

Endorsed on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2014

## **DOUNREAY STAKEHOLDER GROUP SOCIO ECONOMIC SUB GROUP**

DSG/SESG(2013)M004

Minutes of DSG Socio Economic Sub Group meeting held on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November at 1330 hours in the Pentland Hotel, Thurso (large lounge).

Present:     Derrick Milnes             Wick and Thurso Trades Council (Chair)  
              Ronnie Johnstone       Church of Scotland  
              Sandra McCaughey       Caithness Chamber of Commerce  
              David Flear               DSG Chairman  
              Eann Sinclair            CNS Regeneration Partnership  
              Cllr Roger Saxon       Highland Council  
              Bob Earnshaw           Thurso Community Council  
              Sandy Mackie           Scrabster Harbour Trust

In addition: June Love             DSG Secretary  
              Anna MacConnell        NDA  
              Ken Nicol                 DSRL  
              Alastair MacDonald    Cavendish Dounreay Partnership

### **MINUTES**

#### **1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Derrick Milnes welcomed everyone to the meeting. He noted that Jean Lipa, Association of Caithness Community Councils would now attend this sub group. Jean had originally been on the site restoration sub group but with the inclusion of new members to that sub group the business meeting had agreed to move Jean to the socio economic sub group.

Derrick welcomed Councillor Roger Saxon who had been invited to the sub group in place of Alex MacLeod who had recently resigned from the Council. Derrick noted that Alex MacLeod had been very pro-active in a number of areas and placed on record his thanks to Alex for his involvement on DSG.

Derrick also noted there was a considerable amount of paperwork that was copied for all members. It was incumbent on DSG members to ensure they make the secretary aware of their non-attendance to save the number of packs of paperwork that required copied. It was disappointing to see the waste of paper generated by this meeting. Discussion on this continued with a suggestion that paperwork should only be copied if members requested it.

#### **2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from:

- Trudy Morris, Chamber of Commerce (Sandra McCaughey deputising)
- Jean Lipa, Association of Caithness Community Councils
- Alastair MacDonald, DSG Honorary member

#### **3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

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The minutes of the last meeting – DSG/SESG(2013)M003 refers. These were accepted as a true reflection of the meeting. This was proposed by David Flear and seconded by Eann Sinclair.

#### 4. PROGRESS ON ACTIONS

The progress on actions had been circulated to members in advance. Of note:

- M003/A003: Anna MacConnell to provide an update on NDA's contributions to socio economic across the NDA estate. *Anna MacConnell noted that this was currently being prepared and would be available shortly. Action ongoing.*
- M003/A012: Martin MacDonald to provide further information on the Scottish Skills Action Plan. Martin provided an update – nuclear decommissioning is now one of the sectors within the Scotland's Energy Skills Action Plan. This should lead to closer working in the sharing of best practice and perhaps even training facilities. Skills Development Scotland and the NDA are working together on this. (SDS contact is Robert Orr / NDA contact is Natasha Hanson). [NB: Anna MacConnell also provided an update – Nigel Couzens made a presentation to the Energy Skills Action Group as a result of a request from Scottish Government to ensure some input to the update of the Action Plan as the original did not include reference to nuclear skills.] **Action complete.**
- M003/A023: Ken Nicol to provide report on measuring achievements of socio economic interventions. *This will be available in January. Action ongoing.*
- M003/A023: Ken Nicol and Anna MacConnell to explore a different format of reporting to DSG. **Action complete** – DSG(2013)P022 refers.
- M002/A020: Anna MacConnell to share NNA project communications plan with DSG once it is ready and approved. *Anna confirmed that this was still ongoing. Action ongoing.*

All other actions relating to the socio economic sub group were now complete.

