



16 August 2018  
Ref: DSG(2018)C030

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Dear Sir/Madam

### **DSG Response to Credible options for STEM engagement strategy across the NDA estate**

The Downreay Stakeholder Group (DSG) welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation. The 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 kept up to date with the work carried out locally in relation to STEM. It is pleasing to see that there is a joined up approach with many other organisations and local companies to ensure co-ordination of all STEM activities in the area. There is a strong STEM Ambassador network in the Downreay Travel to Work area and current reports show an increasing number of STEM Ambassadors registered with STEM learning. The STEM activity undertaken in the local area has been very successful over a number of years and relationships with schools, colleges and partners continue to evolve and become stronger. Ensuring the co-ordination allows partners such as Developing the Young Workforce and Skills Development Scotland to link in with all activities to essentially ensure a one stop shop approach to STEM.

While understanding the drive to ensure some form of consistency across the NDA estate all areas will have different mechanisms and different working partners to ensure these activities are undertaken and while supportive of being able to learn from different areas this cannot be to the detriment of the local STEM initiatives. Given our comments here we believe that option 4 SLCs manage with support from third parties and SLCs deliver with support from third parties would appear to be the best fit with the ongoing activities already in place in our area. This is particularly important in the Dounreay area, as there is no new nuclear planned for Scotland and perhaps more importantly, few other high-value jobs in the area. DSG feel it is particularly important for our area that we not only equip the future workforce with useful and transferrable skills, but that these people will be able to stay in the area. With the recent announcement of Space UK launch facility in Sutherland, we particularly welcome the statement in the report that *“ensure that as many young people as possible are inspired by space so that they will study, and keep studying, STEM subjects to tertiary level ensuring a skilled and enthusiastic workforce for high tech industries (including space) in the future”*

Under item 4, Strategic Scope and Boundaries, we would oppose supporting only the mission of the NDA as there is no new nuclear in Scotland and therefore it would be something that would be more difficult to deliver over time, therefore we would urge that STEM is a broad subject which covers many more industries than nuclear and this is already taken on board with many of the activities undertaken locally. We would encourage NDA to be flexible in this approach. While STEM activities right now continue to potentially benefit Dounreay in the longer term it is recognised that our area will need to consider STEM activities in relation to other industries over the next decade.

We would therefore encourage the NDA, as an organisation that is ultimately working itself out of a purpose, to think wider than just the nuclear industry in its support for STEM. The recent PWC report states the next 20 years will see job losses as well as gains due to increasing automation and underlines that many jobs will disappear, to be replaced by new ones, and that STEM skills will be more likely to keep people in employment. The nuclear industry will not be immune to the changes that are coming.

In addition, it is our belief that the biggest influencers in children’s careers are their parents and suggest that NDA could consider ways to encourage the SLC’s own engineering/scientific and wider staff to encourage their own children to take an interest in STEM subjects.

In addition, impacts of activities undertaken can be recorded as to number of events, people involved etc. but it would be very difficult to assess the impacts short term on whether children taking part in STEM activities in their early school years chose to go down a STEM education route due to their early involvement. However, it is always useful to consider the impacts of

such activities and a consistent measuring approach across all NDA sites may allow valuable lessons to be learnt from different areas.

Lastly, we would like to record our appreciation for the work carried out at Dounreay, the local supply chain and those who have been awarded contracts through Dounreay for their involvement in ensuring that there is a strong STEM network across our area.

Yours sincerely

*Sent electronically without signature*

**Roger Saxon**  
**DSG Chairman**