



DSG(2025)P017

DOUNREAY SOCIO ECONOMIC UPDATE*current as of 09 July 2025*

Highland Investment Plan

NRS Dounreay is engaging with the Highland Council and Hub North on the council's Highland Investment Plan (HIP). Councillors agreed to back the Points of Delivery (POD) plan and a community POD centred on the new High School. Dounreay is currently engaged in discussion on understanding possible alignments and synergies related to various POD designs including an office POD.

In addition, Dounreay is managing Focus North funding for UHI North, and Hebrides, provided by the NDA, related to development of a business case for an innovation centre, which is aligned to aims and aspiration of the HIP.

Socio Economic Communications

Socio Economic grant funding delivered by Dounreay and the NDA will be highlighted in a series of upcoming campaigns including:

- Discrete coverage of NRS socio economic funding on the UK Gov website on the 16th of July
- A six week campaign on NRS and NRS Dounreay channels covering six projects (three from Caithness and north Sutherland).

The Dounreay Socio Economic Annual Review for 2024/2025 is due to be published in August.

Just Transition Commission

The Just Transition Commission is an independent advisory body that provides scrutiny and advice on how to deliver a just transition to a low carbon economy in Scotland. The Commission visited the Dounreay site in early May as part of a wider visit to Caithness.

The Commission met with the Managing Director, Head of Sustainability and Socio Economics, Head of Communications and Stakeholder Relations, and Socio Economics manager to discuss the socio economic role of the site within the area, and wider Scottish economy. The Commission is set to publish its report on Caithness later in the year.

Socio Economic Benefits Realisation

Socio economic benefits and associated indicators have been completed for Dounreay, these are:

- Improved Local Wellbeing (workforce and wider community)
- Local Economic Growth and Diversification

The final benefits profiles are being developed and integrated into a new management system with associated benefits dashboards with the intention that they will be reported through the subgroup.

Grant funding

Dounreay continues to provide pre-application support for socio economic funding. Circa 70% of the FY 2025/2026 budget has already been committed on multi-year projects and we expect to fully utilise the socio economic budget this financial year – as per previous years.

The continued status of socio economic grant funding activities is recorded in Appendix 1, with new projects approved in the previous quarter outlined below:

- FR-000002798 – Latheron Show 100th Anniversary, £10,000 - <1yr
- FR-000002754 – Young Person Apprentice – Caithness Chamber of Commerce, £55,000 – 2yr

Procurement

The following financial figures are for Q1 2025/2026, with the number of companies cumulative for Q1. It should be noted that they do not sum to any total.

- Total Spend £24.9M, including mandatory spend.
- £16.9M is non mandatory and non-utility.
- £3M is with 38 (YTD) companies that are Caithness owned.
- £10.4M is with 17 (YTD) companies with Caithness resource*.
- £13.4M is spent with Caithness owned or resourced suppliers.
- £6.3M is with 227 (YTD) SME suppliers (including Caithness SME).

*Includes some mandatory spend. (YTD = year to date).

The socio economics team, working with the commercial team, continue to improve how Dounreay sets, assesses, and monitors social value across in scope procurements. Dounreay continues to manage social value commitments from procurement.

Staffing

Recruitment continues to be carefully managed. Dounreay shares full details of all internal and external recruitment with the DSG Business Group to ensure transparency. Updates were provided in April, May, and June of this quarter highlighting recruitment due to new posts, internal backfill, and leavers.

Ten summer students are currently on 3 month placements with various Dounreay teams.

STEM

NRS Dounreay engineers and apprentices supported 4 primary schools at Goblin Car Final at Alford on 13 June. The Caithness pupils are pictured here with their cars and the Dounreay engineers and apprentices.

Initial email has been sent to schools asking for interest in the 2025/26 First Lego League Challenge. NRS Dounreay supports schools participating from Caithness and North Sutherland, and hosts the North Highland Tournament in partnership with DYW North Highland and UHI North West and Hebrides.