#### 5. COMMUNITY FUND REQUESTS

A number of community fund applications were discussed. Declarations of interest were recorded as follows:

- Ref 035: Ronnie Johnstone
- Ref 038: Ken Nicol

A discussion on one application was in regards to funding which should be provided by the local authority (Ref 35 refers). There was general support for this application but because it was a local authority responsibility it could not be considered. It was agreed that Councillor Roger Saxon would raise the issue with the Education body to explore whether this could be provided through the educational channels.

**Action: DSG/SESG(2013)M004/A001: Councillor Roger Saxon to take up issue of funding educational activities through local authority responsibility.**

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While the recommendations made were generally accepted there was one minor clarifications required. These would be progressed before any applicants would be notified.

## **6. PROCUREMENT**

Ken Nicol provided an update. Of note:

- Ken Linn had taken over as Commercial Manager from Joe Kane. Ken Linn had met with David Flear and Derrick Milnes. He had also met with Trudy Morris of the Chamber. It had been agreed that the Chamber would facilitate one to one meetings with the local supply chain.
- Three companies had recently been awarded the framework contract for decommissioning operatives. As part of this the three companies were working together to put 7 individuals through training initiatives to provide them with employment.
- Regular meetings were now organised between the Socio Economic Team and Commercial Department to explore what contracts were coming up and if there were any socio economic activity that could be identified.
- Discussions were underway regarding a second framework contract being considered at present.
- The site's website pages had been updated to reflect the consideration of socio economic activities and to sign post potential bidders to the Chamber of Commerce who could provide information on the local capability as well as Job Centre plus for local labour requirements.

## **7. DRS UPDATE**

Derrick Milnes noted that originally Tom Curry, DRS was scheduled to attend this meeting. However, due to the change of date Tom Curry was not available and this would be carried forward to the next meeting.

## **8. DOUNREAY SOCIO ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES**

**NDA update:** Anna MacConnell noted the following:

- A response had been provided to David Flear regarding the NDA sale of land with regards Viewfirth. She noted that the NDA had been approached by two individuals with tentative enquiries re the use of this land.

There was a discussion around the informal enquiries. Anna confirmed that one was by an individual who did not represent a Council or organisation. The second enquiry had been made by an individual who was involved with a group of sports associations that want to develop an indoor sports facility in Thurso Highland Highlife is currently speaking to people in Caithness to potentially help them develop a sports hub.

Anna MacConnell confirmed that if a suitable project comes forward with community support the NDA would be minded to support this. However, she had emphasised to the

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individual that there would be a need for community engagement to ensure support for the project moving forward.

David Flear asked Ken Nicol (a Non Executive Director of Highland Highlife) whether he wished to elaborate. Ken Nicol responded that Community Sports Hub is a SportScotland initiative. Within the Highland Council area a four locations for Community Sports Hubs have been identified of which Thurso was one. The hubs are being developed through a partnership approach between various groups and organisations. Highland Highlife had held a series of meetings so far to try to identify the requirements from sport organisations.

David Flear asked whether water sports facility were also included in this with the past (O'Neill surfing championships) and the more recent surfing competitions taking place in the area. Ken Nicol responded that he was not aware of whether water sports facility were included as he had been unable to attend recent meetings.

Bob Earnshaw said he would support this type of project going forward on the Viewfirth land. Anna MacConnell noted that the individual who had spoken to her had been very enthusiastic and has project development experience. David Flear responded that the original concept of a community facility had been driven by enthusiastic people but had come to nothing because they simply did not have the time to drive the project forward. Roger Saxon added that it would take about a year to get plans in place to turn a concept idea into reality. Anna MacConnell noted that she had spoken with David Atkinson (NDA Property) and the NDA view is that there is no rush to sell off the land and hopefully the community will come up with a sustainable project.

Ken Nicol offered to facilitate a discussion with a number of DSG representatives, Anna MacConnell and Highland Highlife on the concept of a sports hub.

