

**DOUNREAY STAKEHOLDER GROUP**

**Minutes of the Dounreay Stakeholder Group Public Meeting, held at 19:00 on Wednesday 10 September 2024 in ETEC UHI North, West and Hebrides, Thurso and via MS Teams.**

<b>Present:</b>	Cllr Struan Mackie	DSG Chair (The Highland Council)
	David Alexander	DSG Vice-chair (Thurso and Wick Trade Union Council)
	Gillian Coghill	DSG Site Restoration SG chair (Buldoo Residents Group)
	Peter Faccenda	Focus North
	Eann Sinclair	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
	Niall Watson	NRS Dounreay Trade Unions
	Ron Gunn	CHAT
	Tor Justad	HANP
	David Broughton	DSG co-opted member of the public
	David Craig	Caithness West Community Council
	Thelma Mackenzie	Thurso Community Council
	Cllr Andrew Jarvie	Highland Council
	Cllr Michael Baird	Highland Council
	Cllr Karl Rosie	Highland Council
	Sandy Mackie	Scrabster Harbour Trust
	Abbe Luckock	Women in Nuclear Highland
	Christian Nicolson	NHS
	Allan Farquhar	Royal Burgh of Wick Community Council
	Trudy Morris	Chamber of Commerce
	John Deighan	DSG co-opted member of the public
<b>Attending:</b>	John Grierson	NRS Dounreay Managing Director
	Mac MacGill	NRS Dounreay Deputy Managing Director
	Alan Mackay	NDA Site Facing Team
	James Francis	ONR
	Stewart Ballantine	SEPA
	Cdr Ian Walker	MOD Vulcan
	Tina Wrighton	NRS Dounreay Stakeholder & External Relations Lead
	Dawn Clasper	DSG Minute Secretary
	Ferne Mill	NRS Dounreay Communications Administrator

**MINUTES**

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Cllr Struan Mackie welcomed everyone.

**2. APOLOGIES**

The following apologies were received:

- Debbie Miller UHI North, West and Hebrides
- Brian Mutch Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspection Directorate

- Ken Nicol DSG co-opted member of the public
- Cllr Dr Stephen Clackson Orkney Island Council
- Roger Saxon DSG Site Restoration subgroup deputy chair
- James Bryson DNSR

### 3. MEMBERSHIP

Cllr Mackie stated that there had been two new requests for co-opted membership from John Deighan and Ken Nicol. Both John and Ken were accepted and welcomed onto the DSG.

Murray Lamont has resigned from his place in North Highland Tourism, so Venture North has been reassigned to this position with Trudy Morris representing Venture North and the Chamber of Commerce.

### 4. SCOTLAND'S HIGHER ACTIVITY RADIOACTIVE WASTE POLICY REVIEW

Diane Hamilton started by addressing the paper (DSG(2024)C014) stating they were undertaking a review of their higher activity waste policy and strategy; the consultation will be taken in 2025 and they are looking for stakeholder opinions. She asked for opinions to either be emailed or written in and they can come from individuals or as a group with the deadline being 30 September. They are looking for what aspect of policy needs further developed or clarification and if there is anything in policy the members believe must be kept in.

Cllr Mackie stated he is conscious this is something that has been raised many times by the DSG over several years. He thinks it is important policy makers have a good understanding of the impact these policies have, not just on sites but also the region.

David Broughton said he has written comments which Diane confirmed she had received. He went on to say that when revising policy, the Scottish Government needs to cut out ambiguity as the policy has lots of this and it has been written with a misrepresentation of disposal and storage. The Scottish Government needs to address what is happening in the rest of the UK with deep geological disposal.

Diane will make a note of these comments and informed David it is up to ministers to decide what happens when it comes to big changes in the policy, but all views and advice will be used to inform the ministers.

There were no further questions.

### 5. NRS DOUNREAY UPDATES

As before, Cllr Mackie asked that updates be kept to a high level. He would take all the updates and then open to members for questions.

**NDA Corporate:** Alan Mackay reported:

The NDA update was as per the written paper, and Alan highlighted 2 points of interest. One being the stakeholder conference happening on 17-18 September in Manchester and the other being the cross-party working group which takes place on 12 September.

Alan invited David Wallace to give an update on the cross-party group. David Wallace noted the cross-party group on 17 December will be looking at waste policy to allow members to

give their views on waste policy and the co-chairs will be making a formal submission to the Scottish Government on this.

The NDA is continuing their secondment to the Scottish Government, this is their second secondment which will finish at the end of the year. They are now advertising internally for a third secondment which they hope will begin at the start of the year and last 18 months to take them up to the next Scottish election. They have gone through the interview process and shortlisting is to take place soon, they hope to announce the appointment by the end of the month.

Cllr Mackie thanked Alan and David and welcomed any questions.

Tor Justad asked about the report regarding SCORSS and what the purpose of the appointment for an engagement officer was?

