

**DOUNREAY STAKEHOLDER GROUP  
SOCIO ECONOMIC SUB GROUP**

**Minutes of the DSG Socio Economic sub group meeting held on Tuesday 29 October 2019 at 1330 hours in the Georgina lounge, Pentland Hotel.**

<b>Present:</b>	David Alexander:	Wick & Thurso Trade Union Council (Chair)
	Derrick Milnes	DSG Co-opted member of the public
	David Flear	DSG Honorary member
	Roger Saxon	DSG Chair
	Trudy Morris	Caithness Chamber of Commerce
	Cllr Struan Mackie	The Highland Council (DSG Vice-chair)
	Ron Gunn	CHAT (Deputy sub group chair)
	Eann Sinclair	HIE
	Peter Faccenda	CNSRP
	Gillian Coghill	Buldoo Residents Group
<b>In addition:</b>	June Love	Dounreay Socio Economic and Stakeholder Relations Manager
	Anna MacConnell	NDA Socio Economic and Stakeholder Relations Manager
	Dawn Clasper	DSG Minute Secretary, Dounreay
	Steve Young	Organisational Excellence Director (observer)

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Davie Alexander, Chair of DSG socio economic sub group welcomed everyone to the meeting. He introduced Steve Young, DSRL Organisational Excellence Director who was attending to observe the meeting. Introductions were made around the table.

**2. APOLOGIES**

**Apologies were received from:**

- Councillor Matthew Reiss
- Bob Earnshaw
- Murray Lamont

**3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

DSG/SESG(2019)M003 refers. Davie Alexander noted that these minutes were now endorsed at the DSG public meeting to allow them to be published in a more timely manner. He invited members to raise any issues from the minutes. No issues were raised.

**4. STATUS OF ACTIONS**

Davie Alexander noted the following actions:

- DSG(2019)M003/A003: Peter Faccenda, CNSRP Programme Manager to raise question of status report of the City Region Deal projects already approved and the criteria that was used for these projects. Information on other areas will also be requested. **Action complete:** Peter Faccenda noted that he had made enquiries had been informed that a series of projects had been submitted to the City Region Deal (CRD). It was unlikely that a second round of this initiative would commence until the first round projects were complete. There was a potential for underspend in these (first round) projects but unlikely that this would allow CNSRP projects to

be put forward for consideration. A watching brief for the potential CRD2 would continue.

David Flear felt that the area has missed out on potential funding for CNSRP priority projects and asked what input CNSRP had made to the CRD bids. Eann Sinclair responded that he was not sure what projects had gone forward to the bidding round as he had never seen the bid that went forward. CNSRP had prepared a list of priority projects that had gone through the CNSRP Advisory Board that had been chaired at that time by Drew Hendry.

Gillian Coghill stated that at the time the bids and selection process had been conducted behind closed doors and it appeared that most of the projects were concentrated around Inverness and as such there had been little included for other parts of the Highlands.

David Flear re-iterated his disappointment given that the Caithness & NS area was meant to be a priority area and suggested that The Highland Council had lost sight of this. He felt that 1% of the total funding had come to Caithness (town centre Wi-Fi) and this was not good enough for an area that was looking to regeneration with the rundown of the Dounreay site.

Davie Alexander agreed that this was a disappointing outcome but appreciated it was too late to take any appropriate action. He suggested that the action be closed but that a watching brief continue for the potential CRD-2 in around two years' time.

- DSG(2019)M003/A004: June Love to speak with Phil Cartwright re progress with the Community Sports Hub project and to explore whether additional support was required. **Action ongoing:** June Love noted that she had spoken with Phil Cartwright. A meeting of the CSH committee was currently being organised to look at what was required to continue to take this project forward. Therefore, at this time the action continued until the meeting had been held.

Davie Alexander stated that this project appeared to be dragging on and on. David Flear asked what the implications were for the land as this was currently owned by NDA. Anna MacConnell responded that while progress was slow the project was continuing.