**Action: DSG/SESG(2013)M004/A002: Ken Nicol to co-ordinate meeting with Highland Highlife representative, Anna MacConnell and DSG members to discuss concept of a sports hub.**

- A workshop had been organised by Wick harbour to look at phase 2 developments at the harbour and this would be held mid November. A number of individuals had been invited to attend.

Derrick Milnes noted that Scrabster Harbour had recently submitted a planning application for the development of land and asked if this would impact on Wick harbour's ambitions. Sandy Mackie responded that Wick was in a perfect location to capitalise on the Moray and Beatrice off-shore wind farms and Scrabster were not in direct competition. The planning applications submitted was a refreshed application for the land development area which has enterprise status at present. It was expected that the application would be submitted in December with a period for consultation.

Bob Earnshaw noted that the Association of Caithness Community Councils and Thurso Community Council had received information on the outline planning. Thurso Community Council had submitted a positive response.

David Flear noted that it was pleasing to see Scrabster Harbour Trust moving forward.

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- Following the socio economic workshop held in March 2013 an idea had been mooted regarding a heritage app. This had resulted in a number of people getting together to take this forward. A scoping study had now been completed and the next stage would be to get a heritage group together to see if there was something to be done.

**Action: DSG/SESG(2013)M004/A005: David Flear to write to HIE and The Highland Council providing views on the CNSRP Programme Manager line management function.**

- No funding applications had been submitted to either NDA or DSRL.
- DSRL had agreed to continue the secondment to HIE for a further three years. June Love was the secondee and would work with HIE on inward investment activities 50% of her time.
- Alastair MacDonald noted that he had been approached by Energy North to chair a skills group as part of an effort to attract oil and gas work into Highlands and Islands. No work had currently been undertaken but Alastair was aware of a number of skills initiatives which had taken place. He was starting this with a blank sheet of paper and envisaged getting a small group of people together to identify, what he expected to be, a two year programme. He would be looking for some support from some representative around the table.

David Flear felt this was very interesting and had the potential to benefit Caithness and North Sutherland. Bob Earnshaw added that there was a variety of people interested in skills. Alastair MacDonald responded that there had been a bit of work done to try and identify the labour market in the area and while this was not complete it had not been an easy thing to identify.

- Ken Nicol noted that four interns had recently been given work experience at Dounreay. They were doing a good job, with the opportunity to broaden their CV's and help them find future employment.
- A discussion paper had been written on Life Sciences for the CNSRP. The HIE Head of Life Sciences had an aspiration to create 1000 jobs in this area and consideration was being given as to what Caithness and North Sutherland could offer in this sector.

Alastair MacDonald noted that he saw the DSG as a useful forum of people who were keen to see what the Dounreay Socio economic alliance does. Currently the socio economic plan was being delivered and a new plan would be developed for next financial year. He encouraged members to come forward with any other ideas that could potentially be developed.

- On the marketing side, This is Caithness (supplement no 2) had been published and distributed via the John O'Groats Journal. DSRL had facilitated this publication.
- Work was ongoing to take the Liddell Thomson marketing information to completion and a report had been drafted which had been considered by the CNSRP Delivery Group and Executive Board.

## **9. UPDATE ON SOCIO ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES**

Derrick Milnes noted that the CNSRP progress report had been distributed to members in advance of the meeting – DSG(2013)P023 refers. Eann Sinclair noted the following:

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- A meeting had been held on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November with HIAL about the infrastructure around the airport. The meeting took place with Mark Stewart (Head of Operations, HIAL) and was a very positive meeting. Eann Sinclair had seen a HC report that had information about the costs for refurbishment, demolition and new build. During the meeting the scope of a study was defined to include (a) a market assessment, (b) options for the airport and (c) business models for implementation. It was envisaged that, following HIAL agreement, HIE would commission work based on this study.

David Flear suggested that the impact of losing the hangar should also be considered as this would have a detrimental affect on the area. Eann Sinclair responded that the driver would be to continue with existing operations until a new hangar was constructed. Funding has been secured to get the report done.

