



## Programme Manager Update

Nov/ Dec 2012

This update incorporates reports from a range of partners involved in delivering elements of the *Caithness & north Sutherland Action Plan*. It is hoped that by condensing multiple reports into one paper the information will be disseminated more efficiently amongst the various groups such as the CNSRP Advisory Board, Executive Board and the Dounreay Stakeholders' Group.

### **Key Issues and highlights:**

- Between Apr-Dec 2012 thirty local companies had projected the creation of 73 jobs and the retention of 14 jobs. Of these jobs, 27 were in the energy sector.
- NDA has confirmed that the national Nuclear Archive project will progress to next stage, with commercial partner being appointed in 2013 and the facility expected to be operational by 2016.
- Passenger and air traffic movements at Wick JOG airport have been boosted by the arrangement with Chevron UK to use the airport to transfer oil workers offshore.

## Caithness & North Sutherland Action Plan 2011-14

The key priorities identified for 2011-14 are to:

- Work with existing area businesses in the energy and business services sectors to help them diversify and grow their businesses.
- Encourage new business starts in the energy and business services sectors
- Deliver a targeted programme of inward investment activity focused on energy and business services-related opportunities.
- Support the delivery of key enabling infrastructure such as ports and harbours, road, rail and air transport, skills transition and digital connectivity.

### Key to “traffic light” reporting system:

Each text entry will have a colour-coded box. This will indicate the status of the project’s delivery, and will indicate the responsible owner for the activity. The box will be colour-coded as follows:

	<b>Activity is on schedule to be delivered.</b>
	<b>Activity has been delayed, or is taking longer to complete than originally expected.</b>
	<b>Activity has not happened, or is in danger of not happening.</b>

### **Progress with High-priority activities**

#### **Energy and Business Services - existing company growth**

<b>Support growth aspirations for companies in energy sector</b>	<b>HIE</b>
--	------------

HIE is currently working with 5 energy sector and 3 business services sector companies on an “account-managed” basis.

<b>Support non-account managed company growth</b>	<b>NHRF/BG</b>
---	----------------

One new business support in the energy sector, and Business Gateway continues to report interest in start-ups.

<b>Energy and Business Services - inward investment</b>	<b>HIE/SDI</b>
---	----------------

Several firm leads currently being taken forward in the energy sector. One lead currently being taken forward in the business services sector.

<b>Biomass</b>	<b>Newpark</b>
----------------	----------------

No further progress on Caithness Biomass project.

<b>Biomass</b>	<b>Ignis Energy</b>
----------------	---------------------

Ignis Energy has taken over ownership of the combined heat and power scheme in Wick, with an investment plan currently being implemented.

<b>Fusion</b>	<b>HIE</b>
---------------	------------

Further discussion between HIE and representatives from Culham on medium term

---

opportunities.

<b>Enabling Activities</b>
----------------------------

<b>Scrabster Harbour</b>	SHT
--------------------------	-----

Scrabster Harbour Phase 1 development now completed.

<b>Wick Harbour development</b>	WHA
---------------------------------	-----

WHA continues to have positive discussions with developers regarding Wick's potential role in offshore wind in the Moray Firth. Both Moray Offshore Renewables and Beatrice Offshore Windfarm have now submitted plans to Scottish Government, with decisions expected during 2013.

<b>Invest Caithness</b>	CCoC
-------------------------	------

Attended Nuclear Decommissioning Supply-chain event in Bolton.

<b>Supply Chain Diversification</b>	CCoC
-------------------------------------	------

<b>Enterprise Area/ Marine Energy Park</b>	HIE
--	-----

Enterprise Area designation for Scrabster farm site became active on 1<sup>st</sup> April. Marine Energy Park launched in Thurso in July by UK Energy Minister Greg Barker MP. Discussions between HIE and SHT on options.

<b>Marine Energy "Onshore Vision" action plan</b>	THC
---	-----

Business & Industrial Land Audit is now complete, and a "call for sites" has been carried out. Council officials have begun working with Scrabster Harbour Trust and Wick Harbour Authority to develop Masterplans for each area. Community "charrettes" to be held in Thurso and Wick in February 2013 to support this planning process.

<b>Superfast broadband to key parts of C&amp;NS</b>	HIE
---	-----

Procurement of programme should be concluded by January. Scottish Government has announced £120 million funding for the programme. Digital engagement programme for businesses and communities launched in October through HIE and Business Gateway. Thurso exchange upgraded to ADSL2+ in November.

