

DSG/SRSG(2024)M003

DOUNREAY STAKEHOLDER GROUP

SITE RESTORATION SUBGROUP

Minutes of the DSG Site Restoration subgroup meeting held on Wednesday 16 October 2024 at 19:00 in the Hub, Thurso and via MS Teams.

Present:

Gillian Coghill	DSG Site Restoration sub group chair (Buldoo Residents chair)
Roger Saxon	DSG honorary member (sub group deputy chair)
Thelma Mackenzie	Thurso Community Council
Niall Watson	NRS Dounreay Trade Unions
David Alexander	Thurso and Wick Trades Council
David Craig	Caithness West Community Council
David Broughton	DSG co-opted member of the public
Allan Farquhar	Royal Burgh of Wick Community Council
Tor Justad	HANP
Cllr Michael Baird	Highland Council
Ken Nicol	DSG co-opted member of the public
John Deighan	DSG co-opted member of the public

In attendance:

John Grierson	NRS Dounreay Interim Managing Director
Tina Wrighton	NRS Dounreay Stakeholder & External Relations Manager
Dawn Clasper	NRS Dounreay Socio Economics Administrator
Ferne Mill	NRS Dounreay Communications
Gillian McArthur	NRS Dounreay Head of Portfolio & Strategy
Lt Cdr Phil Alexander	MOD Vulcan
CI David McIntosh	CNC
James Francis	ONR (Dounreay)
Alex Pitsillos	ONR

MINUTES

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Gillian Coghill welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from:

- Brian Mutch
- Cllr Struan Mackie
- Cllr Dr Stephen Clackson

- Abbe Luckock
- Christian Nicholson
- Fredric Stalin
- Cdr Ian Walker
- Rick Faris
- Lynsay Hernandez
- Stewart Ballantine

3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Gillian Coghill noted the minutes of the last meeting – DSG/SRSG(2024)M02, July 2024 – had been circulated to members in advance. She invited members to raise any issues from the minutes.

Niall Watson raised that on page 7 where it stated the preferred options for trading alkali metals, it was discussed that the option to be explored was water vapour nitrogen. Other than this issue the minute was accepted as a true reflection of the meeting.

4. ACTION STATUS

Gillian Coghill noted that the status of actions had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting. Of note:

David Alexander confirmed he had spoken to David Calder regarding the land at Viewfirth and that the NDA estates team and lawyers had recently visited; this is continuing to progress and remains on the action list.

Rolls Royce gave a full report of details for their flexible working policy, this action was taken as completed.

Peter Faccenda noted a provisional date of 15 November for an advisory board meeting, this was overtaken due to working towards the annual conference and workload. To have two meetings was proving difficult with a lack of resource, the action is ongoing but will be closed and reopened in future if needed

5. DOUNREAY UPDATE

Gillian Coghill noted several written papers had been distributed to members in advance of the meeting including:

Dounreay: (DSG(2024)P026) refers:

Gillian McArthur (GM) introduced herself to the DSG and apologised that the paper was distributed late.

GM highlighted that Dounreay has been through a challenging time. Since 8 June Dounreay has moved from industrial action into a safe and managed return to project delivery. The site's focus remains on embedding the programmatic approach and to drive the site in the right direction.

GM informed members that the enhanced regulatory action is being addressed and this is being done by a return to routine plan. She then addressed the maintenance backlogs, recognising the poor state of some areas and the longevity that their plan now has.

It's recognised the site is still in a difficult position but is working on rebuilding its relationship with staff, the supply chain and regulators. This is being managed by listening to staff concerns from the Peakon survey, being open and honest as well as engaging more with the supply chain.

A key finding arising from industrial action was the review of voluntary appointments, this is being worked on by HR to renew and improve the appointments, it is in the early stages but is progressing in the right direction.

The quarterly report shows a table with the targets on it, the group key targets (GKT) are the most challenging targets and are grouped together on the first line to form GKT 1. It is a combination of fuel cycle area, reactors and balance of site and the reason this GKT is at threshold even though the shaft and silo work has been delivered and worked well in a collaborative effort with the supply chain, is due to the breeder and the ripple effects of industrial action. There are plans to try and recover these targets whenever possible.

The next GKT was on waste transfer and this is on target to improve, with the help of target solution activities. Collectively their team developed an action plan for the programme and are comfortable they can do it.

GM explained although some targets are showing as threshold or at risk there is progression. The operating key target for engaging with SMEs is moving to on target due to the future supply chain pipeline and the head of commercial is happy with the progress being made.

