

Caithness & North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership

Advisory Board meeting T3UK, Janetstown, by Thurso

30th November 2012

- Attendees** Cllr G Farlow, B Manson (Community Council), Cllr G Ross, Cllr G Farlow, Cllr R Saxon, D Milnes (T&WTC), D McBeath (NHC), J Robertson (Crown Estate), A Macdonald (Babcock), B Baxter (CCC), Cllr J Green, K Nicol (DSRL), G Jenkins (NHC), L Cranna (SNH), S Johnson (JC+), S Sutherland (CCC), Rev R Johnstone (DSG), R Kirk (HIE), S Mackie (SHT), S Campbell (SDS), S Black (HC), N Dreaves (CCC), F Bruce, (DSRL), E Sinclair (CNSRP), E Gunn (CNSRP)
- Apologies** Cllr D Hendry, A Macconnell (NDA), F Gunn (Sutherland Partnership)

Cllr G Farlow chaired the meeting in place of Cllr Drew Hendry, who gave his apologies. The Chair opened the meeting and introduced Susan Johnson, Job Centre Plus, as well as John Green who now represents Caithness Voluntary Group.

1 Ignis Energy presentation:

The Board received a presentation from Craig Ibbetson at Ignis Energy who outlined the developments of the biomass plant at Wick and the resulting benefits to the area in terms of cheaper energy for residents, distillery expansions, investment in local economy, increase in skilled jobs and increased renewable energy useage.

ACTION: A Macdonald – discuss progress of nuclear archive with NDA as a potential future customer of Ignis Energy.

ACTION: E Sinclair – Pass details of this presentation to press.

3 Previous minutes were agreed without amendment.

4 Matters Arising

BT revised timescale means that the contract will be signed in January 2013. Wick JOG Airport discussions are ongoing.

4 Crown Estate update:

The board heard an update from J Robertson, Crown Estate. An additional lease in Lackey Sound brings the potential outputs to 1630MW. Message from the industry is that there is no appetite at the moment for further leasing rounds. Wave and Tidal information days were held this week. The Crown Estate Enabling Activities Fund has £5.7m intervention available to lend support and has received expressions of interest, this fund is not available for training.

Skills and Training was discussed. Previous systems to encourage apprentice numbers have been tried in Caithness. Most recently NHC had 90+ applicants for the 12 apprentices in its new programme, in which the College acts as employer. Sector-based work academies could work well in the Pentland Firth area with ETEC having a central role.

ACTION: E Sinclair to follow up with Job Centre Plus, SDS and Caithness Chamber.

5 Programme Manager Update:

ES spoke to his written update paper, highlighting progress with new and maintained jobs. B. Baxter reported that Kongsberg Maritime are recruiting 5-6 new staff in the next month; the recent purchase of the Dounreay Pensions Administration Office by AON Hewitt; further progress with the next stage of the Berriedale Braes project.

Inward Investment Update

Roy Kirk gave up update on work ongoing in Inward Investment including broadband now available in Thurso (ADSL 2+), the HIE Skills Register.

ACTION: E Sinclair – Circulate skills register link

Member Updates

- SNH
Update on the Peatlands Partnership's major project. Will engage community and education, and will bring some employment and volunteering opportunities, working with ERI.
- Assoc of Caithness Community Councils
W. Manson outlined 2013 plans to build a vintage motor museum in Halkirk, will link with John O Groats visitors and cruise tourists, potential to partner with college for apprentice training.
- North Highland College
All works on Thurso campus are complete. Intend to move focus to Dornoch campus in 2013. Future changes as regional board will be created to cover all H&I.
- Job Centre Plus
Welfare Reform Agenda is likely to have serious implications for people who are out of work, some people are going through pre employment training and work experience which guarantees an interview at the end. Feedback from programmes is taken into account, eg at Nigg recent 3G welding training has been altered to 6G as a result of feedback received.
- Caithness Partnership
Caithness Partnership no longer has funding to continue its work. The bus users' group and transport forum have been passed to Caithness Chamber of Commerce. Environmental funds are being tidied up, and the Board of CP will meet in new year to look at issues.
- Dounreay Alliance
2012-15 Socio-Economic Plan is now finalised however comments are still welcome, actions are being monitored. Working with NDA on funding, a few projects have come forward. Nuclear business ideas are being tested. Discussion papers have been produced on the renewables industry, focusing on marine energy O&M and Offshore Wind. Babcock are working with Hitachi on new nuclear.
- Caithness Chamber of Commerce
Attended nuclear supply chain event in Bolton; MTRC programme continues to make progress. Town centres project ends soon, but with retail training for local businesses to take place.
- DSG
Working with DSRL on socio-economic elements within site contracts.
- Trades Council
Concern at ongoing difficulties with contracts and procurement in socio-economic terms.
- Highland Council
Pleased that Pentland Firth & Orkney Waters Information Day in Thurso went well, particularly with attendance by schools.

Ref:	Action:	Responsible Person:
01	Discuss progress of nuclear archive with NDA as a potential future customer of Ignis Energy.	A MacDonald
02	Pass details of the Ignis Energy presentation to press.	E Sinclair
03	Follow up skills discussion with Job Centre Plus, SDS and Caithness Chamber	E Sinclair
04	Circulate skills register link	E Sinclair