- DSG(2019)M003/A008: Anna MacConnell to ask CNS Fund to forward quarterly updates to DSG Socio Economic sub group for information. **Action complete:** Anna MacConnell noted that this had been requested. She added that the CNS Fund AGM would take place on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November at 1900 hrs in the Pentland Hotel and encouraged members to attend. At the AGM an annual report would be available and some of the beneficiaries of funding would be providing short presentations.
- DSG(2019)M003/A011: Roger Saxon and Peter Faccenda to meet to discuss process to ensure overlaps of information at DSG/CNSRP are kept to a minimum. **Action complete:** Peter Faccenda had noted that he had attended the last DSG business meeting to discuss this. It was recognised that both groups had some legitimate overlaps. The CNSRP Advisory Board were considering its role and would bring forward a paper for the role of the Advisory Board to the Executive Board for consideration.
- DSG(2019)M003/A015: Cllr Struan Mackie to work up draft proposal for holding an NDA stakeholder summit in the future in Caithness for comment by DSG members. **Action ongoing:** June Love noted that the summit in 2020 would be held in Scotland but likely to be in a more central location. However, it was agreed that this action would remain open to allow a proposal to go to the NDA for a future event.

- DSG(2019)M003/A017: June Love to invite MSP and MP to a DSG Socio Economic sub group meeting at the beginning of the new year. **Action ongoing:** June Love noted that she had not done this yet as it would be useful to wait for the outcome of the UK Government elections. She also added that the meeting date would likely be changed to accommodate an invitation to both as it would be difficult to get them in the county during the week while they were due in their respective parliaments. This would be progressed in January.
- DSG(2019)M001/A007: Roger Saxon to raise Japanese presentation and how momentum can continue at the next Scottish Government Scottish Nuclear sites meeting. **Action ongoing:** it was noted that the Scottish Government meeting was due to be held on 31<sup>st</sup> October and therefore this action would be raised at that meeting.
- DSG(2019)M002/A004: Anna MacConnell to ask JOG mill project whether the business plan could be shared with DSG members. **Action complete:** Anna MacConnell provided a hard copy of the business plan and undertook to send the link of this document to the DSG secretary. She asked that this was not shared outside the DSG sub group as there was commercial information included. It was agreed that the DSG secretary would email out to all sub group members asking them if they wished to see the business case and this would be sent to those who indicated their interest.

Anna MacConnell also noted that an invitation had been extended to DSG members to visit the John O’Groat mill to see for themselves the ongoing progress of the project. Davie Alexander intimated he would be interested in taking up this invitation.

**Action: DSG/SESG(2019)M004/A001: June Love to speak with DSG Socio Economic sub group members to explore who would be interested in visiting the JOG Mill project and then identify a suitable date for visit.**

Davie Alexander noted that all other outstanding actions sat with the Site Restoration sub group and invited questions on any of the completed actions relating to Socio economics. The following was discussed:

- DSG(2019)M003/A006: David Alexander to follow up in writing an invitation to Jacq Longrigg to visit Caithness to discuss potential funding for skills projects. This action had been completed in that an invitation had been extended. It was noted that a response had been provided from Jacq Longrigg stating she had hoped to visit in November but due to other commitments it would be later in the year. Davie Alexander noted that he would involve a number of people involved in skills in this discussion once the date was confirmed.

**Action: DSG/SESG(2019)M004/A002: June Love to continue to progress date for Jacq Longrigg to visit Caithness to discuss skills.**

- DSG(2019)M003/A007: Trudy Morris to inform DSG when Rolls Royce and the Chamber had discussed the recruitment issues (relating to DSG92019)C026 and C027). **Action complete:** Meeting scheduled for 1<sup>st</sup> October 2019. Trudy Morris noted that the meeting had taken place and the issue of supply chain recruitment had been raised. John Hook had indicated that while he could not stop people applying for any vacancies at the site he would not allow poaching of staff to take place. He had also indicated Rolls Royce’s continued apprentice programme and the aspirations for a deployment hub in Caithness post 2022 which had the potential to deploy up to 100 people.

