

DOUNREAY STAKEHOLDER GROUP

COMMENTS ON CNSRP ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Dounreay Stakeholder Group (DSG) is represented by over 20 organisations and therefore this response is one that is generally agreed by most organisations. However, there are some organisations, who may not agree entirely with this submission and therefore these organisations have been encouraged to provide their own response.

-) DSG is grateful for the opportunity to submit comments on the CNSRP roles and responsibilities document.
-) As a general comment given the DSG representative had discussions with HIE as part of this review process it would be interesting to have seen the review report and its recommendations.
-) It was also generally agreed given DSG and other bodies were also reviewing their roles/remit it is believed that a judgement by CNSRP at this time was a bit premature. This should have been done in parallel with DSG and other reviews to ensure all topics for consideration were in fact being discussed at the most appropriate forum.
-) The timing of CNSRP's review should have waited until after the elections which would allow the Local Committee or Councillors to have an input on the proposed changes.
-) It should also be noted that the DSG review had recommended looking at the overlaps in reporting and the feeling amongst members were that topics relating to the regeneration of the area was discussed in multiple forums. However, DSG is the only public facing body that can raise any issues in the public arena. If CNSRP does not get reporting mechanisms and cascading of information correct then a vacuum will be created which would leave DSG being the one body that can still raise these issues in public. There needs to be a clear divide as to how the information flows, this has to be shown transparently and proven that it can be done by other bodies to ensure overlaps are not required.

Comments on the different groupings are as follows:

-) **Communications Group (formerly Advisory Board)**
 - o It was generally felt that a Communications Group could result in a less democratic offering and did not reflect the original concept of the Advisory Group as being the basis where elected members and other Caithness and North Sutherland Groups could put input into a non-elected Executive Board whose members mostly do not come from the area.
 - o It was agreed that the Advisory Board required changes to be made and DSG members felt it would have been better to have a focussed workshop with all Advisory Board members to consider how the Advisory Board could become more effective.

- Consideration should be given to the chair of this group. One such suggestion to ensure the links between the groups are improved is to ensure that a senior representative of the Highland Council (dependent on outcome of HC re-org) with a local background becomes Chair or Vice-chair. This would reflect a new concept by HC of devolving decision making to the local area.
- Recognising that communicating the work of CNSRP has proved difficult in the past it is felt that the reduction to two meetings per year will make communications worse rather than better and allows a vacuum of information which will inevitably be covered by other groups.
- If this group is to be renamed the Communications Group then it is essential that communication activities need to be stepped up and it would be useful to understand what is being proposed. There have been many examples of requests being made that CNSRP issue a press release following each meeting – this has never happened and it would be useful to understand the communication strategy for this group, and indeed the other groups which sit within CNSRP.
- Recognising that a brief discussion was held at the last Advisory Board it would be useful to understand why some of the existing members will no longer be represented. It is noted that some members would be invited as required and there needs to be clear criteria as to who decides when they are required or would it be their choice to attend or do they need to be invited.

) **Executive Board:**

- The Executive Board needs to be more visible to ensure that the Advisory Board (Communications Group) and Delivery Group feels they are making a valuable contribution.
- Consideration should be given to appointing the Chair of the Communications group (if an elected leader) and be given a seat at the Executive Board. While recognising that the CNSRP Programme Manager does a good job at facilitating meetings and bringing together different organisations it is recognised that he is a paid representative (funded by two of the partner organisations, HIE and Dounreay). This means it is difficult for him to challenge the respective organisations and to this end if the Chair of the Communications Group was to sit on the Executive Board they could report through feedback from the Communications Group and champion such things for the area.
- Clearer feedback is required from the Executive Board. It is not transparent as to whether any issues raised at the Advisory Board ever reach the Executive Board for consideration. As an example, concerns were raised regarding the Inverness City Region Deal where the Advisory Board were expecting THC would recognise Caithness and North Sutherland as a priority area and to ensure some funding of substance would have been committed to CNSRP priority projects. A further example is the potential sports centre recognising that the NDA was considering the potential for using their land. In

both cases it is felt that THC and Scottish Government could have influenced or supported these decisions. We were also disappointed to note that the P&J featured the new sports centre for Dornoch backed by NC and Sports Scotland. All those who sit on the Executive Board need to ensure that their respective organisations are kept in the loop, as an example of this at the recent Scottish Government Scottish Nuclear Sites meeting it was evidence that Rosanna Cunningham although knew a little about CNSRP it was evidence that she was not aware that someone from Scottish Government sat on the Executive Board. The minutes of these meetings should be cascaded down the respective organisations so that there is a joined up approach to what needs to be done.

- It is being considered that the Chamber should sit on the executive board, CNSRP should however consider that while the Chamber does an excellent job it does not represent all business interests and therefore it should be considered with care to ensure that businesses who are not Chamber members are also recognised and their requirements also represented.

) **CNSRP Delivery Team:**

- The Delivery Team needs to develop clear action plans with key milestones and these should be reported through to the Communications Group.
- It would be useful, from a DSG point of view, if CNSRP set out a clear programme of projects and future funding for the next three years. This would allow DSG to see clearly how the nuclear partners (NDA, CDP and DSRL) are supporting these priority projects.

) **Project owners group**

- This would appear to be a sensible way forward and could be somewhat flexible in attendance, ie only certain project owners would need to attend dependent on the project.
- It would be interesting to see how the information from the project owners group feed back into the various other groups, (Delivery Team, Executive Board and Communications Group).

In summing up, DSG believes that CNSRP need to clearly set out what their aims are for suggesting such changes. By changing the name and including a new group it is still not clear how the information will be cascaded up and down and how conflicts will be resolved.

DSG fully supports CNSRP and believe that it remains a useful vehicle to concentrate on priorities within Caithness and North Sutherland. However, unless there are useful changes made to the structures, membership, the upward/downward feedback the community will see little change thus leading to concerns for the future of our area. CNSRP need to think carefully about how they plan to articulate these changes and make decided improvements in CNSRP communications (both internally within the meetings and externally to the local public).

Roger Saxon
DSG Chairman
20th June 2017