- With regards HMRC, the computers and furniture was now being rolled out to enable the staff to continue to carry out their duties by homeworking. This was a pilot project but if successful would retain 16 jobs in the area.

Derrick Milnes asked whether there was going to be some pro-active press around this. Eann Sinclair said this was likely and would progress.

June Love noted the work being done at Scrabster and Wick harbours and asked if there had been any discussions with Gills harbour. Eann Sinclair responded he had visited Gills harbour recently and acknowledged that Gills had a good geographic location for the Meygen device.

David Flear noted that recent comments made by some Councillors regarding transport infrastructure was not helpful when trying to attract new business to the area. Some of the comments were completely unfounded and while he had no wish to curb people's right of speech he felt it was necessary to raise this as these unsubstantiated comments were causing harm to the area. Sandy Mackie agreed with David's comments and added that it sometimes helped fuel the myth that Caithness and North Sutherland still drove on single track roads with dangerous roads (ie the notorious berriedale braes).

Derrick Milnes added that some people should think before they went into print. Ronnie Johnstone agreed but said at times it was a judgement as to talking up the area but this should not distract from the fact that there were issues that still needed to be addressed. Eann Sinclair agreed that there was value in having these discussions and debates and there was always a balance to be made.

Ken Nicol noted that the area statistics had been tabled at an internal meeting and he would be happy to take these to DSG meetings. Anna MacConnell asked whether this included the landward area. Ken Nicol responded that Highland & Islands Enterprise unemployment digest statistics cover the the Travel to Work Areas for Thurso and Wick. It was suggested he look at The Highland Council website as this reported landward statistics.

Derrick Milnes invited others round the table to provide an update.

- Sandy Mackie noted that the Scrabster Harbour Trust had recently held its AGM. Willie Calder (Chair) and Jock Campbell (Vice-chair) had both stepped down and Tom Pottinger and Colin Calder had been elected chair and vice-chair respectively.

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In terms of the Board, two new members had been introduced – Frank Bremner and Douglas Robertson.

- Sandy Mackie also noted the discussion on skills and noted that there were a lot of initiatives currently being undertaken. OPITO being another example. He felt this was an opportunity for the county in that there were skills and resources coming available as the decommissioning of Dounreay progresses.

#### 10. UPCOMING PROJECTS

Derrick Milnes noted that he and David Flear had discussed this as an agenda item to get clarity on future projects coming forward. David Flear added that this was to ensure that the DSG understood the forward programme in terms of potential NDA/DSRL funding.

Eann Sinclair outlined a number of infrastructure-type projects that had been identified through the CNSRP and that these would likely come forward into the next financial year.

David Flear asked if it was possible to get a timeline on these projects. Eann Sinclair noted that while most would be considered next financial year timescales would be identified via the CNSRP Delivery Team as priority projects developed.

Eann also stated that there was now a monthly meeting organised between HIE and NDA to discuss potential funding packages going forward.

Eann confirmed that once agreed the project timeline would be taken forward at the CNSRP Advisory Board.

Anna MacConnell noted there were opportunities to source other funding, the National Lottery was apparently under spent in some budget areas and these should also be explored. She agreed to follow up on potential lottery funding sources.

**Action: DSG/SESG(2013)M004/A006: Anna MacConnell to explore which parts of lottery funding was currently under-utilised.**

#### 11. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

Derrick Milnes noted the following correspondence:

- DSG(2013)C054: BDUK rollout. Following an announcement of the Broadband roll out the Caithness Chamber of Commerce had written to HIE's Chief Executive asking for the rationale behind the timetable for the different areas. In parallel the DSG had also written seeking clarification. A meeting with HIE's Director of Digital, Stuart Robertson would take place on 18<sup>th</sup> November and the Chamber would co-ordinate this meeting.