Gillian Coghill stated that she had asked at the site restoration sub group meeting whether Rolls Royce apprenticeships would continue and was heartened to hear that they would be

It was noted that Rolls Royce did provide a written report that was taken forward to the Site Restoration sub group. It was agreed to send Trudy Morris a copy of this paper.

**Action: DSG/SESG(2019)M004/A003: Dawn Clasper to send Trudy Morris a copy of the Rolls Royce written update report.**

## **5. DOUNREAY COMMUNITY FUND REQUESTS**

Davie Alexander noted the current funding requests and reminded members to declare an interest if there was any involvement from members in these projects. Roger Saxon declared an interest in one request and left the room while this was discussed. The applications were then reviewed and recommendations made.

## **6. DOUNREAY SOCIO ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES**

**NDA:** Anna MacConnell, NDA Socio Economic and Stakeholder Relations Manager, reported:

- Scrabster Harbour Trust: The £5m funding support for the St Ola Pier redevelopment had been provided after funding became available from an unexpected source.
- Space Hub Sutherland project: A meeting had taken place between HIE and NDA to discuss the potential £5m funding request from NDA for this project. Discussions had been positive and NDA were exploring with DSRL some combined funding support over the next 2 to 3 years. It was noted that the programme may be slightly behind schedule.

Peter Faccenda stated that HIE were still in a position to submit the planning application in December 2019. He noted that he had presented a number of priority projects at the Dounreay Socio Economic Board in September with a funding profile required to take this forward. It was asked that if DSRL provided funding support for the Space Hub Sutherland project did not negate support to other projects. June Love noted that there had been tentative agreement at the Board to support Battery North, PSO business case and the Space project and could all be supported this financial year if the applications and required information was made available. Any support to the Space project would not have a detrimental impact on the consideration of funding other priority projects.

- David Flear asked what progress had been made with the NDA Socio economic strategy. Anna MacConnell responded that discussions had taken place with several stakeholders in September to provide input into the new strategy. This has taken place at all NDA sites. David Flear noted that it had been intimated that the final draft (following the September discussions) would be made available at the end of September. Anna MacConnell noted that one SSG had not responded as yet and this was currently awaited before a final draft could be circulated. It was expected that the final draft would be made available shortly and a second meeting with stakeholders would take place sometime in November. This would allow the strategy to be finalised and published in January 2020.
- David Flear asked what socio economic projects were currently ongoing with NDA. Anna MacConnell responded that the JOG Mill project had now been provided with funding and the only other one still continuing at present was the Space Hub Sutherland project is being considered. An early enquiry had been received from North Highland College for £6m for the

campus redevelopment.

- David Flear asked about progress with the Wick Harbour Authority high water gate as it appeared that it had been a couple of years since the NDA had committed £1m of funding to support this project. Anna MacConnell confirmed that the funding was still available at this time. Eann Sinclair noted that the technical review had not yet taken place and following further consideration of the high-water gate specifications it appeared that the costs would significantly increase. Davie Alexander noted that he had, along with STUC officials, visited BOWL at Wick harbour recently and asked whether there was an issue with the protection of the seacats because of the lack of a gate. Derrick Milnes added that it had to be about three years since the NDA committed the funding as he recalled a previous visit from STUC when this had been discussed.

David Flear asked if there was a finite time when the NDA committed funding would have to be released to support other projects. Anna MacConnell responded that the funding commitment was still on the table. Trudy Morris added that this was a valid discussion to have in terms of timelines and there needs to be an endpoint to projects such as this.

Trudy Morris re-iterated that projects would need to define an endpoint as by having funding committed and not spent may end up to the detriment of other projects which were in a more advance state. Anna MacConnell responded that nothing else was being stopped because of this commitment. Eann Sinclair noted that a meeting between Wick Harbour, HIE and NDA would be held shortly and would provide an update on this project once that meeting had been held.

**Action: DSG/SESG(2019)M004/A004: Anna MacConnell to provide update on projected timelines for Wick Harbour Authority high water gate following the meeting to be held.**

#### **Dounreay update**

Davie Alexander noted that a written update had been received – DSG(2019)P029 referred. He invited June Love to pick up key highlights from the paper. Of note, June Love reported:

- Discussions were still ongoing to confirm the re-opening of Caithness Horizons. Currently the Highland Council were carrying out the maintenance required to re-open the facility. It was noted that a recent press article from The Highland Council had not mentioned the continued support by DSRL which had been disappointing. It was equally disappointing that there was no timeline for the re-opening of the facility.