David Wallace explained this to be Scottish council committee on radioactive waste and that they advise the local authorities on the subject. They have been inactive since 2019 and as time goes on the Scottish government and NDA are getting concerned over the lack of activity in terms of consultations and engaging with local authorities. He has been in conversations with Michelle Campbell, the chair of SCORSS, who has agreed it is important to get it back up and running so that local authorities are engaged and have their say. The engagement officer will be taken on to offer support to Michelle in arranging meetings and sorting agendas, but also to reintroduce all local authorities back to SCORSS in a campaign for more involvement.

Tor asked about the CPX master plan as he was unsure what it stood for. David informed members this is the Chapelcross master plan which is a long-term strategy for the site. The NDA owned land will hopefully become a green energy park working alongside the council to become partners in this project.

**NRS Dounreay:** John Grierson reported:

John Grierson introduced himself to the DSG and gave a short summary of his time so far in Dounreay. He took the report as read and picked up on a few points.

John was pleased to report that not long after his start as interim MD the site managed to reach a position to resolve the pay dispute and begin to work on the decommissioning programme again. He is currently working through a process of healing with the unions and workforce.

Dounreay transitioned to a new delivery model in April, the benefits of the programmatic approach are now beginning to show and work is ongoing.

Confirmation was received from ONR on a change of status going from routine to enhanced measures along with an enforcement letter. There have been two injuries - a cut to a finger and an ankle injury which is disappointing, but focus is being maintained.

Gillian Coghill asked what the risk of the strikes happening again are with the 2024 pay reviews?

John stated that the 2024 pay settlement has recently come in from the unions and he is confident the site can achieve a good pay negotiation this year with discussions ongoing.

David Craig raised some issues for clarification over the Dounreay report presented to the subgroup in July. John apologised and agreed to look at this with the secretariat.

Cllr Mackie explained it is important that members who don't attend the subgroups stay informed and acknowledged the value of the site reports to keep the DSG informed.

Alan Scott asked John what the impact will be on the cost and duration of decommissioning due to the industrial action.

John said the site is working through this to understand the impact on the targets and the costs, which will hopefully be recovered.

Alan furthered his question by asking if the resolution will mean it takes longer to decommission the site and will it cost more?

John replied saying he believes because efficiency levels will increase it means he does not see the time or cost increasing.

Alan Farquhar asked what advantages come from the new programmatic approach?

John said it brings the site focus into areas and drives the delivery. It allows the organisation to be target driven and delivery focussed and we are beginning to see the benefits of this.

Tor asked how long John will be in post and what businesses he worked in before joining Dounreay?

John explained he has been seconded to Dounreay for 6 months or until they find his successor. He has been in the nuclear industry for 36 years and has worked on 12 sites. Of note he was site director at Chapelcross for 9 years and worked as a nuclear operations director in Magnox.

Cllr Mackie added that the site has been through a period with lots of change and he is hopeful for a period of prolonged stability now.

Cllr Struan Mackie thanked John Grierson for his update

**SEPA:** Stewart Ballantine reported:

A compliance inspection had taken place on site and the site was found to be compliant. Stewart had nothing further to add.

No questions were asked.

**ONR:** James Francis reported:

The site was put into enhanced regulatory attention and enforcement actions were taken for safety reasons. This will lead to a process meaning Dounreay will make a plan and ONR is in the process of discussing that action with the site.

A level 1 demonstration exercise took place on site; ONR rated this demonstration adequate.

A security demonstration exercise is also planned for 2 weeks' time and ONR will be attending site for that.

ONR's chief inspector visited the site in July and thanked everyone for their time and input and in 2 weeks' time is the chief inspector's inspection which will focus on climate change.

ONR has received a report from Dounreay about a minor leakage of liquid from a carbon bed filter. The water leak had a small level of contamination and would appear to have no effect on the environment or neighbouring land. ONR is content this is being dealt with correctly.

Tor asked when the enforcement deadline was.

James replied saying an initial response has been sent by Dounreay confirming a schedule, but he is not familiar with the exact date but expects early next year there will be an inspection to confirm compliance with COMAH.

Cllr Mackie noted on behalf of the DSG the position Dounreay is in is disappointing and he can see that the site is trying to be proactive to get out of this regulatory framework. He expects to be receiving updates from both the site and ONR on the progress of this at future DSG meetings.

John Grierson added that 4 members of his leadership team and a programme manager have been tasked with setting out a clear plan to progress these actions on site.

Niall Watson furthered this by saying the unions are confident and they recognise progress and that there is no debate on the priority being safety.

No further questions were asked.

**CNC:** Cllr Struan Mackie noted there was no one in attendance from CNC but stated that if any questions arose these would be actioned through the minutes to ensure a response was forthcoming. He invited members to raise any questions.

No questions or issues were raised

## 6. MOD (VULCAN) UPDATES

**MOD, Vulcan:** Cdr Ian Walker reported the following:

There have been no lost time accidents or reportable events. There has however been 1 minor finger injury.