David Flear noted that the DSG letter had been copied to Deirdre Mackay who had stated in the press she would be meeting with the Highland Council Chief Executive and Drew Hendry to seek a meeting with Alex Patterson. He asked if Roger Saxon could follow up to find out the outcome of this meeting.



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**Action: DSG/SESG(2013)M004/A007: Councillor Roger Saxon to speak to Deirdre Mackay to find out the outcome of The Highland Council meeting with HIE on Broadband.**

Eann Sinclair noted that Sir Anthony Cleaver had also followed this up with Alex Patterson.

- DSG(2013)C057: NDA SSG Chair's forum meeting. David Flear noted he had attended this meeting and the minutes (still in draft) had been circulated to members for information.

## **12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- **Community funding:** June Love noted that she had spoken with Foundation Scotland regarding community funding for wind farms. DSG had been asked to become the stakeholder group to discuss/facilitate this issue. The reason for asking DSG was that the majority of organisations were already represented. It had been agreed that the DSG would set up a working group to facilitate these discussions and June Love would write to all DSG representatives asking them to discuss with their respective organisations with a view to identifying the most appropriate person to sit on this working group. As a working group it meant that others could be co-opted on if there were gaps in the membership.

**Action: DSG/SESG(2013)M004/A008: June Love to write to all DSG members requesting appropriate representative from each organisation to sit on a working group to discuss community funding from wind farms.**

- **John O'Groat article:** David Flear noted he had written to the editor of the John O'Groat journal following a comment made in the 'view from the cliff' regarding Dounreay's failure to report the stop/start work. The letter had stated that this in fact had been discussed in full at a public DSG meeting and addressed the facts.
- David Flear noted that he had recently been contacted by CH2MHILL who were looking to put together a programme for the A9 dualling. It was pleasing to see that they recognised the DSG as a good example of carrying out community engagement and were looking for possible suggestions. He had suggested that CH2MHILL needed to look at micro and macro engagement with the positives that could be provided (as examples – berriedale braes, laying cables).
- Bob Earnshaw noted the recent announcement from Rolls Royce looking to increase their workforce for future work. It was agreed that John Hook would be contacted to clarify the situation at Vulcan, ie would the jobs be at Vulcan or would it be workers from Caithness commuting to other jobs. Either way it was agreed this was a positive.

**Action: DSG/SESG(2013)M004/A009: June Love to write to John Hook, Rolls Royce, to clarify the creation of additional jobs.**

There being no further business Derrick Milnes thanked everyone for attending and formally closed the meeting.

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**Derrick Milnes**  
**DSG Socio Economic Sub Group Chairman**  
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## **STATUS OF ACTIONS**

### **ACTIONS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING**

DSG/SESG(2013)M004/A001: Councillor Roger Saxon to take up issue of funding educational activities through local authority responsibility.

**DSG/SESG(2013)M004/A002: Ken Nicol to co-ordinate meeting with Highland Highlife representative, Anna MacConnell and DSG members to discuss concept of a sports hub.**

DSG/SESG(2013)M004/A003: June Love to write to Murray Lamont suggesting that a deputy is identified to represent the tourism industry.

DSG/SESG(2013)M004/A004: Eann Sinclair to speak to SNH with a view of getting further information on the Peatlands project.

DSG/SESG(2013)M004/A005: David Flear to write to HIE and The Highland Council providing views on the CNSRP Programme Manager line management function.

DSG/SESG(2013)M004/A006: Anna MacConnell to explore which parts of lottery funding was currently under-utilised.

DSG/SESG(2013)M004/A007: Councillor Roger Saxon to speak to Deirdre Mackay to find out the outcome of The Highland Council meeting with HIE on Broadband.

DSG/SESG(2013)M004/A008: June Love to write to all DSG members requesting appropriate representative from each organisation to sit on a working group to discuss community funding from wind farms.

DSG/SESG(2013)M004/A009: June Love to write to John Hook, Rolls Royce, to clarify the creation of additional jobs.