocoamountain.co.uk
www.scotlandfoodanddrink.org

Mr Lochhead said: "These awards are a welcome opportunity to showcase our world-class, mouthwatering



The Crown Estate

Following the deadline for pre-qualified companies seeking leases for wave and tidal energy projects in the Pentland Firth strategic area, The Crown Estate has announced the bidders and applications for the world's first large scale commercial wave and tidal energy leasing round.

- The Crown Estate received a total of 42 applications from 20 bidders for wave and tidal energy leases
- These applications range from 10 MW demonstration sites all the way up to the highest band of 200-300 MW commercial sites
- Applications have been received from organisations ranging from small developers through to multi-national energy companies

The Crown Estate is working in close partnership with Scottish Government and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), supported by strong executive and stakeholder groups. The partners remain committed to successful wave and tidal device deployment enabling generation of over 700 MW of renewable power from the Pentland Firth strategic area by 2020. The Crown Estate will use option fees paid by developers and an equivalent investment from its own funds in order to de-risk and accelerate the development of tidal and wave energy projects in the area.

The strong response to the competitive tender demonstrates a real drive to develop this industry and create a strong marine energy sector in the UK. However, this is heavily dependent on implementing solutions to a number of issues including: grid, consenting processes, supply chain and economic support for the projects.

First Minister of Scotland **Alex Salmond** said: "The Scottish Government is delighted with the level of applications received by The Crown Estate for the development of marine renewables in the Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters.



The Solon™ turbine, owned and developed by Atlantis Resources Corporation is shown here being deployed for an extensive set of tow tests. Atlantis is collaborating with Statkraft, Europe's largest renewable energy generator, to deliver a commercial project utilizing the latest version of the Solon™ technology, in the Pentland Firth.

Projects Director for Atlantis, **Dan Pearson** commented "Atlantis considers the Pentland Firth as currently the world's most attractive area to develop tidal current energy projects. The Pentland Firth tidal resource, the pro-active approaches made by the Scottish Government and The Crown Estate, combined with the strong and relevant skills base in the region, provides technology developers such as Atlantis, and project owners such as Statkraft with a fantastic opportunity to help contribute to Scotland's renewable energy targets in its aim to fight global warming."

"The Scottish government will be working closely with The Crown Estate to support the development of marine energy" . . .

"I am delighted that The Crown Estate has received a total of 42 applications from 20 bidders for wave and tidal energy leases for the Pentland Firth. The Scottish Government will be working closely with The Crown Estate to support the development of marine energy, to ensure we capitalise on our rich natural resources and to make Scotland a world leader in renewables."

Welcoming the investment made to date by organisations in detailed planning and application process for wave and tidal energy leases in the Pentland Firth strategic area, **Rob Hastings**, Director of the Marine Estate at The Crown Estate, said: "The Crown Estate is delighted to

support the growth of the wave and tidal energy industry in the UK, aiming to ensure that we are at the forefront of marine energy generation.

"Our match funding of option fees demonstrate both The Crown Estate's and the developers' commitment to realising the potential of wave and tidal energy in the Pentland Firth strategic area. The Crown Estate believes that targeted investment now will help reassure stakeholders whilst reducing development timescales."

Sandy Cumming, Chief Executive of HIE said: "The level of developer interest in the Pentland Firth confirms both the

potential of these waters and the confidence that companies have in the industry's development. HIE is committed to working with partners to develop marine energy generation and to securing the significant economic benefits it offers the Highlands and Islands."

A detailed and confidential evaluation process of the bids will now be carried out by The Crown Estate to identify those bids that demonstrate the capabilities and commitment necessary to safely deploy wave or tidal energy devices in the Pentland Firth strategic area. Throughout the summer negotiations with prospective developers will commence, prior to awarding agreements for lease.

Learn more at:
www.thecrownestate.co.uk/our_portfolio/marine/wave-tidal.htm