

Mr David Flear
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DSG(2015)C067

Your ref: DSG(2015)C059
Our ref: 2015/0038011
20th November 2015

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of 23 October 2015 about the GMB press release on Dounreay.

The Scottish Government takes seriously our statutory obligations and role in relation to performance of the NDA mission in Scotland. The NDA mission as you will be aware includes the safe decommissioning of Dounreay, Scotland's most complex civil nuclear site.

I understand that despite the well-publicised Improvement Notice issued to Dounreay last year by the Office for Nuclear Regulation, the decommissioning programme remains on track. Furthermore, the CNSRP (in partnership with Dounreay) is making good progress to address the socio-economic effects of decommissioning at the Dounreay site. Like you, I was therefore surprised to read GMB's statement that the economic legacy has '*not been fully grasped*' and that the Dounreay management team is performing poorly.

I therefore welcome the Dounreay Stakeholder Group (DSG)'s swift and clear response to the GMB's strongly worded statement on Dounreay. I am particularly pleased to read that you are confident that your members find the Dounreay senior management (and regulators) to be open and engaging at your public meetings. I was also pleased to read that information on the subject of Dounreay safety issues, performance and staff morale has been discussed and recorded on the DSG website for over a year.

As Dounreay progresses into the final phases of its lifetime plan, it essential that there remains in place a mechanism in which Dounreay's decommissioning and socio-economic plans performance can properly and publically be scrutinised in an open manner. Reading your letter and advice from my officials, it is clear that the DSG has a created a high performing stakeholder group that is respected both locally and nationally. I understand that the DSG, with its strong and diverse range of members, is widely recognised as one of the best performing Stakeholder Groups in the NDA estate.


The DSG is also to be congratulated in its recent successes in helping secure longer term inward secondees for senior management positions at Dounreay and encouraging major infrastructure investment projects in Caithness and North Sutherland, including the National Nuclear Archive.

I would be delighted to accept your offer to meet the Dounreay Stakeholder Group in the not too distant future, as part of a programme of visits when I am next in Caithness. As part of these visits, I would welcome an opportunity to meet with members of the DSG and Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership to discuss the Dounreay decommissioning project and wider local economic issues.

As promised last month, I am also happy to meet with the Thurso and Wick Trade Union Council and the GMB to explore whether an agreement can be reached between the two organisations to help build trust and understanding on the issues of Dounreay performance and the wider economy.

I'd be grateful if you could liaise with my diary secretary, Scott Hitchings, on 0131 244 7738 or email ministerbet@gov.scot to arrange the above.

Yours Sincerely



FERGUS EWING