Cllr Struan Mackie noted that The Highland council would not be the end user of the facility as Highlife Highland would be running the facility once it had re-opened. June Love noted that while there had been a lot of discussion when the facility had closed it appeared the re-opening had lost some momentum and while it had been hoped it could open in October that now appeared to be unlikely. Cllr Struan Mackie responded that he believed that given the time of the year now HLH would hold off re-opening until next season as opening during the winter months would not provide a good measure of footfall going through the facility.

David Flear agreed that the lack of acknowledgement of DSRL's continue support in the recent press article was disgraceful and had it not been for DSRL continuing to commit the facility would not have had a chance to re-open. Davie Alexander also agreed.

- Cllr Struan Mackie also noted the town centre regeneration funding recently provided to both Thurso and Wick town centres. The funding was available for shovel ready projects and an

allocation of funding would go to support the maintenance of Caithness Horizons. Peter Faccenda asked whether this was suggesting that town centre regeneration funding was being used to support THC core funding or whether this was an added funding package. Cllr Struan Mackie responded that some of the town centre funding would be diverted to Caithness Horizons due to the lack of shovel ready projects it would have meant that some funding would have had to be handed back.

Anna MacConnell asked whether the funding for town centres could have been considered to support the Community Sports Hub. Cllr Struan Mackie responded that the area covered by this funding stream was from the beach front to the train station with the aspiration that footfall would be increased in the town centre.

- David Flear asked what the implications were for the proposed car parking charges. He noted that while listening to the podcast on this topic he had been disappointed that not one Caithness Councillor had made any comment in this debate. Cllr Struan Mackie acknowledged there was a framework for car parking charges but he believed that areas could either opt in or out.
- Trudy Morris stated, going back to the earlier discussion on Caithness Horizons, that DSG should consider writing a letter to The Highland Council expressing frustration and could also mention the lack of acknowledgement for DSRL's continued support with funding. This was agreed by all members.

**Action: DSG/SESG(2019)M004/A005: DSG Chairman to write to The Highland Council expressing frustration and disappointment regarding Caithness Horizons.**

- Regarding town centre redevelopment funding, Trudy Morris suggested that again there should be a push back on the limited time for funding being drawn down not how an area can be disadvantaged by not having shovel ready projects ready in such a short timescale. Cllr Struan Mackie responded that this had already been done. He also noted that because there were no longer town centre development officers in place this had added further disadvantages. Projects being considered at present was streetscape vamping (replacing ageing street furniture, planters etc). The noticeboard outside the HC service point would be replaced with a digital one. It was acknowledged that at present there was no transformational town centre projects in such a state of readiness that funding could be applied for and while not ideal funding to support the maintenance costs of Caithness Horizons allows the maintenance schedule to be escalated. In Wick the focus had been on one big project concentrating on improvements to the Riverside car park.

Trudy Morris asked whether there was something that could be done around transport type projects such as improving shelters for bus stops with flip up seats etc. Peter Faccenda noted that the issue was that there was no-one available to take projects such as this forward.

- Davie Alexander, noting that Steve Young had only recently started at Dounreay, stated DSG's interest in the DSRL staffing profile adding that this had gone back a long time. He was aware of the new performance plan and the fact that this will drive the staffing profile and people plan but this was something that a number of organisations were interested in seeing and understanding the potential impacts going forward.

Eann Sinclair noted that this was the same for CNSRP and understood while it was not an easy task it was something that was important for the CNSRP to understand to ensure that everyone involved was trying to react at the right time.