1 Caithness Pupils at Goblin Car Finals

Dounreay Heritage

Provided in Appendix 2

Visits to Dounreay

- The Just Transition Commission: 8 May
- Peter Hill CBE, NDA Chair, Harriet Kemp, Alex Reeves NDA NEDs: 12 May
- Rob Fletcher, NRS CEO and Lawrie Haynes CBE, NRS Chair: 20-22 May
- Diane Hamilton, Scottish Government: June 4
- John Vickerman, NRS Chief of People: 10-12 June



2 Just Transition Visit to Dounreay

**Magnus Davidson,
NRS Dounreay Socio Economics Manager**

**David Calder,
NRS Dounreay Head of Sustainability and Socio Economics**

09/07/2025

Appendix 1

Rolling status of socio economic grant funding activities

Funded Project	Completion date	Progress	Comments
CNSRP (Focus North) support hub	30/03/2024		Funding commitment: 3 years Total award: £487,000 Yr 4 (25/26): £83k* remaining. £21.3K paid to date.
Caithness Transport Forum	31/03/2027		Funding commitment: 3 years Total award: £30K Yr 2 (25/26): £10K £10K paid to date.
Focus North Programme Manager	31/03/2027		Funding commitment: 3 years Total award: Up to £124,830k Yr 2 (25/26): Up to £40k £9.9K paid to date.
STEM activities	N/A		Funding commitment: ongoing Total annual award £25k £4.7K spent to date
Dounreay Community Fund	N/A		Funding commitment: ongoing Total annual award £35k £35k paid for 2025/26
Ormlie Community Association	30/09/2026		Funding commitment: 3 years Total award: £60k Yr 3: £20k £0 paid to date
Dunbeath and District Centre	31/12/2026		Funding commitment: 3 year Total award: £ 149,630 Yr 3: £24,938 £0 paid to date
Rumster Outdoor Centre	31/07/2025		Funding commitment: 1 year Total award: £43,000 Yr 1: £43,000 £43,000 paid to date
Science Skills Academy Newton Room Thurso	01/06/2028		Funding commitment: 3 year Total award: £128,000 Yr 1: £40,000 £0 paid to date
North Coast Visitor Centre (Highlife Highland)	31/10/2027		Funding commitment: 3 year Total award £265,000 Yr 1: £75,000 £75k paid to date
Community Plan and Delivery (Thurso)	30/09/2027		Funding commitment: 3 yr Total award: £200,000 Yr 1: £66,666

Funded Project	Completion date	Progress	Comments
Community Development Trust)			£33.3k paid to date
Masterplan Delivery Officer (UpNorth! CDT)	01/03/2027		Funding commitment: 2 yr Total award: £36,551 Yr 2: £18,177 £0 paid to date
Destination Strategy and Venture North (CCoC)	31/03/2028		Funding commitment: 3 yr Total award: £342,000 Yr 1: £147,667 £88.2K paid to date
Caithness Sports Council Reboot (CSC)	31/03/2026		Funding commitment: 1 year Total award: £10,000 £10k paid to date
Farm Cluster and Baseline Pilot (NHI)	31/03/2026		Funding commitment: 1 year Total award: £72,186 £72,186 paid to date
Community Infrastructure Support Programme (NHI)	31/03/2026		Funding commitment: 1 year Total award: £100,000 £100k paid to date
Apprenticeship Programme (CBF)	31/03/2027		Funding commitment: 2 years Total award: £150,000 Yr 1: £150,000 £150k paid to date
Future Skills Graduate Scheme	31/03/2027		Funding commitment: 2 years Total award: £100,000 Yr 1: £100,000 £100k paid to date

Appendix 2

Dounreay Heritage Initiative

Progress report – April to June 2025

Collection of objects

No objects were collected in the period.

