

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

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD 30<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2008 AT TOLLEMACHE  
HOUSE, THURSO**

**Present:** Sir Anthony Cleaver (Chair)  
Alistair Dodds, THC  
Randall Bargelt, NDA  
Sandy Cumming, HIE  
Greg Allan, Scottish Government

**In Attendance:** Roy Kirk, HIE  
Ian Hargrave, THC  
Eann Sinclair, CNSRP  
Fiona Macpherson, HIE  
Charlotte Wright, HIE  
Eilidh Gunn, CNSRP (minutes)

**Apologies:** There were no apologies

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**2. Presentation on North Highland Tourism – Ian Richards**

Ian Richards, director of North Highland Tourism (NHT) had been invited to present to the board.

NHT is the tourism leg of North Highland Initiative which is staffed by volunteers. It covers Caithness, Sutherland and Ross-shire and currently has 167 members.

He gave an informative presentation which covered their targets, objectives and trends. There are around 800 businesses that would be eligible to join NHT. He outlined their marketing tools, development plans and issues. The development plan makes use of information received during the learning journey earlier this year.

Ian Richards will send a copy of the development plan to board members for comment and consideration and will update in time for the December board meeting.

**3. Minute of Executive board Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

The minutes of the meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> June 08 were approved.

**4. Matters Arising**

Tidal Energy Projects costs – was covered at the recent Pentland Firth board meeting and will be reviewed at the next meeting. The Pentland Firth project is also undergoing a gateway review which will be discussed at a future

meeting. The issue of resource for the Pentland Firth project was also discussed. **ACTION** Roy and Charlotte to produce a plan of budget and resource. The idea of an account management team for the device developers was also raised.

Feb 2008 Report on Berriedale Braes – not to be pursued at Council level at the moment as the strategic transport announcement is due in November. **ACTION** carried forward – THC to feed back to board.

Wick Tax Office – Sir Anthony has now spoken to the Chairman and received a polite hearing, with no promise of a change of heart from HMRC. However HMRC will be seeking sites to set up larger specialist centres and THC has sent a letter suggesting a site in Caithness might be suitable to them. Roy Kirk reported that HIE has replied to the consultation in similar vein.

## **5. Membership of Advisory Board**

There had been some controversy over advisory board membership, and this issue was being addressed. Further members (eg. Chamber of Commerce, Trades Council, Skills Development Scotland, press) should be invited shortly to allow full attendance at the December meeting. **ACTION** Roy Kirk will follow up with the Caithness Chamber of Commerce in time for reps to attend the December meeting. **ACTION** Eann to contact Liz Galashan of SDS.

## **6. Membership of Executive Board**

A suggestion has come from the public that a local person and an elected representative should be on the executive.

It was agreed that the membership of the executive board was designed to be representative of the highest level of executive staff in the partner bodies. Elected representatives were present on the Advisory Board, which guided the overall “direction of travel” for the Plan. If the board membership was to be increased it would be to include other funding organisations. For example the skills remit of public bodies have has changed since the board was first set up. Skills Development Scotland (SDS) now exists to carry out a range of skills functions, and it needs to be fully engaged as training is likely to be a large component of the Plan’s high priority projects. **ACTION** Alasdair and Sandy to contact Damien at SDS.

## **7. Update from Programme Manager – Action Plan snapshot 4**

Eann outlined the content of Snapshot 4 of the Plan, circulated to members of both the Executive Board and the Advisory Board. It was noted that the high priority actions have no specific mention of skills, though skills are being taken forward by UHI plans and NDA plans.

It was queried whether the transport items could be grouped together.

It was queried whether telecom improvements were covered in the action plan. Sandy Cumming suggested that Brendan Dick of BT could be invited to discuss options for telecoms/ connectivity improvements. This might tie in with possible BT plans to further their home shoring plans.

Any comments on snapshot 4 should be circulated to Eann.

## **8. Update from Inward Investment Executive**

Fiona MacPherson has been in post for a week and is already aware of many exciting opportunities. She intends to utilise her SDI contacts as well as working on contacts already established.

## **9. Press and PR**

There has been a lot of good press lately, including the publication of the first of the newsletters which was very well received.

A comment that came from the conference was that we do not make enough of the smaller good news stories so perhaps this could be taken into account for the next newsletter. This will also be allowed for on [www.cnsrp.org.uk](http://www.cnsrp.org.uk) which should soon go “live”. THC has a capital plan which covers the next 3-4 years and includes Caithness activities, so these could be included. **ACTION** All partners to feed stories to Eann. It was queried whether the action plan should have “assisting small projects”.

Another comment from the conference was that the figure of 200 jobs created since September 2007 could in fact be an underestimate.

There was a suggestion of a media visit for specialist journalists showing both sides of the Pentland Firth.

## **10. Any other business**

Marketing – Randall Bargelt raised the ongoing issue of communications and marketing, and suggested that in order to achieve maximum impact the partners might consider employing a member of staff to focus upon marketing issues.

Branding – Discussion took place on creating a recognised brand for the area to incorporate all partners and other relevant organisations such as NHI.

It was noted at the conference that the word ‘regeneration’ gives a suggestion to investors that the area is in poor state. There is no obvious short hand for CNSRP so possibly a name will need to be put forward in the way that TriDEC was used for the Regeneration efforts in the Tri-Cities area of Washington State. However it was noted that the important thing to focus on is the achievements not the name.

**Date of next meetings** – Next meeting will be Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2008, at 10.30am in T3UK, Janetstown, Thurso.

Sir Anthony and Eann will discuss dates for 2009 and circulate to check members’ availabilities.

### Summary of Actions

Action	Due Date	Responsible Person
Produce a plan of budget and resource for PF project.	asap	Roy and Charlotte
Follow up with Caithness Chamber in time for them to attend the Advisory Board meeting in December.	asap	Roy
Contact Liz Galashan at SDS.	asap	Eann
Contact Damien at SDS.	asap	Alistair and Sandy
All partners to feed good news stories.	asap	All