

**CAITHNESS & NORTH SUTHERLAND  
REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP (CNSRP)**

**MINUTES OF ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
16<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2011  
t3|UK, JANETSTOWN**

**Present:**

Cllr Ian Ross - (Chair)  
Cllr David Flear  
Cllr Gail Ross  
Cllr George Farlow  
John Green, Caithness Partnership  
Steven Sutherland, Caithness Chamber of Commerce  
Simon Middlemas, DSRL  
Derrick Milnes, Thurso and Wick Trades Union Council  
June Love, DSRL  
Gordon Jenkins, North Highland College  
Neil Robertson, Caithness Chamber of Commerce  
Frances Gunn, Federation of N&W Sutherland Community Councils  
Fiona McNab, Skills Development Scotland  
Anna MacConnell, NDA  
Nicola Dreaves, Caithness Chamber of Commerce  
Ronnie Johnson, Dounreay Stakeholder Group

**In attendance:**

Marcus Mennie, Caithness Chamber of Commerce (item 3 only)  
Simon Coles, Inward Investment Manager, HIE  
Eann Sinclair, Programme Manager, CNSRP  
David Sutherland, Ward Manager, THC  
Stuart Black, Director of Planning and Development, THC  
Eilidh Gunn, CNSRP (Minutes)

**1 Welcome and Apologies**

It was agreed that Cllr I. Ross would chair the meeting in the absence of Cllr AS Park. The chairman welcomed members to the meeting of the Advisory Board and asked members to briefly introduce themselves.

Apologies were received from Cllr AS Park, Billy Manson (Assoc of Caithness CC's), Lesley Cranna (SNH), Willie Watt (WHA), Roy Kirk (HIE), Ian Carse (SDS), Trudy Morris (CCoC), Sandy Mackie (SHT).

**2 Previous Minutes**

Agreed as true copy with one amendment. All previous actions were either complete or covered on the Agenda.

### 3 “Make the Right Connections” programme

M Mennie provided an update on the three year Make the Right Connections programme. Key research components have been identified, synergies between Make the Right Connections and other projects such as John O’Groats and Town Centre projects have been identified, 65 companies are on the training database. Training and upskilling has already commenced. A copy of the presentation has been made available to members.

### 4 Programme Manager Update

Eann Sinclair had previously circulated a programme update and mentioned a few other points:

- Liz Galashan, Operations Manager, SDS will shortly be joining the CNSRP Executive Board.
- The Executive Board is seeking a meeting with Fergus Ewing MSP, Minister of Energy, Enterprise and Tourism. Will also be seeking broader ministerial contact - for example with Transport Minister.
- Sir Anthony has written to the Olympic committee regarding the inclusion of John O’Groats on the Olympic torch journey. Highland Council is also helping with this request.

Update on John O’Groats development – A new proposal on the public realm project has been received from the developer. D Sutherland will feed back at next meeting.

S. Middlemas confirmed that work has begun on Phase 1 of the Scrabster harbour development.

A study has been commissioned by HITRANS to examine the area’s “internal” roads infrastructure, with particular reference to the energy sector.

Scottish Government are committed to four Enterprise Zones, information is expected on the selection process. Noted that Cllr Ross could assist in liaising with Rob Gibson MSP.

Members requested that the Programme Manager feed back to the Delivery Group and Executive Board that a delivery programme should be finalised and published.

#### **ACTION 1 - ES**

A letter has been received from HIE detailing the £12 million commitment which was well received by members. Members asked how the impact of this was being measured. ES said that a study into the Socio Economic Impact of Dounreay decommissioning would also look at the impact of partner activities since the previous impact study in 2006. He agreed to circulate results of this when available. **ACTION 2 - ES**

“Lessons learned” from the development of the funding package for the Scrabster Harbour project had been discussed at the Executive Board in May, and one of the key decisions was to move to a more pro-active identification of priority projects that would require funding. E Sinclair would be taking a paper on this subject to the

Executive Board meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> September. He agreed to feed back to members following that meeting. **ACTION 3 - ES**

D Sutherland commented that various projects such as school builds and work at Scrabster will be providing a boost of approximately £77 million for the area's economy, with opportunities for the construction sector.

## **5 Inward Investment**

S Coles provided a brief update on Inward Investment.

