



Programme Manager Update

Jan 2012- Apr 2013

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:

- 34 local companies/ business starts have projected the creation or retention of 105.5 jobs (46.5 in the energy sector) since April 2012.
- The CNSRP partners' priority projects for the coming period will be Scrabster Harbour, Wick Harbour, Wick John O'Groats Airport and an inward investment in the energy sector.
- The contract to roll out Next Generation Broadband to the Highlands and Islands has been signed between HIE and BT.
- Highland Councillors have approved plans by Meygen for onshore infrastructure relating to Phase 1 of its tidal development in the Inner Sound. Councillors also agreed to raise no objections to Moray Offshore Renewables Ltd's plans for offshore wind development in the Moray Firth.

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:

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

Progress with High-priority activities	
Energy and Business Services - existing company growth	
Support growth aspirations for companies in energy sector	HIE
Recent HIE investments have included Scotflow Renewables Ltd and Precision Machining Services Ltd. NHRF has also approved loan funding to Thurso Cinema.	
Support non-account managed company growth	NHRF/BG
Business Gateway reports continued strong interest and enquiries from both business start-up and existing businesses. Several companies have been taken on to become account-managed by HIE.	
Energy and Business Services - inward investment	HIE/SDI
HIE is currently discussing potential investment plans with a renewables company seeking to establish a facility in Caithness. These discussions are progressing well.	
Inward Investment Marketing Plan for 2013/14 is in draft form.	
Biomass	Newpark
No new progress to report with the proposed facility at Georgemas.	
Biomass	Ignis Energy
Ignis Energy has announced the successful commissioning of its new £2.5M boiler for the combined heat and power plant in Wick. It is now working, and is directing its excess steam to the next door Pulteney Distillery.	
Fusion	HIE
No new progress to report.	
Enabling Activities	
Scrabster Harbour	SHT
Scrabster Harbour Phase 1 development now being completed. SHT is in discussions with HIE and Highland Council regarding plans for the Business/ Industrial Park above the harbour – a CNSRP priority project.	
Wick Harbour development	WHA
WHA is in discussions with HIE and NDA regarding financial support for its plans to develop the harbour's capacity to become an offshore wind operations & maintenance base. Highland Councillors raised no objections to the application from Moray Offshore Renewables Ltd to build its development in the Moray Firth. Marine Scotland decision on this is expected later this year.	
Invest Caithness	CCoC
Caithness Chamber is attending the tourism-focused "Best of Britain & Ireland 2013" exhibition in March.	
Supply Chain Diversification	CCoC
Enterprise Area/ Marine Energy Park	HIE
See "Scrabster harbour" above for Enterprise Area discussions. The Pentland Firth & Orkney Waters Leadership Forum (on which both Highland Council and HIE are	

represented) is working on a marketing plan for the Marine Energy Park. PFOW Marine Energy Park has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with SW England Marine Energy Park.	
Marine Energy “Onshore Vision” action plan	THC
Business & Industrial Land Audit is now complete, and a “call for sites” has been carried out. Highland Council carried out “charrette” planning processes in both Thurso and Wick during February 2013.	
Superfast broadband to key parts of C&NS	HIE
Procurement of programme was completed on 26 th March. BT will deliver a £146M programme for the Highlands and Islands. Digital engagement programme for businesses and communities has been launched through HIE and Business Gateway.	
Electricity Grid enhancements	SSE
Progress continues on route plans and overhead works between Dounreay and Mybster. New proposals have been consulted on for HVDC switching station focusing on Sinclair Bay. SSE has announced Partnership Agreement with UHI to enhance skills locally.	
Skills Development	
Engineering Technology & Energy Centre	NHC-UHI
ETEC Stakeholder Forum meets on 12 th March to ensure the ETEC facilities are being used to maximum effect, and to highlight opportunities for future development.	
Centre for Energy & the Environment	NHC-UHI
ERI and CfEE staff are pursuing a number of European collaboration projects.	
Make The Right Connections	CCoC
Good progress being made with the Programme, which has been audited during March. Caithness Chamber also successfully led and managed the “Jobs and How To Get Them” event at the ETEC building in late February, with around 30 business and organisations offering advice and support to over 320 attendees.	
Schools STEM Programme	THC
CNSRP partners and business organisations are due to deliver presentations to High School guidance staff on areas/ sectors of future employment potential.	
Innovation Challenge	CCoC
Competition winner Rachel Skene was announced by John Swinney MSP at Caithness Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner in September.	
Young Chamber programme	CCoC
Discussions on how best to engage with young people on entrepreneurship continue.	
Transport - Roads	
A9 Road safety study – Berriedale	THC/TS
Transport Scotland expected a designer for the Berriedale scheme to be appointed during March. Caithness Chamber has taken on the activities of the Caithness Transport Forum and Bus Users’ Group.	
Caithness "internal" transport infrastructure study	THC/HITRANS
Study now complete and recommendations being considered by Council TECS team. Elements of this incorporated into Charrette planning.	

Transport - Rail	
Caithness freight railhead	DSRL/DRS
DRS Ltd continues to work on potential commercial traffic opportunities and related line issues.	
Transport - air	
Support Enhanced infrastructure in & around Wick Airport	HIAL
Impact of oil & gas traffic to Chevron North Sea sites has boosted flight and passenger numbers. Discussions taking place on further opportunities to a position for Wick JOG as a strategic airport for energy traffic. HIAL and CNSRP to work on detailed project plans.	
Progress with other priority activities	
Tourism - existing company growth	
Support growth aspirations for companies in Tourism sector	HIE
Natural Retreats self-catering lodges development at John O'Groats is now open and has received encouraging visitor business over the winter. The development of the complex around the former hotel building (to be called "The Inn at John O'Groats").	
F&D - existing company growth	
Support growth aspirations for companies in F&D sector	HIE
HIE is currently working with 2 companies on an "account-managed" basis.	
Support non-account managed company growth	NHRF/BG
No new business start-ups in the food & drink sector.	
Other Sectors - existing company growth	
Support account-managed company growth	HIE
Support non-account managed company growth	NHRF/BG
15 new business start-ups in "local market" sector to date in 2012/13.	
Other sectors - Enabling activities	
North Highland Initiative, with support from DSRL, is exploring tourism opportunities around "dark skies" viewing.	
John O Groats development	
See Tourism – existing company growth, above.	
National Nuclear Archive	
NDA confirmed in December its commitment to building the National Nuclear Archive in Wick. The project, which will also ensure a long term home for the Highland Council's North Highland Archive, will be operated for the NDA by a specialist partner. NDA plans to appoint a suitable commercial partner by mid 2013, and to have the facility operational by 2016.	
Town Centre development programme	
The programme came to an end in December, although activity continues, with further retail training planned, and the two town websites (Thurso – Energy Town and Wick – Heritage Town) still live.	