

Endorsed on 12 March 2025

DOUNREAY STAKEHOLDER GROUP BUSINESS MEETING

Minutes of DSG Business Meeting held on Tuesday 11 February 2025 at 0930 at Dounreay public Information office, Hoy meeting room and via MS Teams

Present: Cllr Struan Mackie	DSG Chair
David Alexander	DSG Vice-chair & Socio Economic sub group chair
Gillian Coghill	DSG Site Restoration sub group chair
Peter Faccenda	DSG Socio Economic sub group deputy chair
Roger Saxon	DSG Site Restoration sub group deputy chair
Dawn Clasper	DSG Minute Secretary
Tina Wrighton	NRS Dounreay Stakeholder & Engagement Manager
Magnus Davidson	NRS Dounreay Socio Economic Manager

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

Cllr Struan Mackie welcomed everyone to the meeting and welcomed Magnus Davidson who was providing an update on the Socio Economic Strategy.

Apologies have been received by David Calder, NRS Dounreay Head of Sustainability & Socio Economics.

2. NRS DOUNREAY SOCIO ECONOMIC IMPACT STRATEGY PLAN

Magnus Davidson noted that this was still in draft form. He mentioned that they had wanted to release this last financial year, but they had to produce a social impact strategy and deferred this into the current year. NRS was going to consult to feed into their strategy and align these where possible. The consultancy work has been fulfilled; however, there have been delays. They have pushed ahead and need to consult on the local strategy, which will be published later this year and run for three years.

There is nothing groundbreaking in terms of a shift from what they have been doing over the last couple of years. Previous socio-impact strategies were very detailed and focused. They are PBO focused and set out what they have been doing, giving them an enabling function over the next three years to build on upcoming opportunities and reflect on LTP and build in relation to that.

Their four main commitments are to:

- Deliver maximum positive social impact for Caithness and north Sutherland – they hope to continue doing that.
- Contribute to maintaining and developing skills – they know there is a skills agenda being pushed by the government and it is a necessity for the local area.
- Support economic and social infrastructure – of the areas they have done in the grant funding program and continue to resource this.
- Diversify the local economy through Focus North.

Endorsed on 12 March 2025

Magnus Davidson noted that this may be perceived as not reducing NRS Dounreay's contribution to the local economy and society, as the near-term work plan and the years of the LTP involve growing the economy around NRS Dounreay's activities. There is no reduction in their effort; this will facilitate the local economy and society around the anchor institution on NRS Dounreay's work. They must emphasise the significant impact that NRS Dounreay has had on the social and economic benefits historically. It is important that they emphasise the many decades of NRS Dounreay's impact on the local area and that the work they do is legally required under the Energy Act (2004) and Public Services (Social Value) Act (2012).

They incorporate the sustainability agenda to build sustainable communities, emphasising social and economic aspects as well as environmental and cultural enhancements. The socio-economic tools that they want to use may shift from the last Dounreay strategy. Grant funding for the DSG has increased the DCF limit to £7.5k, and they will look to increase the total budget annually. NDA funding decisions emphasize the three priority areas: North Wales, Cumbria, and NRS Dounreay. They will continue to work with the NDA on supplementary funding. It has been used for the Focus North Support Hub, and they aspire for this to continue. They have included Social Value; they continue to work hard on this as a significant lever in the local area. It is recent, and they continue to work with commercial colleagues on realizing its potential.

Social capital has been utilised previously, focusing on the workforce, local employment, and volunteer opportunities. Next year, a new program will allow the workforce to have paid time off to volunteer in the local community.

Peter Faccenda noted the strategic enablers. There may be a strand missing around influence and partnership because NRS Dounreay is a large organisation with budget and people that can affect other organisations, and this should be made public. There should be regional influence and partnership with other organisations. Magnus Davidson noted that they are taking this wider and will take this point forward.

Gillian Coghill acknowledged what Peter Faccenda had brought to the table. Being a big employer, not everything they do is right, and there are other employers in the area whose opinions matter. This is important to explain here.

Peter Faccenda suggested that in a published strategy or internal strategy, they should have a community engagement strategy looking at grant funding and NDA funding. There should be a strand of activity on how they use their grant funding and influence to synergise and leverage other activities.

Magnus Davison agreed and noted that it is implicit in community engagement and will make this explicit in the strategy.

Magnus Davison referenced community engagement and there will be a large amount of it. They should be cognisant of their influence in relation to this and want to do their own community engagement with those who have a relationship with Focus North. They aim to maximise community benefit and ensure that decommissioning decisions optimise these benefits by embedding the socio-

Endorsed on 12 March 2025

economic discipline in all of NRS Dounreay activities. Some inroads have been made to this.

Aligning funding initiatives is crucial. NDA and David Calder have been in discussions around NRS Dounreay funding and NDA funding, including the CNS Fund and social values. They must integrate or potentially reduce duplicate efforts to improve. There will be no reduction in budget; in fact, they expect to see an increase. They aim to cut down on duplication and administrative burden.

Leveraging public and private partners is important. There is significant work in the private sector, and the public sector the Highland Council has ambitions for Thurso over the coming years. They must work with non-Dounreay organizations to harness financial resources and align as closely as possible.