Asset intervention is another key area moving to 7 out of the 14 asset interventions being taken, this was achieved by developing a resource loaded schedule and bringing it together to collectively see the impact of everything being done.

The regulatory positions are still in enhanced regulatory attention status which will continue until the actions are addressed. A positive to come from this is that there is a clear plan which allows effective tracking and clearer communication to ONR.

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SEPA improvements have been made to close out the actions, which allows all permits and authorisations to return to compliance. Outstanding actions are being discussed in routine engagements going forward to ensure the site stays on track.

A routine compliance inspection picked up issues with the site's steam pipes, this is being investigated and recommendations have been raised, this will continue to be tracked and investigated.

John Grierson provided an update that a new managing director has been appointed to Dounreay. David Wilson is to join NRS on 18 November and John will leave in December. John thanked the DSG for all their work.

GM added that the nominations for the Dounreay decommissioning awards had taken place and there has been 86 nominations recognising people going above and beyond.

The apprentices have also gone through their time and qualified, as well as Liam Gordon, a member of Dounreay staff, being awarded young chemical engineer of the year.

Gillian Coghill (GC) invited members to raise any questions:

Roger Saxon (RS) asked about the GKT stating he does not believe they are clear and that when there are so many projects within each GKT it seems as though the site isn't making as much progress as it is.

John Grierson (JG) asked if the members would be interested in seeing the table that has each target and its progress shown individually, it was agreed this is a good idea and is already in hand for future reporting. JG added that considering the site has been through 3 months of industrial action, the targets remained positive and that month-on-month improvement is being noted.

RS picked up on the site telecoms issue and asked what caused this - JG explained that there was a fault in the system and it went to batteries and the batteries had depleted, which then shut down external comms.

RS then pointed out that the Dounreay report stated a foot had been 'impacted' when it was stated in the ONR report that it was fractured. These reports should be better aligned in future.

Tor Justad asked about the climate change intervention which involved ONR. James Francis explained this was a themed visit that takes place every 18 months and that the inspector looked at how ready the site is for climate change. The main report is expected to be on the ONR website for February 2025.

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Ken Nicol (KN) questioned the performance target regarding emergency arrangements asking if this affects the site's ability to respond to an emergency. GA explained this is referring to strength and depth as well as having more people on call so does not impact the site's ability to respond to an emergency.

KN then asked about the injuries stated in the Dounreay report and questioned if this was implying a lack of supervision for new people on site. GM stated she believes there is enough supervision on site but they need to ensure everyone has the time and space to supervise efficiently and to continue putting safety as a priority.

JG added that supervision cannot be done 100% of the time and that younger colleagues do not have the same life experiences, which means educating them in safety and compliance is important.

KN asked about the steam pipe and if the site is looking for asbestos on the pipe. GM confirmed they are targeting critical feed areas but they will continue tracking this issue.

David Broughton asked why a contract had been terminated with one of the site's partners. JG explained this was due to contract performance and safety issues.

Niall Watson added he believes it is a good thing the site has been so honest in their report and haven't tried to gloss over things. He also added that there is an internal team already looking at climate change which confirms that the site is not relying on external regulators for this issue.

GC asked about the ventilation project and if it was an in-house job or done by the supply chain. GM explained it is a supply chain job but will be collaborative.

GC continued by saying the amber rating on the PFR SG hall and turbine hall is worrying and wanted to know how this will be rectified and how long the repair would take. GM asked for the timeframe to be put down as an action.

GC questioned if the leak in the disused ventilation system could happen again and GM informed her that it is now under enhanced surveillance and there is a cover on top to prevent it happening again.

GC thanked members for their questions.

SEPA: (DSG(2024)P021)

There was no SEPA representatives at the meeting.

No questions were raised.

ONR: (DSG(2024)P024) refers: James Francis noted the following:

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James Francis (JF) started by introducing Alex Pitsillos to the group and explained she will be replacing Rick Faris in the role as site inspector for Dounreay and Vulcan.

He then went on to say at the level 1 safety demonstration Emergency Arrangements performed well and the demonstration was rated as adequate.

ONR also attended the site's security exercise in September.

An inspection took place on the IRR's - a new process in ONR to check the management of sealed sources on site; this had a positive outcome.

JF noted ONR is still waiting on the site report regarding the foot fracture.

The move to enhanced regulatory action was highlighted again, ONR has now published their report to the public regarding this.

Gillian Coghill invited members to raise any questions:

David Broughton asked for an understanding of how concerned ONR is regarding the regulatory action. James Francis explained the level of concern can be gauged by how much regulatory enforcement is on the issue and that it is circumstantial.

