

## **DOUNREAY STAKEHOLDER GROUP**

### **CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT**

#### **Introduction**

Covid constraints continued during the year 2021/22 and despite restrictions on physical meetings, I am extremely pleased that the DSG meetings continued despite the lack of face-to-face meetings.

All meetings – both public and subgroups – continued to meet as per agreed schedule, with Members and Observers linking up virtually through the Microsoft Teams platform. While the experience for the attendees is simply not comparable to meeting face to face I would like to thank everyone for their patience in attending and for ensuring that the protocol for virtual meetings were adhered to.

The business meeting continued to meet fortnightly during the year which allowed for a number of key topics to be discussed, actions to be taken agreed and generally continued to keep information flowing at all times. It also allowed the business meeting to keep on top of the actions to ensure these were closed out in a timely manner.

This year has seen a number of changes being made to the way the site operates. It became part of the NDA Group on 1 April 2021 thus signalling the end of the Parent Body Organisation (PBO) model for the site. Following hot on the heels of Dounreay coming back within the NDA Group was the announcement of Dounreay joining with Magnox. While this is still in the early stages of planning this will be a key focus of the DSG moving forward to ensure that the site's unique identity is not lost as it joins with the Magnox structure.

It is also fair to say that there was a lot of frustration with the Ministry of Defence, with the DSG membership highlighting the lack of meaningful engagement and communication with our SSG at a key juncture for the NRTE Vulcan site. I am pleased to say that having raised these frustrations through both direct and public channels that MOD engagement has improved and that our frustration sits with the organisation as a whole and not with the local teams. Notwithstanding, the decision of MOD to take forward a procurement for the decommissioning of the Vulcan site remains something that DSG will require to focus on as the procurement process progresses.

#### **Activities 2020-21**

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

#### **Meetings attended by DSG representatives**

There continued to be a number of meetings held via virtual platforms and it was pleasing to see that the Site Stakeholder Group Chair's Forum continues to meet on a quarterly basis to allow interaction with other SSG Chairs and vice-chairs across the NDA estate.

- Representation at various other meetings continued including:
  - Scottish Government Scottish Nuclear sites
  - Caithness Transport Forum
  - CNSRP Advisory Board
- In addition, DSG representatives attended the DRS trial for commercial freight on 22 April 2021 at Georgemas Junction.

## **Consultations**

Members continued to contribute to collective responses to various consultations, including:

- DSG(2021)C002: NDA Draft business plan April 2021
- DSG(2021)C049: DSG response to CNSRP Advisory Board remit
- DSG(2022)C001: NDA Draft business plan April 2022
- DSG(2022)C006: North Highland College – proposed college merger

## **Presentations received at public meetings:**

Given the restrictions for meetings, the format of the public meeting was changed to focus on a particular topic rather than taking all the sub group business to the public meeting. Presentations provided throughout the year were:

- DSG(2021)C015: DRSL transition and near term work plan
- DSG(2021)C026: Dounreay update, new term work plan and site end state review
- DSG(2021)C043: MOD presentation on decommissioning timescales for Vulcan

## **Correspondence of note:**

As a Group, we continued to make representation on a number of topics, including:

- DSG(2021)C012: Support for the Fusion (STEP) reactor to be sited in Caithness.
- DSG(2021)C018: MOD discussion on social value for Vulcan contract
- DSG(2021)C038: Letter of support for PSO for Wick/JOG airport

And continued to make representation for clarity of Scottish Government Energy Policy.

## **Other activities**

The DSG Socio economic sub group continued to oversee the Dounreay Community Fund with 28 organisations and charities benefiting with funding support. Organisations ranged from Sport Clubs, Village halls to Santa's grotto and other membership groups such as the Brownies, Guides and Scouts. All help to support the fabric of our community.

We were also pleased to welcome Jamie Reed to Caithness in the first week of his new job taking over the NDA Socio Economic Director from Andrew Van Der Lem. He provided an opportunity for Jamie to see first hand the efforts being made by the CNSRP and other groups to actively seek alternative and diversified employment in the area.

## **Changes to personnel**

We have seen people within the DSG (member and observers) 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. Notably:

- Alastair MacDonald, Founding chair of DSG
- Sam Usher, Strategic Programme Director, Dounreay
- Cdr Mark Cleminson, MOD Vulcan

## **Looking forward**

As we begin to look forward and hope that the start of a new financial year allows more meetings to take place in person the work of the DSG is as important than ever.

Our focus for the coming year, among many other things, will continue to:

- ensure timely updates on Dounreay joining with Magnox to ensure Dounreay continues to have a unique identity.
- challenge the NDA on the benefits of Dounreay being part of the NDA Group in terms of research and development and lead and learn sites.
- seek clarity from DSRL on the Life Time Plan and site end state date.
- Seek to further engage with MOD in relation to social value and the decommissioning contract.
- To work with, support and become a voice, to support the CNSRP activities within the area.

### **Conclusion**

This year saw an independent review being undertaken for DSG. The final report has been provided and the recommendations now need to be considered. This will be taken forward under the new DSG officials once elected. I would like to personally thank everyone who took the time and trouble to feedback their comments.

I would also like to congratulate CNSRP on the way that ‘true partnership’ working was reflected in the combined efforts for the area to pitch for the Fusion (STEP) reactor. The timescales for submitting a formal response was tight and each and everyone of the partnership organisations worked together to submit a case for the reactor being sited in Caithness. This demonstrates the power of working together, with community, supply chain and political stakeholders working in unison. While our area was not selected to go forward in the site selection process, I am sure there are lessons that were learnt and it is the belief of many that we are well placed to take advantage of future opportunities. Notwithstanding the current political climate that is actively restraining opportunities for our region in the field of nuclear, the unique skills and supply chain capability in the area is an asset to the Far North.

To end of a positive note, another example of partnership working was that of securing the PSO for Wick/JOG airport. CNSRP partners worked together, with Dounreay providing funding to allow the Chamber to produce a robust business case, to the Highland Council contributing financially and taking forward the procurement and for CNSRP core team in co-ordinating and ensuring the county spoke with one coherent voice when making the case. The announcement of the airport re-opening its door in April was good news for the community and for business and those involved should be congratulated.

**Cllr Struan Mackie**

**DSG Chair**

10 March 2022