There have been no environmental events or challenges to the SEPA approval of arrangements this period.

The site programme for the commissioning and revalidation of equipment needed for the next phase of operations is nearing completion as is the associated training, the focus is now on progressing the documentation needed to support the operations. The remainder of the site programme continues as planned.

There have been no events reported to SEPA, ONR or DNSR.

We have received the report from the annual Lonestar demonstration exercise in June, this was assessed as adequate or green with some minor learning points and work to address these has already started.

Vulcan are the lead for the Level 2 exercise scheduled for 2025, however developing any, even semi, believable scenario that provides an off-site hazard is extremely challenging. This is due to the relatively benign nature of the hazards present. Positive engagements have been held with Highland Council and also support offered by ONR to develop a workable scenario.

Annual review of safety (ARoS) by DNSR - for the first time ONR attended as an observer and we await the formal report; the verbal feedback was positive.

Cdr Ian Walker attended the Scottish Nuclear Sites Stakeholder meeting in August.

Cllr Struan Mackie thanked Cdr Ian Walker for his update and invited questions from members. There were no questions or issues were raised.

**DNSR:**

Cllr Struan Mackie noted there was no one in attendance from DNSR but stated that if any questions arose these would be actioned through the minutes to ensure a response was forthcoming. He invited members to raise any questions.

No questions or issues were raised

**SEPA:** Stewart Ballantine reported:

There has been no reported incidents.

A compliance inspection is taking place within the next month, the outcome will be reported back.

Cllr Struan Mackie thanked Stewart Ballantine for his update and invited questions from members.

**ONR:** James Francis reported:

There was nothing further to update. It was confirmed 'the Vulcan ARoS was attended and was a positive interaction.

ONR attended the Dounreay level 1 exercise which was very positive.

Cllr Struan Mackie thanked James Francis for his update and invited questions from members. There were no questions or issues raised.

**7. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the last public meeting (DSG(2024)M01) held on 20 March 2024 were ratified, proposed by David Craig, and seconded by Thelma Mackenzie.

The minutes of the DSG socioeconomic subgroup (DSG/SESG(2024)M02) held on 17 July 2024 were ratified, proposed by David Alexander, and seconded by Gillian Coghill.

The minutes of the DSG site restoration subgroup (DSG/SRSG(2024)M02) held on 17 July 2024 were ratified, proposed by Gillian Coghill, and seconded by David Craig.

**8. STATUS OF ACTIONS**

The status of actions were taken as read.

**9. CORRESPONDENCE**

Cllr Struan Mackie noted all correspondence received has been circulated to members and would be noted.

David Broughton stated that the Dounreay socio economic paper doesn't present the spend well for the SME's and he requested the updated paper has clearer spends on it.

David Calder responded saying that he agrees it is not clear on the paper given, however recently the details of the spend were provided to business group members explaining every £1 in £3 is spent on SMEs and stressed the commercial confidentiality on how much they can publish.

David Alexander added that recently Jane Mackenzie, head of Commercial, gave a well detailed presentation and he appreciates the confidentiality of the matter and that the group are happy with the spends, he then confirmed this information will continue to flow through the business group. Magnus Davidson apologised for the paper not being clear.

Thelma Mackenzie asked about the reliability of Eastern Airways and asked if anything is being done?

Peter Faccenda replied saying long term development is being progressed for the airport, and he believes a discussion is ongoing with Highland Council and Eastern Airways to resolve these issues.

Trudy Morris added that this has been brought up with Transport Scotland and that there are discussions ongoing.

Cllr Mackie added that there has been a fight to keep this flight ongoing and that public frustration is obvious, however constructive dialogue needs to be used to continue the use of the flight.

The DSG terms of reference have been updated to involve co-opted members of the public voting and tighter language. All members were happy with the new terms of reference.

A survey regarding decommissioning and opinion of the public sector was sent to members and Cllr Mackie reminded members to please fill this out.

David Broughton believes it is important for the public to understand the type of company Dounreay is. He says he himself gets confused with the structure.

Cllr Mackie says understanding the company structure was something the DSG has tried to nail down from the start and that accountability within the company is something that wasn't initially clear. He is happy to discuss this further with David.

Cllr Mackie announced the retirement of Sandy Mackie from Scrabster Harbour Trust and hoped his replacement will continue as a member of the DSG.

## **10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Prior to opening to DSG members, Cllr Struan Mackie noted the following.

- Cllr Struan Mackie noted he would be attending the Cross-Party Parliamentary Working group on 12 September.

Cllr Mackie then invited members to raise any other business.

No further issues were raised

**11. CLOSE**

Cllr Struan Mackie thanked everyone for their input and formally closed the meeting.

**Cllr Struan Mackie**  
**DSG Chair**  
14 October 2024

**ACTIONS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING**

No formal actions were recorded