The *Caithness & North Sutherland Inward Investment Marketing Plan* is available on-line at <http://www.cnsrp.org.uk/files/downloads/download1905.pdf> and feedback is welcomed as another update is planned for January. **ACTION 4 – ALL MEMBERS**

HIE are working on a schedule of contact for the potential leads generated by the series of inward investment mini-tenders undertaken.

Caithness Ambassadors have provided one lead so far and HIE will look to the ambassadors to make contact with leads where appropriate.

HIE will link with the successful PBO once the competition process has been concluded in order to understand the likely labour profile for the site, and may work with the unsuccessful PBO regarding investment.

It was noted that the Berriedale Braes are still a hindrance to development, both PBOs have brought up that Berriedale is a pinch point.

J Love said that SDI staff have a visit planned to the area, and DSG members will have an opportunity to meet them and hear their inward investment plans for the north.

## **6 Member Updates**

Highland Council – Business Gateway figures for 2011/12 so far: Sutherland; 9 start ups, 5 supported, 2 passed to HIE for potential account management; Caithness; 3 start ups and 19 supported. Cllr G Farlow said he was supportive of the devolution of the powers of the Crown Estate Commissioners.

SDS – Get Ready for Work scheme and Targeted Pathways are both progressing.

North Highland College – New classrooms at the Engineering, Technology & Energy Centre will be ready for use in September, still require heavy machinery delivery which is expected for October. Approx 400 students enrolled for coming year, still space for more apprentices. Have had 10.3% funding cuts and have reduced staff costs by £1.2 million, further budget reductions are expected.

Federation of N&W Sutherland Community Councils – Broadband in North Sutherland is patchy which is affecting business expansion. With price of fuel businesses need to make better use of V/C, which is hindered by poor broadband.

Caithness Chamber of Commerce – Currently recruiting two town centre development managers. Chamber Dinner is organised for September with Rt Hon Danny Alexander MP as the keynote speaker. Operational review of Chamber's activities due to take place in September.

Caithness Partnership – AGM will be held in November. Six new buses have been arranged for the X99 route (Caithness-Inverness). Still lobbying along with Highland Council for implementation of £2.3 million scheme at Berriedale. Network Rail have no business case for North Highland line but if funding was provided they'd be happy to carry out improvements.

DSRL – Have met with key staff at Culham regarding opportunities in the Fusion energy sector, and will continue looking into this alongside HIE. Preferred bidder for the Dounreay PBO competition is expected to be announced in late November, with the successful bidder taking over in April 2012.

DSG – Plans to meet with SDI on 1<sup>st</sup> September to discuss inward investment. Site competition update will be available 23<sup>rd</sup> Aug. R Johnson and Cllr D Flear will be attending a Highland Health Board meeting to discuss threat of Dunbar closure. Request from Board members to feed back on this meeting. **ACTION 5 - DF.**

Thurso and Wick Trades Union Council – Note to thank the people who were involved in the HRMC result. However, this campaign will continue, and partners will be asked to support ongoing work.

NDA – Nigel Lowe is due to start in September as the new Head of Programme for Dounreay, replacing Randall Bargelt.

## **7 AOB**

Response from Crown Estate on vacant Wave and Tidal post which would be beneficial to remain in Caithness, or be replaced with similar post. **ACTION 6 - JL** to circulate copy of letter. The Pentland Firth Co-ordination Committee might be the most appropriate vehicle to discuss this with Crown Estate.

The Pentland Firth Co-ordination Committee minutes have not been received in some time. **ACTION 7 - ES** to discuss.

### **Summary of Actions:**

<b>Ref:</b>	<b>Action:</b>	<b>Responsible Person:</b>	<b>Due Date:</b>
1	Discuss need for published delivery plan at Executive Board meeting	ES	02/09/11
2	Circulate information from Socio-economic	ES	30/09/11

	impact study on Dounreay Decommissioning		
3	Feed back on project-level prioritisation discussion	ES	Next meeting
4	Feedback on Inward Investment Marketing Plan	ALL	30/09/11
5	Feed back on NHS Highland meeting	DF	Next meeting
6	Circulate reply from Crown Estate	JL	02/09/11
7	Confirm flow of information from PFOW Coordination Cttee	ES	Next meeting