Recording of memories

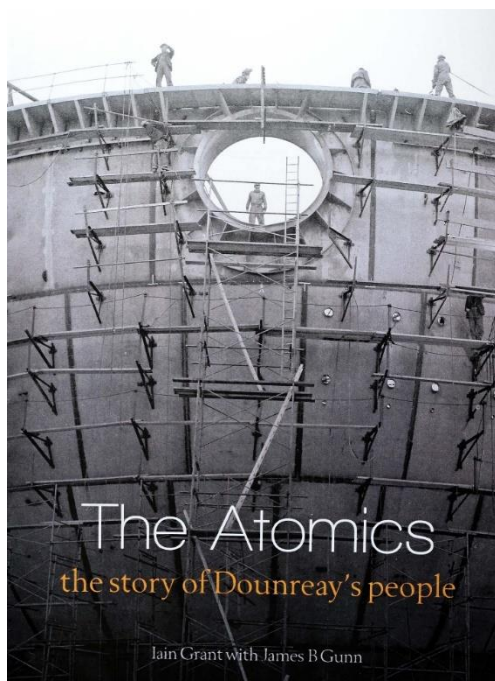
A process to capture the memories of those leaving the site is in place. A form with seven questions is sent to leavers, and it is voluntary to complete it. Two forms were returned in the period.

Research projects

The three-year NuSPACES research project about nuclear cultural heritage was completed in September 2024. It was undertaken by a collaboration of academics from the UK, Sweden and Lithuania. James Gunn was one of the project's board members.

The project will publish an international book about nuclear cultural heritage in late 2025 and one of the case studies will be about the Dounreay and Sellafield heritage initiatives. Comments by various academics on the draft Dounreay/Sellafield case study were received and are being addressed.

Dounreay history



3 'The Atomics' cover

Dounreay's 70th anniversary is in 2025 and to mark this milestone a book has been written by James Gunn and Thurso journalist Iain Grant. The book was reviewed by the Dounreay and NDA Communications teams and approved for publication after the minor comments were addressed. The book is with the printer and should be delivered in mid/late-July. It is intended to launch the book at the Mey Games on 2nd August 2025. The title is, "The Atomics: the story of Dounreay's people" – see image left. The price for the softback version is £17.99. It can be pre-ordered from the Whittles Publishing website or bought from the Dounreay Public Information Office, 7 Olrig Street, Thurso, after 5th August. Any profits will go to the

Dounreay Employees Charity Fund. The book has 232 pages, 125 illustrations/photographs, and:

- Highlights the significance of Dounreay to the nation in being the UK's centre for R&D into nuclear fast reactors
- Details how it affected a small and remote rural community, particularly the market town of Thurso
- Concentrates on the social history and features numerous recollections of workers and people of the local community

James Gunn recorded the memories of numerous people during research for the book. The recordings and transcripts were donated to the Caithness archive at Nucleus in Wick.

James Gunn has written history reports on a variety of Dounreay topics. Gordon Tait has written the history of decommissioning activities for numerous facilities. These reports are being reviewed for approval and should prove to be very useful to employees and historians.

Dounreay Reminiscence Group

The popular Dounreay Reminiscence Group (DRG) is due to resume in the Autumn with sessions being held at Nucleus in Wick.

Museums

The Halkirk Heritage and Vintage Motor Centre opened for the 2025 season at Easter. One of the new exhibitions is about Stephen's Plastics factory which was based in Halkirk from 1959 to 2014. The company supplied plastic suits and bags to the nuclear industry, particularly Dounreay. The comments from visitors have been very complimentary.

The National Museum of Scotland has a temporary exhibition about the Cold War until the end of 2025. It mentions Dounreay, Vulcan, the former US Navy base at Forss and has objects on display from Dounreay and the Forss Base. The small exhibition can be seen at the main museum on Chambers Street, Edinburgh. James Gunn visited the exhibition and found it very interesting.

James Gunn
NRS Dounreay Information & Knowledge Manager
2 July 2025

4 'The Atomics' front cover