



1st May 2017
Ref: DSG(2017)C017

All DSG members

Dear member

DSG REVIEW

Following on from the DSG review a number of actions have been identified to consider taking forward changes to DSG. Separate letters and questionnaires will be send out shortly to you all I would encourage you to consider the information and respond to allow informed decisions going forward.

While the review identified a number of potential areas for change there was also questions raised regarding expenses for members to travel to meetings and also the role of a co-opted member of DSG. I am writing to you on these two topics to clarify the DSG position.

) Should expenses be paid to members travelling to DSG meetings?

This has been discussed twice already and the decision at that time was that no expenses should be provided for travelling to DSG meetings.

At the business meeting on the 29th April, officials reviewed comments received by members of DSG and considered further the request for expenses to be paid. It was agreed that the current status quo remains whereby no expenses will be paid for members travelling to DSG meetings. Further to this, enquiries were made across other SSGs and it has been confirmed that no expenses are available for attendance at scheduled SSG meetings.

For DSG activity outside the normal meetings expenses will be paid on the provision of receipts (where possible member expenses will be kept to a minimum by the secretariat organising travel/hotel accommodation in advance (and by pre-paying as much as possible).

) The role of co-opted members of the public.

The DSG's Terms of Reference allow the ability to co-opt up to 5 members of the public if circumstances arise that additional representation is required. This will be considered where

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capacity on certain topics is limited by existing membership. Representation will be advertised, reviewed and renewed on a 3 yearly basis.

In 2013, DSG took the view capacity was required on topics of waste, health, safety, environment, socio economics and third sector organisations and adverts were placed with applications being received. Three applicants were successful and, following a three year period, was reviewed and confirmed for a further three years (ie up to 30th March 2019).

When considering applications from members of the public, the successful applicants received a letter indicating the following:

- J The DSG is a voluntary group and therefore there is no remuneration in respect of travel or accommodation for DSG meetings (ie main meetings, sub group meetings or ad hoc meetings you wish to attend).
- J If you represent DSG at meetings away from Caithness travel and overnight accommodation (if required) will be reimbursable to you on presentation of receipts – your travel will be organised and paid for by the DSG secretariat – out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed.
- J As a member of the public you do not represent any organisation and therefore you will have no voting rights nor do we expect you to come to the meetings representing a group or a single issue topic.

Following feedback from DSG members and a further discussion at the DSG Business meeting held on 29th April these conditions still stand.

Recognising that there was no clarity, with the DSG Terms of Reference, on whether a co-opted member of the public could stand for an office bearing post the Business meeting proposes, that those involved with DSG as a co-opted member of the public, should not be provided with the opportunity to take on an official role.

This will be subject to a change in the Terms of Reference and the business meeting proposes that rather than holding an extra-ordinary meeting to make these changes to ensure clarity going forward that changes to the Terms of Reference are made at the next Annual General Meeting (unless a number of other changes are identified following potential changes in accordance with the review currently underway).

I hope that this now clarifies the situation regarding expenses and the role of co-opted members.

Yours sincerely

sent electronically without signature

Roger Saxon
DSG Chairman