



Please respond to:

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Ref: DSG(2019)C025

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Andrew Parrish
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Dear Mr Parrish

DOUNREAY STAKEHOLDER GROUP:

Thank you for your letter dated 22 May 2019 (your ref: T02019/04540) in response to our letter.

Firstly can you please clarify that you are responding on behalf of MOD only or whether this response is a joint one with MOD and the UK Government Minister of Defence.

This is the second time we have had to write to MOD noting our concerns and in both cases you have responded "that you are disappointed and that you remain committed" to hold dialogue, etc. While this may be the case from your perception, DSG's perception is very different. We appreciate you work under different constraints to the NDA and the Dounreay site but there is an opinion within the DSG that you are simply turning up and using the DSG as a tick box exercise. Trust is something that takes a long time to build but it only takes 1 or 2 examples such as this to lose the trust of the community completely. MOD will have to work extremely hard to change that perception.

Your response to our letter provides assurance that you remain committed to maintaining a dialogue with all stakeholders including DSG and goes on to note that this was demonstrated by providing, at short notice, an alternative MOD representative following the illness of the regular representative. While we appreciate that a representative at short notice did attend the meeting DSG's frustration is deeper than this. To re-iterate:

The DSG represents the views of the community and the only way this can be done is by ensuring that the information provided by the DSG can be published and cascaded down through the member organisations.

At that sub group we requested MOD to attend the March DSG public meeting with a presentation which would not prejudice procurement and believe that this could have been done – there have been other examples of organisations being able to balance this, providing useful information to the DSG in public. While we appreciate that, at the sub group meeting, it was indicated that this might not be possible it was agreed that this would be taken back to MOD for clarification. We then received notification two days before the meeting informing us that the presentation would not take place.

At this stage, we would like to point out that we believe that these decisions are more likely to be made by someone sitting in an office in London and also suspect that the short notice provided by the local MOD representative that the presentation would not take place (2 days prior to the meeting) was as a result of receiving that decision at such a late stage.

As you rightly mention MOD, has through DSG sub group interaction, previously actively sought the DSG's suggestions for the future of the site and you are grateful for our response. We feel we have had to continue to emphasise this and the DSG's preferred option going forward. It will be interesting to hear, at the appropriate time, whether these views were factored into the thinking when moving towards a preferred option. We would also, however, point out that to ensure a collective community view it is important to ensure that this is something that can be considered by the wider community and hence why this information should be made public.


You also note that you are using an array of data to assist you with the development of the options for the site and that analysis is ongoing. DSG could have accepted this but given two years ago we received the same response (hence why an update was requested in January 2019), our perception was that this work has been ongoing since 2017 (and having received redacted information from NDA on meetings we are aware these options were being considered in 2017) we find it unbelievable that two years later you have still not got to a stage where your options are mature enough to share with the community – a community which has been supportive to your organisation and the site operations for half a century).

We are well aware that MOD will be required to undertake statutory consultation but would be after a decision has already been made selecting option you plan to take forward rather than outlining all options and asking the community for their views before finalising. That is not consultation, it is pretty much a decide, announce and defend stance albeit that under planning you will need to demonstrate that your option is robust taking on board all safety and environmental issues but this will be done on the option you choose, not on an option going forward with community support.

Given two years ago we were informed that the options assessment would be available in January 2019 which was certainly not the case we are now requesting a clear timeline for all the activities you require to undertake, up to and including the dates for carrying out the statutory planning consultation. It would be useful to provide these dates to allow expectations to be set as to when this information will eventually be made available.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roger Saxon". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Roger Saxon
DSG Chairman

cc. UK Government Defence Minister
Roseanna Cunningham, Scottish Government
Gail Ross MSP
Jamie Stone MP
DSG members