Trudy Morris concurred adding that this had been talked about for as long as she had taken up the Chamber CEO post which was just over 10 years ago. She continued that until such times as the people plan and staffing profile was available it appeared difficult to understand what was required in terms of training and education. As an example, she had recently held discussions with a company who had shut their local office as there had been no work for 6 safety case writers however DSRL was having discussions with North Highland College to pilot a training course to train safety case writers. This did not appear to align with a shortage of skills in that area when the resource was already available in the county. It was this type of thing that the people plan should be feeding into as at present it was difficult to reconcile these issues. This also makes it difficult to react to these sorts of issues when the real picture is still unknown.

- Gillian Coghill commented that looking down the line in about 10 years' time it was important to understand the skills need now to allow this to develop over time. This should encompass all types of skills including nurses, engineers, etc. Trudy Morris agreed adding that the young people living in the county needed to be aware of what employment opportunities would be available.

Peter Faccenda agreed with the comments on skills noting that while the nuclear skills were available for the Dounreay site right now these skills could be sold elsewhere in the longer term. However, it was important that the skills required for the future were well thought out and informed by such things as the people plan and wider local business future needs.

Eann Sinclair noted that at a recent meeting with a number of stakeholders and the STUC officials there had been a discussion on how the STUC could help support a future skills requirement study. This would tie in to the CNSRP vision which was now 10 years old and due to be reviewed and revised as well as the economic report that was due to be refreshed again in 2021.

Steve Young, DSRL Organisational Excellence Director, stated that he had read up on CNSRP and the socio economic activities of the area prior to coming to Dounreay and it would be his job to develop DSRL's people plan. He noted that skills had been discussed a lot during the meeting and believed that the skills available on the site at present were transferrable to other sectors when required. His first activity would be to understand the skills already on site and gather as much information as possible. Cllr Struan Mackie commented that the People plan would be a vitally important from a lobbying interest as well and thought this should be a real driver in the next couple of years. Steve Young commented that he would continue to have discussions around skills to understand the needs not only for the site but for the future as well.

Steve Young also noted that his last job had been out in Canada and prior to that he had worked at Strathclyde University being involved in attracting research funding. He commented he would be happy to try and support potential funding streams that may be available for skills development and/or research.

## **7. CNSRP UPDATE**

Davie Alexander note that a written report had been provided in advance of the meeting – DSG(2019)P033 refers. Of note, Peter Faccenda reported on:

- The PSO study that had been developed was now getting traction with a number of discussions held with key stakeholders including Scottish Government Ministers, Transport Scotland and others. The next stage would be to develop a scope for a business plan and funding had been, agreed, in principle, with the Dounreay Socio Economic Board. Trudy Morris added that the

meeting with the Minister had been positive and he had taken the discussions very seriously. At the end of the day a decision to turn the airport into a PSO would be a political decision and part of this would be identifying a funding solution to be considered. It was important to keep this project moving forward as at this time it had some traction.

Davie Alexander stated that the work done on the PSO to date had been excellent and agreed it was important to keep the momentum moving positive forward. Peter Faccenda commented that the airport was on the CNSRP priority programme and believed that with the development of the business case and potential funding support moving forward it would allow a good case to go to Scottish Government. Trudy Morris added that this could be a game changer for the area if this is done correctly and would allow more business activity as well as the potential to attract additional talent to the area.

Davie Alexander stated that he was quite heartened with the CNSRP activities where there were signs that things were starting to happen. He agreed that the moment for the airport had to continue at pace and that partner funding streams would be vital to continuing that support.

#### 8. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

Davie Alexander noted that the following correspondence had been received since the last meeting.

- **DSG(2019)C032: NDA SSG briefing, September 2019**
- **DSG(2019)C035: NDA SSG briefing, October 2019**

These were noted with no issues raised.