<b>Electricity Grid enhancements</b>	SSE
--------------------------------------	-----

SSE has announced a Partnership Agreement with UHI to enhance skills locally.

<b>Skills Development</b>
---------------------------

<b>Engineering Technology &amp; Energy Centre</b>	NHC-UHI
---	---------

Dounreay apprentice training team have relocated into the ETEC building, and first intake of students has begun training. ETEC Stakeholder Group being revised in January 2013 to support the ongoing development of the facility.

<b>Centre for Energy &amp; the Environment</b>	NHC-UHI
--	---------

CfEE officially opened by First Minister Alex Salmond MSP in August. Major conference on the Peatlands of Caithness & Sutherland took place in Thurso in October 2102.

<b>Make The Right Connections</b>	CCoC
-----------------------------------	------

Good progress being made, with around 450 beneficiaries having accessed the programme.

<b>Employment/ Employability</b>	CCoC
----------------------------------	------

Multi-partner event focusing on future jobs to take place in ETEC facility on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2013.

<b>Schools STEM Programme</b>	THC
-------------------------------	-----

Pupils from Wick and Farr High Schools attended the Information Day held in Thurso on Wave and Tidal energy on 28 November 2012.

---

<b>Innovation Challenge</b>	CCoC
Competition winner Rachel Skene was announced by John Swinney MSP at Caithness Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner in September.	

<b>Young Chamber programme</b>	CCoC
No news to report.	

<b>Transport - Roads</b>	
<b>A9 Road safety study – Berriedale</b>	THC/TS

Caithness Chamber has taken on the activities of the Caithness Transport Forum and Bus Users' Group, with funding support from DSRL and the Highland Council. The Transport Forum has written to Transport Scotland, John Swinney MSP and Keith Brown MSP to request that the project can benefit from additional funding for "shovel ready" projects.

<b>Caithness "internal" transport infrastructure study</b>	THC/HITRANS
Study now complete and recommendations being considered by Council TECS team.	

<b>Transport - Rail</b>	
<b>Caithness freight railhead</b>	DSRL/DRS

Construction work at Georgemas is complete. Access issues for commercial traffic being addressed by NDA/ DRS and Transport Scotland.

<b>Transport - air</b>	
<b>Support Enhanced infrastructure in &amp; around Wick Airport</b>	HIAL

Re-branding of the airport as "Wick-John O'Groats" now in place. EuropeCar facility now launched. Passenger and air traffic movements have increased significantly following short-term arrangement with Chevron UK to fly oil workers into Wick JOG airport and transfer them to rigs via helicopter.

### Progress with other priority activities

<b>Tourism - existing company growth</b>	
<b>Support growth aspirations for companies in Tourism sector</b>	HIE
HIE is currently working with 5 companies on an "account-managed" basis.	

<b>Support non-account managed company growth</b>	NHRF/BG
CNSRP Programme manager will take on administration of the group advising HIE on its Ambitious for Tourism programme.	

<b>F&amp;D - existing company growth</b>	
<b>Support growth aspirations for companies in F&amp;D sector</b>	HIE
HIE is currently working with 2 companies on an "account-managed" basis.	

<b>Support non-account managed company growth</b>	NHRF/BG
No new business start-ups in the food & drink sector.	

<b>Other Sectors - existing company growth</b>	
<b>Support account-managed company growth</b>	

<b>Support non-account managed company growth</b>	NHRF/BG
Sixteen new business start-ups in "local market" sector to date in 2012/13.	

<b>Other sectors - Enabling activities</b>	
<b>John O Groats development</b>	

---

Progress continues to be good with the Natural Retreats development. Accommodation lodges are open, and were in use by visitors over Christmas and new year period.

#### National Nuclear Archive

NDA Board has confirmed the NNA project is progressing to its next phase, with the facility being operated on NDA's behalf by a specialist commercial partner, bringing more than 20 sustainable jobs to the area economy. As well as containing nuclear records from across Britain, the NDA is working with The Highland Council to ensure that the NNA will also provide a new, publicly-accessible home for the Council's North Highland Archive. The NDA's current plans are that a commercial partner will be appointed by mid-2013 and the facility will be operational in early 2016.

#### Town Centre development programme

The programme came to an end in December 2012 with a retail training course attended by a number of local businesses. Chamber seeking extension until February 2013 to allow additional training to take place. Local retail groups in both Wick and Thurso are considering future options.