

DOUNREAY STAKEHOLDER GROUP BUSINESS MEETING**Minutes of DSG Business Meeting held on Tuesday 31 August 2021 at 0930 via Microsoft Teams.**

Present:	Cllr Struan Mackie	DSG Chair
	Davie Alexander	DSG Vice-chair & Socio Economic sub group chair
	Gillian Coghill	DSG Site Restoration sub group chair
	Roger Saxon	DSG Honorary Member
	Cllr Willie Mackay	DSG Site Restoration sub group deputy chair
	Peter Faccenda	DSG Socio Economic sub group deputy chair
	Dawn Clasper	DSG Minute Secretary, DSRL
In Addition:	Cllr Jill Tilt	Highland Council
	John West	High Life Highland Director of Culture and Learning

MINUTES**1. WELCOME**

Cllr Struan Mackie welcomed everyone to the meeting. He welcomed Cllr Jill Tilt, Highland Council to the meeting and noted that John West, High Life Highland Director of Culture and Learning would be attending the meeting for agenda item 5.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from June Love.

3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Cllr Struan Mackie noted that the minutes of the last meeting – DSG/BM(2021)M0013, 17 July 2021 – had been endorsed by members via email. Members agreed this was a true reflection of the meeting. No issues from the minutes were raised. These would now be circulated to all DSG members for their information.

4. ACTION STATUS

Dawn Clasper updated on the progress of actions. Discussion centred on:

- DSG/BM(2021)M013/A03: Davie Alexander to write to Maree Todd requesting support for the PSO for Wick/JOG airport. **Action complete:** Letter sent to Maree Todd on 17th August 2021 (DSG(2021)C038 refers).

Dawn Clasper noted that a response has been received from Maree Todd and this would be circulated to the Business meeting.

Action: DSG/BM(2021)M014/A01: Dawn Clasper to circulate response from Maree Todd

- DSG(2021)M02/A011: Cllr Struan Mackie to provide a copy of the letter sent to CNSRP. Struan Mackie confirmed that this letter was for internal circulation. This action will be closed. Cllr Mackie noted that there had been a lot of scrutiny making sure the programme was suitable for potential future opportunities. It was noted that there are a number of DSG

members who sit on different groups, and more was needed to get member groups to contribute in a meaningful way.

Peter Faccenda noted that as part of the review they will be looking at how the partnership is scrutinised and governed. The Advisory Boards remit is to challenge the executive board on resourcing and the direction of travel, focus etc and this needed to align. The DSG is locally focused as is CNSRP but there were some partners with wider remits and there was a need to ensure the emphasis the importance of putting effort in locally as well as to their regional or national remits. He noted that the review would be taking place shortly and hoped this would include people who will have a view and influence to provide input to achieve actions rather than talking points.

David Alexander asked who would be carrying out the review. Peter Faccenda responded that this would be carried out by a third party company.

Cllr Struan Mackie noted that he was pleased to see DSG actions being closed out in a timely manner.

5. HIGH LIFE HIGHLAND UPDATE RE NORTH COAST VISITOR ATTRACTION

Cllr Struan Mackie welcomed John West and invited him to provide an update on the North Coast Visitor Centre.

John West thanked the group for the opportunity to provide an update. He noted that he had provided a written update prior to the meeting.

John West noted that there had been a delay in the handover of the building due to a number of issues. He, however, was pleased to advise that the facility was being handed over and a deep clean had been scheduled to take place on the 3 September. It would take around 4 weeks before the facility would be open to the public and the timeline was also dependent on the condition of the collections.

The capital works had now been completed, the building was weather proof and the lifts were now fully operational. Extensive health and safety and fire risk assessments had been undertaken which detailed a number of issues. These issues have been addressed so the building will be Health and Safety & Fire risk assessment compliant and additional Security measures have been improved throughout the building.

The café area would be fully refurbished installing new catering equipment throughout and improving the flooring and the seating area, it had been made health safety and environmentally compliant.

The North Coast Visitor Centre would be rebranded, and HLH were working with a marketing company. The existing flagpoles would be removed due to their condition and two new flagpoles would be installed above the entrance. It was proposed that the flags would reflect the NCVN and the Caithness County Flag.

All being well, it was estimated that the facility would be open in its entirety in early October but dates may be flexible in either direction depending on the condition of the substantial Caithness collections.

Cllr Struan Mackie thanked John West for his update.

David Alexander noted that it was good to see that it was looking more positive and asked why the building need so much work done. He also queried if HLH were confident that the building

was structurally sound and fit for purpose. John West responded that the main concern was the roof and there had been a series of problems with this which had led to interior issues. This may have been an issue with previous installations and could not be more precise about the background of the past works. He also noted that this was now on the Highland Council maintenance schedule.

Roger Saxon noted that he had been involved as a Councillor on the Caithness Horizons Board for a number and noted that there had been a full repairing lease on the building, so any issues identified were discussed with the Council. He noted there was local scepticism about the museum and the change of the name as the name Caithness Horizons was on all signage and leaflets. He further asked if staff had been recruited and what element of staff would be giving tourist advice. John West responded that staff has been recruited and visitor assistants would be trained locally and work with the local community. They would be taking on the local information point and would have strong links with the High Life Highland Library so local information would be shared between facilities. They were aiming to be 'Customer Service Excellence' within the first year of opening to improve the customer experience. NCVC were also planning to run a year round programme of events which would build through the autumn and winter months and into the summer. HLH teams including adult learning, music, ranger service and leisure teams would participate in supporting the programme and the Youth Worker would operate from NCVC to encourage young people to use the space productively.

