

CNSRP Executive Board
Pentland Hotel, Thurso, Friday 22nd June 2018

Present:

Sir A Cleaver, Stuart Black (Highland Council), Bill Hamilton (NDA), Simon Middlemas (CDP), Trudy Morris (Caithness Chamber of Commerce), Stephen Sheridan (SDS), Eann Sinclair (CNSRP), Cathy Souter (CNSRP – minutes), Charlotte Wright (HIE)

Apologies:

Steve Barron (THC), Seonag Campbell (SDS), Catriona Maclean (Scottish Government).

Observing:

W.J. (Ian) Ross

Welcome and Introduction:

The Chair welcomed Ian Ross (WJR) to the meeting as an observer. Ian has been appointed as the successor to Sir Anthony as Independent Chair, and will take up post after this meeting. He thanked members and other partners for their good wishes since being appointed, and looked forward to continuing the important work the Partnership has undertaken under Sir Anthony's leadership.

The Chair thanked members for their support over the past ten years as the Partnership has developed into a widely-respected exemplar of partnership working, and wished Ian Ross every success in his tenure as Independent Chair.

Matters from CNSRP Advisory Board

Skills Investment Plan: SS updated members. Ekos consultants had developed an overall report for Caithness and North Sutherland, however the action plan element was not fit for purpose.

Additional discussions have focused on a short additional piece of work, to be commissioned by SDS.

Conflicts of Interest: Scrabster Harbour trust had questioned the potential for conflicts of interest to arise when a CNSRP member was also potentially and project promoter (the example used being the development of the UKVL project). SM said that a similar type of query had been brought up by the NDA member of the Dounreay Socio-economic Board (DSEB). However when asked to go into detail at the DSEB it proved difficult to pinpoint a specific example. Dounreay MD Phil Craig has subsequently sought advice on the issue, and SM asked BH if NDA had any specific concerns over CNSRP-related conflicts of interest? BH said that NDA has no current concerns over this and that he would discuss further with A. MacConnell. The Chair summarised that partners had robust existing policies on conflicts of interest, and asked BH to update members again at the next meeting. **ACTION** – BH to update at next meeting.

Programme manager update

NC500

The NC500 Working Group is discussing the key priorities in helping the area economy to respond to the opportunity presented by the marketing success of the route. On a local level this will provide fresh impetus for a project.

Offshore Wind

BOWL construction phase is progressing well, and as the O&M phase moves closer so the economic benefits from supply chain opportunities become clearer. Key discussions with SSE on O&M plans, and with key Tier 1s such as Siemens. MORL O&M base has been identified as Fraserburgh, but members agreed that opportunities still exist for economic benefit for Wick in particular.

Oil & Gas

Scrabster Harbour Trust is taking forward its next phase of infrastructure development, building on west of Shetland oil & gas potential, as well as possible renewables and cruise market opportunities. In parallel, work continues with SHT and the oil & gas industry to position Scrabster as a west of Shetland forward supply base location.

Business Services & Nuclear Services.

Sykes @ Home, a global business outsourcing company, has been attracted to the area and has begun recruiting for up to 100 homeworkers in Caithness and Sutherland.

Nuclear services – discussions continue on business models that will encourage the establishment of long-term nuclear services businesses in Caithness. SM agreed, saying discussions were progressing within CDP Board before involving regulators etc.

UKVL

UK Space Agency announcements on this expected at the Farnborough International Air Show in July. SM and JSB both attending. show.

A9 Berriedale

Transport Scotland now in competitive dialogue with four potential contractors for this work, which is expected to commence in Autumn 2018.

AOB

NH College UHI – Thurso campus

ES – has recently been speaking to the Principal at NHC-UHI, which is updating its ambitious project to redesign and enhance the Thurso campus. There is an opportunity to work with the parallel NHS Redesign programme in Caithness, which may include the development of a “Health Hub” at the neighbouring Dunbar hospital site in Thurso. SS agreed the potential for NHC-UHI to be an even greater economic contributor. More information will be given to the CNSRP Delivery Group as plans come together.

Newton Room

TM expressed frustration at the very slow pace of progress with the development of a Newton Room at NHC-UHI, and the related loss of stakeholder engagement with local private sector companies. CW agreed to speak to colleagues to find out more, and ES agreed to follow up with Donald MacBeath, Principal at NHC. **ACTION CW & ES** to discuss.

Summary of Actions:

	Action:	Due Date:	Lead
1	Update on Conflicts of Interest discussion within NDA	Next meeting	BH
2	Discuss progress on Newton Room at NHC-UHI	ASAP	CW/ ES