Planned activity will continue with partnership working, and they will discuss with FN how to move forward constructively. They are cognisant of social inequalities in Caithness and North Sutherland and want to understand and mitigate these better. These may relate to disparities in wages, remote and rural areas, transport, and housing.

Sustainability is integral to all of this. They can adopt sustainability language, focusing on social and economic aspects to leverage greater resources. They will make a nod to consumption and land use policies and legislation for environmental and biodiversity enhancements. They may not have space on-site, which allows them to look offsite and develop social and economic levers based on their activities. Monitoring, reporting, and transparency are key. They want to continue reporting in a satisfactory manner and will work closely with the DSG through SESG, allowing public scrutiny and communication. They will continue to report annually with the Annual Socio-Economic Review. They aim to develop this information further and detail their spending and economic input in the local area. The benefits realisation work is being finalised and will be presented to the subgroup in April. This is a mechanism to monitor benefits under the new LTP, reported quarterly through the DSG.

Quantifying the community and economic impacts to a greater level links back to benefit realisation. They are on a three-year basis for some economic data, and he was unhappy with the depth of the data. So, they are working with the NDA and some of their framework consultants to gain a greater understanding of the nuclear industry in Caithness and North Sutherland going forward.

He noted that he will be consulting with the NDA on 12 February, the TUCC on 6 March, and then the Dounreay Leadership Team with a plan to publish in the middle of March 2025.

Peter Faccenda noted the list of consultations would need to be widened to consult with key partners, so everyone is sighted. Magnus Davidson noted he would take this to the next Focus North delivery group.

Cllr Struan Mackie noted the majority of this was provided to the subgroup, he opened to questions to members present.

Endorsed on 12 March 2025

David Alexander noted that this would need to go to Emma Reynolds the NRS Director of Corporate Affairs and asked if there would be any further input.. Magnus Davidson responded that this was a courtesy to pass this on for information.

Roger Saxon noted that there is supposed to be a squeeze on the budget. Magnus Davidson noted that there are ongoing discussions on the spending review, and we have not received clarification or confirmation of the budget moving forward. We have reassurances that the socio-economic budget should not be impacted with discussions with the NDA confirming their commitment to the local area, Spending review discussions are continuing.

Cllr Struan Mackie thanked Magnus Davidson for his presentation.

3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Cllr Struan Mackie noted that the minutes of the last meeting – DSG/BM(2025)M01, 21 January 2025 – were endorsed by members. Members agreed this was a true reflection of the meeting. These would now be circulated to all DSG members for their information.

4. ACTION STATUS

Tina Wrighton noted there were a number of ongoing actions. Discussion focused on:

- DSG/SESG(2025)M004/A001: Magnus Davidson to report on current early career recruitment against historic early career recruitment **Ongoing**: Tina Wrighton noted that this was provided last year, this will be emailed to all Socio Economic subgroup members.
- DSG/SESG(2025)M004/A002: Magnus Davidson to enquire on the status of NDA sign off on the Lifetime Plan. **Ongoing**: Tina Wrighton to get further clarification.
- DSG/SESG(2025)M004/A003: Magnus Davidson to enquire on the impact of industrial action on site activity in 2024/2025. The response to this was provided by John Grierson at the last public meeting – action closed.
- DSG/BM(2025)M01/A01: Arrange a formal meeting to discuss the Viewfirth land with relevant stakeholders. **Ongoing**: A meeting will be arranged before the public meeting.

All other actions have been completed.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The following was raised:

Endorsed on 12 March 2025

- David Alexander noted that he attended a meeting with Rob Fletcher on 30 January regarding the government spending review and provided his recollection of the meeting.
- Dawn Clasper noted that she had provided the agendas for the AGM and Public meetings. Tina Wrighton noted there was a request from Ishbel Dale Stirling of University to give a brief outline of the upcoming habit survey around Dounreay. This was agreed by members present but kept short. Dawn Clasper also mentioned that she had looked into various venues for the meetings, but the costs were extremely high. Therefore, she suggested returning to the Pentland Hotel, providing they have availability and can assure connectivity. This suggestion was agreed by the members present.
- Cllr Struan Mackie and David Alexander attended a meeting for the SSG chairs and vice chairs regarding emolument. It was noted there was a robust discussion; emolument of posts going forward would be classed as an office holder and PAYE deductions will be taken at source, external legal advice was sought, and they agreed this was the way forward.
- Cllr Struan Mackie noted that Seater landfill would no longer be taking municipal waste as of June 2025, this would now be transported to Dunbar and burnt for waste energy. He had contacted Dave Wallace NDA and NTS to ask if there was an opportunity to take this by rail rather than road. This has been handed back to the Highland Council to discuss further.
- Cllr Struan Mackie noted that individuals had approached him expressing interest to join the DSG. He advised them how to apply through the DSG secretariat.
- Tina Wrighton noted that the Site Restoration sub group members have been invited to site on 18 February and members have been asked to come in to the Dounreay Public information office in Thurso to complete the forms.

6. CLOSE

There being no further business, Cllr Struan Mackie thanked everyone for their input and formally closed the meeting.

Cllr Struan Mackie
DSG Chair
12 February 2025

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING