



DSGSESG(2026)P002

DOUNREAY SOCIO ECONOMIC UPDATE

current as of 10 April 2026

NRS Dounreay Socio Economic Organisational Update

As of the 1st of April 2026, David Calder is Head of Socio Economics covering all of NRS and Alan Krailing is Heading of Sustainability covering all of NRS. The Head of Socio Economics role continues to report into the NRS Director of Communications and Stakeholder Relations and sits on the Dounreay Leadership Team, reflecting Caithness and north Sutherland being one of the three NDA priority areas, alongside North Wales and Cumbria. Dounreay continues to have dedicated socio economic resource which continues to work collaboratively across NRS and the wider NDA Group.

Dounreay Socio Economic Annual Review

The 2024/2025 Dounreay Socio Economic Annual Review has now been [published](#). The 2025/2026 report is now being drafted and will include updated economic impact analysis which supersedes the analysis last published in 2022 (see Economic Impact Study section below).

The 2025/2026 Dounreay Employees Charity Fund Annual Report can be found in Appendix 2.

Highland Investment Plan

NRS Dounreay continues to engage with the Highland Council and Hub North on the Highland Investment Plan (HIP). Work is currently being undertaken by NRS to develop plans or support projects on office accommodation, living accommodation (housing), and innovation. NRS Dounreay are currently engaged with a supplier to develop an accommodation strategy business case.

Economic Impact Study

NRS Dounreay has been engaged through an NDA Group wide contract to develop the latest Economic Impact Study quantifying the economic impact of sites and the NDA group. The previous report was completed in 2022 and is updated on a three-year basis. A final draft report has now been received for comment and will be published in May after the election. The DSG will receive a copy in advance of publication.

Grant Funding

NRS Dounreay continues to provide pre-application support for socio economic funding. Dounreay is running a heavily pressurised budget in 2026/2027 and is expected to draw down further additional funds from the NDA as per previous years.

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

- FR-000002952 - Redevelopment of The John O' Groats Playpark (£50,000, <1yr project)
- FR-000003035 - Noss Primary School Parent Council School Trip (£10,000 <1yr project)
- FR-000003045 – Wick Community Hub (£90,000, 3 yr project)
- FR-000003076 – Apprenticeship Programme Caithness Business Fund (£150,000, 3 yr project)
- FR-000003099 - Science 03 Caithness International Science Festival 2026 – 2028 (£60,000 3 yr project)
- FR-000003090 - Community Infrastructure Support Programme (CISP) (£200,000 3 yr project, £50,000 funded)
- FR-000003089 - Community Resilience Fund (£200,000 3 yr project, £50,000 funded)
- FR-000003060 - NHI Farming Project (£200,000 3 yr project)
- FR-000003121 – Scottish Surfing Federation - Scottish National Surfing Championships (£30,000, 3 yr project)
- FR-000003111- Caithness Business Fund – FutureSkills Flexible Training Scheme (£200,000 1 yr project, £50,000 NDA funded)
- FR-000003107 – Wick Harbour Authority – River Harbour Development Wave Modelling (£10,000 1 yr project)
- FR-000003108 – North Highland Chamber of Commerce - All Energy Exhibition Stand 2026 Focus North (£12,000 1 yr project)
- FR-000003152 – Focus North Communications and Marketing Support. (£90,000, 1 yr project, £87,000 NDA Funded)

Please note the above values are the total award value from NRS Dounreay. Total project values may be higher.

Procurement

The following financial figures are for Q4 2025/2026, with the number of companies cumulative for Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4. It should be noted that the line items do not sum to any total. These numbers are provisional at end of P12 and may be liable to change.

Q4 FY25/26 Spend

- £ 32M including Mandatory Spend
- £ 22.6M of which is non mandatory and non-utility
- £ 4.4M is with 36 companies that are Caithness owned
- £ 7.3M is with 15 companies with Caithness resource*
- £ 11.7M is spent with Caithness owned or resourced suppliers
- £ 12M is with 272 SME Suppliers (Including Caithness SME)

YTD FY25/26 Spend

- £ 112.9M including Mandatory Spend
- £ 79.4M of which is non mandatory and non-utility
- £ 14.9M is with 44 companies that are Caithness owned
- £ 26.1M is with 16 companies with Caithness resource*
- £ 41.0M is spent with Caithness owned or resourced suppliers
- £ 34.5M is with 424 SME Suppliers (Including Caithness SME)

*Includes some mandatory spend

FY = Financial Year, 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. No new updates were provided in the last quarter however offers to the new cohort of graduates have been sent out (19 of 20 accepted to date) and apprenticeship interviews have taken place with offers due out shortly.

Mutually Agreed Voluntary Exit (MAVE) has now taken place with circa 22 roles going and circa 70 people leaving the business.

As of the 1st of April 2026, 68 decommissioning operatives, managers, and support staff from GDES, Morson, and Nuvia have TUPE transferred and joined NRS Dounreay.

Awards

Three Dounreay nominees were awarded runner up status at the National Skills Academy for Nuclear (NSAN) Awards in March. The finalists were, David James in the Graduate category, Fallon Campbell in the Apprentice category and the FutureSkills initiative developed in conjunction with the North Highland Chamber of Commerce in the People Power category.



STEM

Dounreay is engaged on developing a new STEM strategy, with work delayed from end of Q4 to engage further stakeholders.

STEM activity in the last quarter has focussed on the First Lego League North Highland Tournament with NRS Dounreay funding the winning team from Newton Park Primary to attend the UK Final in Harrogate on 24 April 2026.



In addition support has been provided for Goblin car racing. There are 9 cars being built at 8 primary schools across Caithness, supported by NRS Dounreay engineers and apprentices and Rolls Royce apprentices. NRS Dounreay is funding the teams' travel and accommodation to allow them to compete at Alford on 12 June 2026.

Furthermore, NRS Dounreay supported the Caithness Science Festival held at Wick High School, where representatives from Training, Waste, Engineering/Drone Team, and our graduate cohort came together to inspire the next generation of scientists

and engineers. Financial support was also provided through the socio economic grant funding programme.



Dounreay Heritage

James Gunn has now retired from Dounreay. James has provided regular updates to the DSG on heritage as well as his valued contribution to site for many years and we wish him the best in his retirement. NRS heritage is now handled at Nucleus; The nuclear and Caithness archive facility, by archivist Jamie McCaffrey.

His final heritage update is provided in Appendix 3.

Visits to Dounreay

- N/A this quarter

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

10/04/2026

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): £103k* carry over £95,0404 paid to date £8,637 accrual for FY 26/27
Caithness Transport Forum	31/03/2027		Funding commitment: 3 years Total award: £30,000 Yr 2 (25/26): £10,000 £10,000 paid to date.
Focus North Programme Manager	31/03/2027		Funding commitment: 3 years Total award: Up to £124,830 Yr 2 (25/26): Up to £40,000 £37,050 paid to date
STEM activities	N/A		Funding commitment: ongoing Total annual award £25,000 £14,125 paid to date
Dounreay Community Fund	N/A		Funding commitment: ongoing Total annual award £35,000 £40,845 paid to date £24,305 committed and accrued
Ormlie Community Association	30/09/2026		Funding commitment: 3 years Total award: £60,000 Yr 3: £20,000 £20k paid to date
Dunbeath and District Centre	31/12/2026		Funding commitment: 3 years Total award: £ 149,630 Yr 3: £24,938 £24,938 paid to date
Science Skills Academy Newton Room Thurso	01/06/2028		Funding commitment: 3 years Total award: £128,000 Yr 1: £40,000 £20k paid to date
North Coast Visitor Centre (Highlife Highland)	31/10/2027		Funding commitment: 3 years Total award £265,000 Yr 1: £75,000 £75k paid to date
Community Plan and Delivery (Thurso Community Development Trust)	30/09/2027		Funding commitment: 3 years Total award: £200,000 Yr 1: £66,666

Funded Project	Completion date	Progress	Comments
			£66,666 paid to date
Masterplan Delivery Officer (UpNorth! CDT)	01/03/2027		Funding commitment: 2 years Total award: £36,551 Yr 2: £18,177 £18,177 paid to date
Destination Strategy and Venture North (CCoC)	31/03/2028		Funding commitment: 3 years Total award: £342,000 Yr 1: £121,084 £121,084 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
Association of the Northern Trails, Trail Development Manager	01/07/2027		Funding commitment: 1 year Total award: £35,000 Yr 1: £35,000 £26,250 paid to date
Sidh Chailleann Art – Caithness Art and Stone Festival	30/06/2026		Funding commitment: 1 year Total award: £11,970 Yr 1: £11,970 £11,970 paid to date
Caithness CAB, Community Outreach	01/10/2028		Funding commitment: 3 years Total award: £176,644 Yr 1: £58,147 £58,417 paid to date
Wick Harbour Authority 2025 Masterplan	21/03/2026		Funding commitment: <1 year Total award: £23,888 £23,888 paid to date
Redevelopment of the John O' Groats Playpark	31/10/2026		Funding commitment: < 1 year Total award: £50,000 £50,000 paid to date
Noss Primary School Parent Council School Trip	14/05/2026		Funding commitment: < 1 year Total award: £10,000 £0 paid to date
Wick Community Hub	31/01/2029		Funding commitment: 3 years Total award: £90,000 Yr 1: £30,000 £30,000 paid to date
Apprenticeship Programme Caithness Business Fund	28/02/2027		Funding commitment: 1 year Total award: £150,000 £150,000 paid to date