Peter Faccenda thanked John West for his update noting that it was good to hear such exciting plans and it would be a fantastic facility for the area. He asked if there was going to be a local manager and if they would be liaising with the local infrastructure such as Venture North who are doing development destination management. John West responded that the local manager would be Susan Taylor and she would be based in the facility and supported by colleagues highland wide.

Cllr Willie Mackay noted he was excited about the future of the NCVC and that while he had been a director for nine years there had always been issues with the building in terms of wind, water tight and heating. He was looking forward to the opening and that the facility should provide a great asset the community.

Gillian Coghill thanked John West for his updated and was happy to hear that it had been handed over. She noted that it was good to hear HLH have plans to encourage the community to use the facilities and was glad to hear that they had thought about income and sustainability. She hoped this would bring more vitality and people into the town and wished them every success.

Cllr Struan Mackie thanked John West for this time and noted that as a group DSG should support the NCVC by hosting business meeting or subgroup meetings in the facility adding that this would be a good asset for Caithness and the North of Scotland. He emphasised the need for a revenue stream to make it sustainable. Cllr Struan Mackie noted that HLH would need to engage with the wider community to integrate other events and programmes.

Action: DSG/BM(2021)M014/A02: Dawn Clasper to circulate the NCVC brief.

Action: DSG/BM(2021)M014/A03: DSG to arrange a meeting in the NCVC once back to normal arrangements.

6. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION WITH CLLR JILL TILT

Cllr Struan Mackie congratulated Cllr Jill Tilt on her successful election to the Wick and East Caithness area. He also provided a background on the DSG and its' roles and remits.

Cllr Jill Tilt thanked the group for the opportunity to engage with them and noted that she had been unaware of the DSG. She was from an army family and had been all over the world but moved to Caithness 15 years ago. Her main focus would be on NHS as she had noted when she moved here it was very isolated and that there was a requirement for medicine, specialists, and hospital equipment. Her other focus would be on the condition of the roads and signage at passing places on single track roads that were either missing or had been knocked over.

Cllr Struan Mackie thanked Cllr Jill Tilt for attending the meeting and noted that the DSG had interests in the issues she would be focusing on as this would support the decommissioning journey, diversification of the economy and general socio economic wellbeing of constituents. He noted that the DSG had a range of representatives from the port authority to CHAT and held regular discussions on infrastructure such as Wick John O’Groat Airport and the roads. Cllr Struan Mackie also noted that Caithness & North Sutherland had been identified as a priority area and was given special preference when it came to investment and strategic projects to invest.

7. SSG CHAIR’S FORUM WORKING GROUP

David Alexander provided an overview of the SSG Chairs Forum. He stated that he had circulated the draft NDA Guidance for Site Stakeholder Groups 2021 to Business Meeting members. He also noted that the DSG remit and objectives align with most of the guidance and had been pleased to see the addition within the NDA guidance of the secretariat support and funding which provided some assurance for all SSGs. He added that this should not affect the running of the DSG and hoped that the guidance would be adopted at the next national meeting.

Cllr Struan Mackie agreed with David Alexander and thanked him for his update.

Peter Faccenda noted that it was good that NDA had set out clarification on support and funding which provided the clarity required by SSGs to continue to operate.

There were no further comments from the Business meeting members.

8. DSG REVIEW PROPOSAL

Cllr Struan Mackie noted there have been two proposals received. As time was limited at this meeting he proposed a further meeting be convened to discuss the two proposals and reach a conclusion. This was agreed by the Business meeting members.

Action: DSG/BM(2021)M014/A04: Dawn Clasper to arrange a meeting to discuss the proposals.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The following was raised:

- Cllr Struan Mackie noted the Caithness Council group will be without a Ward Manager as Alex MacManus had now retired. As yet there was not a permanent replacement for Highland Council Ward Manager as the Ward Manager structure was currently under review.
- Cllr Struan Mackie has asked Highland Council to write to Scottish Government to specify the new ministerial responsibilities for Fusion policies with the re-organisation of the Scottish Government and it was essential to understand how the two parties would work together.

Peter Faccenda note on the Scottish Green Party’s publicly stated policy on Fusion on their website was ‘they are not against fusion but they think investment should not be directed

towards fusion but towards existing technologies as they do not believe Fusion will be sufficiently rapidly developable to effect the current climate change.”

- David Alexander noted he had received an email from Rick Wylie, University of Central Lancashire inviting him to take part in a survey focusing on the contribution of the nuclear industry to public value in Caithness. This will take place in October. Roger Saxon and Cllr Struan Mackie had also received an invite.

Cllr Struan Mackie noted that this was a good opportunity to feed into this to be able to portray what is happening in the area.

10. CLOSE

There being no further business, Cllr Struan Mackie thanked everyone their input and formally closed the meeting.

Cllr Struan Mackie

DSG Chair

2 September 2021

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING

DSG/BM(2021)M014/A01: Dawn Clasper to circulate response from Maree Todd.

DSG/BM(2021)M014/A02: Dawn Clasper to circulate the NCVC brief.

DSG/BM(2021)M014/A03: DSG to arrange a meeting in the NCVC once back to normal arrangements.

DSG/BM(2021)M014/A04: Dawn Clasper to arrange a meeting to discuss the DSG scope proposals.