- **DSG(2019)C033: Nucleus.** David Flear noted that following the DSG letter he had met with Simon Tucker, NDA. Simon Tucker had referred to DSG's letter and clarified that Nucleus was not yet at capacity although for films and photographs it was starting to fill up, but he felt that in general there was a further two years of capacity in the present building. The concern had been raised at the last Nucleus Advisory Board when the group was informed that it was nearly at capacity which had been further re-enforced by Sellafield's Archivist who had also stated that there were capacity issues when visiting Caithness for a heritage event. Simon Tucker had indicated there would be only one Nuclear Archive in the UK and that was the one in Wick. He further stated that he was beginning to look at the extent of Sellafield records to look at the best options for all their material. He did confirm that the Nucleus had been built to allow expansion if required and that was also a potential option. To cut down on the amount of paper records options for electronic storage were being considered. In conclusion, Simon Tucker had offered to attend a DSG meeting to provide a presentation on Nucleus covering not only the capacity issues but on wider updates.
- **DSG(2019)C034: National Museum Scotland.** Davie Alexander reminded members that DSG had written to NMS after he had visited the museum and had seen the nuclear display which had talked about the site leaving a legacy of pollution. It had been agreed to write reminding them that the legacy was also the jobs, skills and economic activity of the area. NMS had responded and he felt that the response had been very disappointing. Roger Saxon noted that he had met with the Keeper of Science & Technology (NMS) at a recent heritage conference in Caithness and had discussed this issue with him.

It was agreed that the response had been a disappointing one and an action was placed on the DSG Chairman to write to the DSRL Heritage Officer to explore what could be done with respect



to the artefacts that is currently displayed at the museum.

**Action: DSG/SESG(2019)M004/A006: DSG Chairman to write to DSRL Heritage Officer to explore potential options for further discussion with the National Museums Scotland concerning artefacts belonging to DSRL.**

- Eann Sinclair noted that Linda Ross had recently completed her PhD on Dounreay and had indicated she would be happy to meet with DSG to present her work. This was agreed.

**Action: DSG/SESG(2019)M004/A007: DSG Secretariat to contact Linda Ross with a view to identifying a suitable date for her to present the outcome of her PhD in relation to Dounreay.**

## **9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Before opening up to members, Davie Alexander noted the following:

- The Chamber had held its annual dinner and a number of DSG members had attended as invited guests from local businesses. The Dounreay Decommissioning Services Framework companies had held a supplier's day prior to the dinner which meant that the majority of those contractors had also attended the dinner.
- The Caithness Transport Forum meeting had met on 10<sup>th</sup> September. Trudy Morris noted that the Transport Forum had discussed topics including the airport, the ongoing contractual issues with the ferries – the contract had been awarded to Serco but Calmac had objected and the contract was deferred for a further 3 months. An update on the bus services had also been provided.

Peter Faccenda asked whether there was a timeline to rectify the issues around the ferry contract. Trudy Morris responded that at this point there was not.

Cllr Struan Mackie noted that the X99 could now be booked on megabus.com from London straight through to Thurso.

- Roger Saxon and David Flear had attended a three-day heritage conference (Interpreting Nuclear Imaginaries and Mediators) in Caithness.
- Roger Saxon had also attended the North Highland College, UHI Academic Award Ceremony held on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2019.
- The CNSRP Advisory Board had met on 26<sup>th</sup> September.

Davie Alexander stated that he had attended this meeting on behalf of the Trades Council and given DSG's involvement also felt it would be useful for the business meeting to discuss thoughts on taking CNSRP Advisory Board forward.

**Action: DSG/SESG(2019)M004/A007: DSG Secretariat to put CNSRP Advisory Board discussion on Business meeting agenda.**

- Cllr Struan Mackie, acting as DSG vice-chair, had visited Japan as part of a UK delegation building on the good work that David Flear had started on an earlier visit.

Cllr Struan Mackie stated that he had a good trip and felt that Dounreay had been very much in the spotlight with it being well recognised by the Japanese representatives. It had been equally pleasing to hear that Dounreay had been providing support into decommissioning plans. From a DSG perspective, he had presented information on the community engagement with the site and also on socio economic activity. He had met with the Mayor of Tsuragu and there were obvious synergies between Caithness and Tsurugu. An invitation had been extended to the Mayor to visit Caithness to discuss and explore further topics that may be of interest including a potential school exchange project and further discussions on the socio economic activity.

Anna MacConnell added that another visit from Japanese delegates would be taking place on 4 December and this representative was from Fukushima. A further visit from a senior delegate would also take place in November and this was to thank Dounreay and NDA for allowing the secondment of a Japanese representative to Dounreay for a period of time.