Funded Project	Completion date	Progress	Comments
Science 03 Caithness International Science Festival	31/03/2028		Funding commitment: 3 years Total award: £60,000 Yr 1: £20,000 £20,000 paid to date
Community Infrastructure Support Programme (NHI)	31/03/2029		Funding commitment: 3 years Total award: £200,000 Yr 1: £66,667 £66,667 paid to date
Community Resilience Fund (NHI)	30/04/2029		Funding commitment: 3 years Total award: £200,000 Yr 1: £50,000 £paid to date
NHI Farm Project	31/03/2029		Funding commitment: 3 year Total award: £200,000 Yr 1: £51,553 £0 paid to date
Caithness Business Fund FutureSkills Flexible Training Scheme	31/03/2027		Funding commitment: 3 year Total award: £200,000 £125,000 paid to date
Scottish Surfing Federation National Championships	01/04/2029		Funding commitment: 3 year Total award: £30,000 Yr 1: £15,000 £15,000 paid to date
Wick Harbour Authority River Harbour Wave Modelling	31/04/2026		Funding commitment: <1 year Total award: £10,000 £0 paid to date
North Highland Chamber of Commerce (Focus North) All Energy Stand	14/05/2026		Funding commitment: < 1 year Total award: £12,000 £0 paid to date
Focus North Communications and Marketing Support	31/03/2027		Funding commitment: < 1 year Total award: £90,000 £0 paid to date

Appendix 2 Dounreay Employees Charity Fund



Annual Report 2025/26

Introduction

The aim of the Dounreay Employees Charity Fund is to grant assistance, on behalf of Dounreay employees to local charities and non-profit making organisations within Caithness and North Sutherland or that benefit the community. The DECF is funded by Dounreay employees through monthly deductions from their salaries.

Grant funding during 2025/26

During the FY 25/26 the DECF had 21 requests with 18 of these being approved by the committee: amounting to £16,595.

Key highlights of the year included the donation of proceeds from *The Atomics* book to the DECF, supported by a promotional stand at the Mey Games. In addition, the DECF held a stall at the Wellbeing Fayre during October.

Money granted to Lybster FC for new nettings at the pitch in Lybster.



£1,000 to team tender for the charity cycle trek.



£3,000 to Caithness FM Toy Appeal



Appendix 3 Dounreay Heritage Initiative

Progress report – January to March 2026

Collection of objects

A total of 506 objects have been collected since 2008. 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. Three forms were returned in the period.

Dounreay history

Dounreay's 70th anniversary was celebrated throughout 2025 and to mark this milestone a book was written by James Gunn and Thurso journalist Iain Grant. The title is, "The Atomics: the story of Dounreay's people".

The book has been selling very well with over 1,000 copies sold, raising around £15,000 for the Dounreay Employees Charity Fund.

It is available to buy at the NRS Dounreay public information office, the North Coast Visitor Centre, and on-line from the Porto Press website, www.portopress.com. The price is £17.99 for the paperback.

Dounreay Reminiscence Group

The popular Dounreay Reminiscence Group (DRG) continued with monthly sessions. The January session was a presentation by a former employee about the early operating years of PFR. Current staff from PFR and three graduates were among the audience of 40. This was the highest ever attendance. This is a great example of two-way knowledge exchange between generations.

The February session was a talk by an employee involved in the use of drones at Dounreay. The presentation included an appearance by the robotic dog "Spot" who proceeded to walk around the foyer at Nucleus causing much delight and photo opportunities. The talk on 26th March will be the last one before the sessions restart in October.

Miscellaneous

James Gunn, Heritage Officer since 2008, will retire on 31 March 2026. An interview by the Communications manager with James will feature in the March 2026 edition of the Dounreay News. James joined Dounreay in 1978 as a Scientific Trainee (48 years ago).

Complied by

James Gunn

NRS Dounreay Information & Knowledge Manager

12 March 2026