Tor Justad asked when the enforcement on sodium issue will be removed - JF doesn't have an exact date but there is a time period of 18 months from issue to resolution and a follow up inspection is planned for December. JF expects that June 2025 would see the close of enforcement, but this is a long-standing issue so work would continue.

Gillian thanked James for his update, no further questions were asked.

CNC: Written update received from David McIntosh:

David McIntosh (DM) explained CNC's top priority is recruitment, a leaflet drop was done twice and an advert is to be played on STV and will play from November to end of December.

Base pay for officers has gone up and he hopes this will have an impact and give them more power within the area as he understands working in nuclear can be challenging.

The first local course graduated in October, only 4 recruits came to Dounreay from this but it is an improvement and hopes are up for a second local course to run in spring 2025.

DM went on to say CNC had 1,000 applications but only 40% made it past phase 1 of the recruitment process. Regular support is coming to Dounreay from other

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OPU'S, officers are sent up for a period of around 6 days at a time and there are also temporary transfer units seeing people join the team for up to 2 years. The problem with recruitment means they are looking to retain their staff and CNC have been working closely with the socio-economics team to find ways to do this.

DM mentioned the site security exercise noting it was a challenging exercise and CNC was pleased to get an adequate outcome from this.

CNC is taking on "Operation Vintage" which means taking over the gas import sites from MDP, this is part of work force stabilization as nuclear sites are decommissioning and shutting down.

DM informed members he is moving on and will be going to help the vetting team for around 12 months and thanked the group for making him welcome. GC thanked David for all his support over the years and wished him well.

Gillian Coghill invited questions from members:

Tor Justad asked if recruitment is a national issue. DM said it is a national issue and explained Dounreay and Sellafield have been through similar issues but Sellafield is seeing a higher number of people completing the recruitment process so Dounreay needs to work on the issue of people not completing the process.

Thelma Mackenzie asked if other new recruits would go to Dounreay or go to other stations. DM stated there were 6 candidates for Dounreay but throughout the lengthy recruitment process they lost some candidates, leaving Dounreay with 4 new officers. 4 other candidates went to Hunterston and there has been interest from Hunterston officers to come up to Dounreay in the future.

Gillian Coghill asked if there has been an effect on staff morale and hoped positive word of mouth makes recruitment easier. DM said morale has been affected and that officers are aware their positive feedback to the community is one of the best recruitment tools. GC praised officers on their work in the recent exercise.

Gillian thanked David for his update, no further questions were asked.

6. VULCAN UPDATE

Gillian Coghill noted the following written updates had been provided:

MOD Vulcan: (DSG(2024)P020) refers:

Lt Cdr Phil Alexander highlighted the following:

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Lt Cdr Alexander started with health and safety reporting there had been 1 injury during the commissioning of new equipment.

An upgrade was done on the boiler effluent neutralising system to ensure proper operation.

A holistic review of compliance with conventional discharge is being undertaken.

In terms of radioactive waste disposal, a SEPA inspection took place in September and Gillian Coghill asked if there will be an update on the report at the next meeting. Lt Cdr Alexander confirmed this will be reported.

Gillian Coghill invited members to raise any questions. John Deighan (JD) asked how many employees Vulcan has on site, Lt Cdr Alexander said it can vary from 250-350 per day. JD followed up by asking if apprentices and graduates are still recruited by Vulcan – it was confirmed that apprentices are still taken on.

No further questions were raised.

Rolls Royce Update: (DSG(2024)019) refers:

No representative was in attendance from Rolls Royce.

No questions were raised.

SEPA (DSG(2024)021)

There was no SEPA representative in attendance at the meeting.

No questions were raised.

ONR: James Francis provided the following highlights:

ONR attended Vulcan's annual review of safety as observers, which was a positive experience. There is work ongoing to help Vulcan transition to be part of the NDA.

Gillian Coghill invited members to raise any questions.

No questions were raised.

DNSR: (DSG(2024)P025)

There was no DNSR representative in attendance at the meeting.

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No questions were raised.

7. CORRESPONDENCE SINCE LAST MEETING

There was no correspondence since the last meeting.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

Gillian Coghill thanked everyone for their input and formally closed the meeting.

Gillian Coghill
DSG Site Restoration subgroup chair
16 October 2024

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING

DSG/SRSG(2024)M03/A001: Gillian McArthur to find out the timescale for the asset intervention work associated with the PFR reactor hall roof and west wall repairs