



Programme Manager Update

April-June 2014

This update incorporates reports from a range of partners involved in delivering elements of the *Caithness & north Sutherland Delivery 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:

- 103 FTE jobs have been projected by companies since the start of the 2014/15 financial year (71 new and 32 retained).
- Process Safety Solutions (PSS) has opened a base at Wick Business Park, creating 30-40 jobs over the next two years.
- Moray Offshore Renewables Ltd (MORL) has announced a Memorandum of Understanding with Wick Harbour Authority.
- HIAL and Chevron announced the recommencement of helicopter flights from Wick John O'Groats airport to Chevron fields in the North Sea. HIAL began construction of helicopter base for NHV helicopters.
- SSE's Sustainability Fund approved grant support for joint MAKLab/ Wick High School bid to develop a digital fabrication lab in Wick, and a mobile facility.

Caithness & North Sutherland Action Plan 2014-17

The key priorities identified for 2014-17 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

Existing company growth

Support growth aspirations for companies

HIE

Dunnet Bay Distillery is nearing completion on its distillery building at Dunnet, and aims to begin production of its Rock Rose Gin in Summer 2014. The company has received advice and support from HIE and the NDA-funded North Highland Regeneration Fund.

A number of Food & Drink companies have successfully entered export markets, particularly in Asia and China. In particular JPL Shellfish continues to expand its workforce and export capabilities. The company now employs 32 staff, and will be recruiting more. It has recently been awarded grant support from HIE.

HMRC remote/ home working pilot is now underway, with staff at the former office in Wick now working from their homes. An evaluation of its impact due to be undertaken this summer.

Support non-account managed company growth

NHRF/BG

Business Gateway reports continued strong interest and enquiries from both business start-up and existing businesses. 14 companies have committed to creating 21 new jobs.

Inward investment

HIE/SDI

Process Safety Solutions (PSS) have announced the creation of a Caithness base at the HIE-owned Wick Business Park, projecting the creation of 30-40 new jobs over the next two years. The company has been approved financial support of up to £194,000 by HIE. This is the first example of successful relocation following the programme of business engagement in

Aberdeen. The company's office was opened by John Swinney MSP during the Scottish Cabinet's visit to Wick in July

Discussions also continue on potential investment plans with a renewables company and several more oil & gas companies – all seeking to establish a facility in Caithness. These and other discussions are progressing well, with proposition documents now prepared for six different energy sector companies.

Highland Council approved Meygen's application for planning consent to create onshore infrastructure at Ness of Quoys in support of its site at the Inner Sound of the Pentland Firth. This includes buildings to house switching equipment and an access road. CEO of parent company Atlantis Resources visited Caithness in May as the company continues to make progress with its plans following a successful £12M flotation on the Alternative Investment Market.

Highland Council worked through CNSRP and Caithness Chamber to present an attractive presence as part of the HIE Energy Pavilion at the All-Energy Exhibition in Aberdeen in May.

Enabling Activities

Scrabster Harbour

SHT

Highland Council has approved the application by Scrabster Harbour Trust (SHT) to develop a Business & Industrial Park at land near Scrabster Farm. SHT is developing costs for servicing the site. Support currently being discussed for further phases.

Wick Harbour development

WHA

Wick Harbour Authority currently completing a heavy lift pad on the Commercial Quay, and associated dredging works will commence. CNSRP partners HIE and NDA approved funding for these works last year. WHA also welcomed news that Scottish Government has approved consent for two offshore wind developments in the Moray Firth. A Memorandum of Understanding with Moray Offshore Renewables Ltd was signed in July.

Superfast broadband to key parts of C&NS

HIE

Preparatory work on exchanges like Wick and Thurso started in December 13, with Thurso and Wick exchanges due to be enabled by early 2015 and others during 2015. In the meantime ADSL 2+ Ethernet services are available in both Thurso and Wick. HIE is offering digital health checks to businesses, and Scottish Government has announced further funding for Community Broadband Scotland to help extend broadband to harder to reach communities.

Skills Development

The ERI is an academic partner in the EU MERIKA project for innovation in the marine energy industry.

Good progress being made with the Make the Right Connections Programme, with a coaching and mentoring programme to be delivered before MTRC concludes in December.

A joint project with MAKLab to create a digital fabrication lab in Wick High School, with an associated mobile facility to cover the rest of the north, was awarded funding from SSE's Sustainability Fund. Team from Wick High School also received an award at the UK Apps for Good Finals, and a team from Farr High Young won the Scottish Enterprise Awards, then went on to receive an award at the UK Final.

Transport – Berriedale

TS

Transport Scotland aims to publish Traffic Order for Berriedale Braes in Autumn 2014

Transport - rail freight/ logistics

Private

A meeting with DRS was held at Caithness Transport Forum on 11th June to update on progress. Private sector plans for freight arrangements also continue to be discussed.

Transport - Support Enhanced infrastructure in & around Wick JOG Airport	HIAL
<p>HIAL and Chevron has announced that helicopter flights will recommence from Wick John O'Groats airport in June, giving a further boost to passenger numbers. Helicopter operator NHV is working with HIAL on hangarage arrangements at the airport. Energy market assessment has been commissioned by HIE, with HIAL looking at any subsequent investment implications.</p>	
Business space	HIE
<p>Discussions continue regarding business space in Thurso.</p>	
Digital connectivity	HIE
<p>Wick & Thurso on course to be enabled for Next Generation Broadband in March 2015. Scottish Government has announced additional funding to Community Broadband Scotland, to support broadband delivery solutions in harder to reach areas.</p>	
Marketing	HIE
<p>Events programme now produced for inward investment activity.</p>	
Tourism – Peatlands project	RSPB
<p>Lottery funding for £9M project reached next round.</p>	
National Nuclear Archive	NDA
<p>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 have the facility operational in 2016.</p>	