- The Wick and Thurso Trade Union Council had facilitated a visit to Grahame Smith and Helen Martin, STUC. While in Caithness they had visited the airport, Nucleus, Wick Harbour and met with representatives of BOWL. Later in the afternoon they had met with a number of key stakeholders to discuss the wider economic picture and it was pleasing to hear Grahame offering to support these activities by raising issues at the right time. Economic studies had also been discussed and agreed that working in partnership and aligning to other economic study requirements in the near future would be useful. An action had been placed on the Trades Council chair and CNSRP programme manager to get a timeline of required economic information that would be required to build a complete picture of requirements going forward. Following that a further meeting with a number of relevant stakeholders would take place in January 2020 to identify where STUC could add value to the work already due to be undertaken.

**Action: DSG/SESG(2019)M004/A008: David Alexander and Peter Faccenda to discuss and agree a timeline for economic reports.**

**Action: DSG/SESG(2019)M004/A009: David Alexander to organise meeting with all relevant stakeholders in January 2020 to agree scope of work for economic reports to ensure STUC has clear requirements for support.**

Looking forward, Davie Alexander noted:

- A drop in session to provide an update on the Space Hub Sutherland project was scheduled for the 4<sup>th</sup> November in the Boys Brigade Hall, Thurso from 1530 to 2000 hrs. He encouraged members to attend and provide their feedback to this project.
- The DSG business meeting would be held on 15<sup>th</sup> November and, election dependents, the agenda for the December DSG would be agreed. MOD had indicated that the Admiral would be attending the December DSG to provide a presentation on Vulcan decommissioning.

Davie Alexander then invited members to raise any other business. Of note:

- David Flear noted his intention to retire from DSG at the AGM in March. He added that he had been involved with DSG since its inception in 2005 and had decided it was time to step down. He thanked everyone for their support and input during his chairmanship and indicated he had enjoyed the partnership working with all the organisations involved. He especially thanked June Love for all her support over the years. He indicated he also intended to step down from the

North Highland Regeneration Fund as well.

- June Love noted that Gail Ross, MSP had held a launch of a consultation on Rural Communities (Scotland) Bill. A bill to enhance the consideration given to rural communities by public bodies in Scotland and suggested that DSG may wish to submit a response to the consultation.

Trudy Morris stated that the Chamber had provided a letter of support emphasising the importance of ensuring that National policy was flexible enough to be delivered in rural communities. As an example, the potential workplace parking levies would be disastrous for our area and also highlight the detrimental impact on rural communities from centralisation of services.

**Action: DSG/SESG(2019)M004/A010: DSG Secretariat to bring forward information on Rural Communities (Scotland) Bill for discussion at the DSG business meeting with a view to drafting a response for further input from all DSG members.**

- Trudy Morris noted that the North Highland Regeneration Fund AGM would be held on Friday 22 November 2019 at 0930 hrs.

Before closing, Davie Alexander invited Steve Young to provide any initial thoughts from observing the meeting. Steve Young noted that he was pleased to have attended so he could listen to the community requirements and recognised he would need help in taking forward some of his own ideas. He did point out that the scope of his work at Dounreay was still evolving albeit that the people strategy would be his priority but felt that he could perhaps support some of the community initiatives going forward utilising his experience from prior work commitments. He thanked the group for taking the time to reach out to him and to take time to explain some of the initiatives already in train.

There being no further business, Davie Alexander thanked everyone for their input and formally closed the meeting.

**David Alexander**  
**DSG Socio Economic sub group chair**  
**31<sup>st</sup> October 2019**

**ACTIONS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING**

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DSG/SESG(2019)M004/A002: June Love to continue to progress date for Jacq Longrigg to visit Caithness to discuss skills.

DSG/SESG(2019)M004/A003: Dawn Clasper to send Trudy Morris a copy of the Rolls Royce written update report.

DSG/SESG(2019)M004/A004: Anna MacConnell to provide update on projected timelines for Wick Harbour Authority high water gate following the meeting to be held.

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