

DOUNREAY STAKEHOLDER GROUP**CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT****Introduction**

When I took over the chair of the Dounreay Stakeholder Group back in March 2020, I certainly had no idea what the next year would bring. With Covid lockdowns enforced in every corner of the country and a very clear message to minimise contact to protect the National Health Service, it inevitably impacted on DSG meetings throughout 2020.

The DSG officials took the decision to cancel our scheduled meetings at the beginning of lockdown, believing that this would be eased in sufficient time to recommence our normal business through subgroups and public meetings. Sadly, this was not to be and what was hoped to be a short period of disruption quickly turned into one of the most turbulent periods of peace-time history.

Early on, the DSG Business meeting group took the decision to meet fortnightly ensuring that information flowed between business meeting and members. I would like to thank members for their continued contribution in commenting of documents, taking part in virtual conferences and providing comment/views for various consultations. I would also like to thank NDA, DSRL, Rolls Royce and Vulcan in attending business meetings at various times throughout the year to provide useful information to ensure DSG were kept fully informed.

In October a full DSG meeting was convened where the agenda concentrated on socio economics matters, with the decision made commence subgroups again in January 2021, using a virtual platform. David Peattie, NDA Chief Executive also attended the start of this meeting to provide an update on the site's transition. While never the same as meeting in person virtual meetings were useful and constructive and therefore future meetings will continue to be held on this platform until such times restrictions are lifted.

This year also saw the announcement that the NDA would terminate the Dounreay management contract with Cavendish Dounreay Partnership and start the transition of the site back under the One NDA. The transition continues and expected to be finalised on 1st April. We were pleased to hear that Mark Rouse has been appointed as Managing Director and this provides continuity for the site. As I write this, a number of other appointments have been made with some still outstanding.

On a more personal note, I would also like to acknowledge past chair, David Flear's MBE award for services to health, community care and the community. Knowing the work he put into the DSG and other organisations when he was involved makes this truly well deserved.

Activities 2020-21

Despite restrictions in place, DSG continued to play an active role and below provides a summary of these:

Meetings attended by DSG representatives

There continued to be a number of meetings held via virtual platforms and it is pleasing to see that the Site Stakeholder Group Chair's Forum will now meet on a quarterly basis to allow interaction with the SSG Chairs and vice-chairs across the NDA estate. DSG was instrumental in developing a Terms of Reference of this group and allows common themes to be discussed.

We also continued to take part in workshops and conferences and I must place on record our thanks to David Broughton and Gillian Coghill for attending a number of waste related meetings. Both attended the NDA Integrated Waste Management conference while David Broughton also attended the Aarhus roundtable discussion on radioactive waste.

David Broughton and Gillian Coghill also attended a Dounreay workshop looking at all possible options for the LLW pits on site and we are grateful to them for giving up their time to attend these and more importantly to ensure views of stakeholders were provided.

We also attended the Scottish Government Scottish Nuclear Sites meeting providing a DSG update for the meeting.

DSG, alongside CNSRP and Chamber, also took part in the MOD market engagement day, providing overview presentations to a wide range of interested companies looking to bid for the Vulcan site's decommissioning programme.

As mentioned previously, DSG business meetings have continued to meet fortnightly since Covid-19 restrictions began. These meetings were frequently attended by Mark Rouse, Dounreay MD to provide updates on the Covid evolving situation of returning to work, transition and various other topics. We also had the pleasure of meeting with Davie Peattie, NDA Chief Executive alongside newly appointed NDA Chair, Ros Rivaz.

- Representation at various other meetings continued including:
 - Caithness Transport Forum
 - CNSRP Advisory Board
 - Caithness Community Planning Partnership

Consultations

It is pleasing to see that members continued to contribute the collective responses to various consultations, including:

- DSG(2020)C022: Just Transition - response to interim report
- DSG(2020)C023: Strategic transport response to consultation, 8th April 2020
- DSG(2020)C037: DSG response to pre-consultation on NDA Strategy 4
- DSG(2020)C048: DSG response to NDA draft strategy 4
- DSG(2020)C050: Council Commission: proposal to change boundaries
- DSG(2020)C056: UK Government Connectivity
- DSG(2021)C002: NDA draft business plan

Engagement between DSG/Japan

Having had the honour of visiting Japan it was great to see continued engagement with our local high school taking part in the 'Japanese' school project. Unfortunately the results of the project was cut short due to Covid. However, there has been recent engagement with Japan in the last couple of months and we hope to be able to continue these interactions during the next year alongside finalising the school project which explore cultural differences between Japan and Scotland.

Changes to personnel

We have seen people within the Dounreay/Vulcan organisations come and go and I would like to place on record our thanks to all those who have contributed to DSG business over the year and extend good wishes to those who have moved on.

Covid-19 support

It would have been remiss of me not to make mention of the incredible Covid related support that the Dounreay site has provided within the community. Too much to mention but the support has been immense by so many of the workforce.

Looking forward

As we begin to look forward and hope that, with Covid statistics going the right way, DSG continues to have an important role to play in the community.

The site will transition back under the OneNDA on 1st April and we will be looking for assurances that the management changes do not cause distractions which could lead to safety issues.

The Dounreay Near Term Work Plan (NTWP) should be finalised on 1st April and that will allow some surety on the decommissioning programme for the next three years. The importance of the lifetime plan cannot be underestimated as progress with decommissioning will inevitably lead to job reductions and for those agencies who are tasked with regeneration the information on the timeline and staffing resource will become more important overtime.

As the site moves back under the OneNDA it provides further opportunities to retain some employment in Caithness servicing the nuclear industry across the NDA estate, even when Dounreay decommissioning is complete, and we look forward to seeing good progress with this over the next 2-3 years.

As MOD Vulcan moves into a decommissioning phase it will be equally important to ensure that they maximise local benefits ensuring social value is part of the contract moving forward.

Conclusion

Personally, I am heartened to see the good collaboration between all the CNSRP partners involved in looking at what comes after Dounreay. Of note, the Chamber of Commerce should be congratulated for the impressive work they have carried out, on behalf of the CNSRP, to develop a robust business plan for a Public Service Obligation for Wick/JOG airport. Through a very clear and cohesive engagement plan the consistent messages from all involved has been instrumental in securing some funding from Scottish Government to ensure we can get our airport can remain open for business.

This year also saw funding from DSRL to enhance the CNSRP with additional resource which, in a short space of time, has proved fruitful in ensuring the programme and business development and I am sure there will be some positive announcements over the coming year as projects being explored right now start to become a reality.

For DSG, there is still work to be done ensuring the continued oversight and scrutiny of the site operations alongside the opportunities for future employment for, not just today's workforce, but to ensure future employment opportunities for future generations to come.

Cllr Struan Mackie
DSG Chair
10 March 2021