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DOUNREAY STAKEHOLDER GROUP

Minutes of the Dounreay Stakeholder Group Public Meeting, held at 19:00 on Wednesday 4 June 2025 at the Pentland Hotel and via MS Teams.

Present:	Cllr Struan Mackie (SM)	DSG Chair (The Highland Council)
	David Alexander (DA)	DSG Vice-chair (Thurso and Wick Trade Union Council)
	Roger Saxon (RS)	DSG Site Restoration subgroup chair
	Gillian Coghill (GC)	Buldoo Residents Group
	Peter Faccenda (PF)	Focus North
	Eann Sinclair (ES)	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
	Trudy Morris (TM)	Chamber of Commerce
	Donna Chambers (DC)	Chamber of Commerce
	Niall Watson (NW)	NRS Dounreay Trade Unions
	Cllr Janet McEwan (JM)	The Highland Council
	John Deighan (JD)	DSG co-opted member of the public
	David Broughton (DB)	DSG co-opted member of the public
	Lauren Mackay (LM)	WIN Highlands
	Marie Cuthbert (MC)	NHS
Attending:	Dave Wilson (DWi)	NRS Dounreay Managing Director
	Mac MacGill (MM)	NRS Dounreay EHSSQ Director
	Alan Mackay (AM)	NDA Site Facing Team
	David Wallace (DW)	NDA Stakeholder Lead
	Linda Buchan (LB)	SEPA
	C/Insp Paul Gilmartin (PG)	CNC
	Cdr Ian Walker (IW)	MOD Vulcan
	Diane Hamilton (DH)	Scottish Government
	Tina Wrighton (TW)	NRS Dounreay Stakeholder & External Relations
	Ferne Mill (FM)	NRS Dounreay Communications Administrator

MINUTES

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Cllr Struan Mackie welcomed everyone to the meeting

A video made by the NDA highlighting the successes of 20 years of SSGs was played.

2. APOLOGIES

The following apologies were received:

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| • Alex Pitsollis | ONR |
| • Allan Farquhar | Royal Burgh of Wick Community Council |
| • Brian Mutch | SGRIPD |
| • Cllr Dr Stephen Clackson | Orkney Council |

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| • Ken Nicol | DSG Co-opted member of the public |
| • Ron Gunn | Iain Gregory deputising - CHAT |
| • Ryan MacLean | Scrabster Harbour Trust |
| • Tor Justad | HANP |
| • David Craig | Caithness West Community Council |
| • Christian Nicolson | Marie Cuthbert deputising- NHS |
| • Cllr Raymond Bremner | Cllr Janet McEwan deputising - Highland Council |

3. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT UPDATE Diane Hamilton updated:

The report was taken as read.

DH gave the group a brief update about higher activity waste policies.

SM thanked DH for her update.

4. DOUNREAY UPDATE

NDA Corporate: David Wallace reported:

The report was taken as read.

The NDA Business Plan was presented in Parliament this week. The Strategy 5 document, which outlines a five-year forward look, is scheduled for release on 7 July.

A recent annual cabinet briefing on mission progress was held and received very positively. As a follow-up, there are plans to invite the Cabinet Secretary to visit Dounreay.

The Cross-Party Group (CPG) meeting took place last week in the Scottish Parliament, where SCORRS was discussed. The meeting saw strong attendance, with 24 councils represented, which was viewed positively. The next meeting is scheduled for September at Hunterston A and B, with a subsequent meeting planned for December.

The next SCORRS meeting is set for 11 November, with productive discussions anticipated. Additionally, the SSG Chairs and Vice Chairs are scheduled to attend a meeting in Manchester in July.

The spending review process is ongoing. While the settlement for the next financial year is confirmed, details for the following years are expected by mid-June.

Questions were welcomed.

DB made several comments on the report and asked where the Festival of Politics would be held.

DW informed DB the Festival of Politics will be in the Scottish Parliament on 20 August and it is a public event.

GC asked how the NDA is selecting SSG members to attend the upcoming 20th anniversary events, and what steps are being taken to ensure that invitations reflect a broad range of community perspectives, including those who have raised concerns or offered challenge.

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GC also questioned what responsibility the NDA holds, as the architect of the SSG model, to support those who speak up within these forums and to maintain the credibility of the model through internal accountability.

DW emphasised that the SSG must resolve its own internal matters, as it is ultimately an independent body. He noted that it is important for members to reach their own resolutions to maintain the group's reputation and confirmed that support will always be provided for such resolutions by the NDA.

DW explained that the NDA has reviewed the existing guidelines for the SSG's and is working to implement any necessary changes. He added that the NDA is responsible for the review and aims to ensure greater consistency across all sites.

SM noted that the new guidance from the NDA will be discussed at the next business meeting and subsequently in the public meeting, to determine what works best moving forward.

A discussion followed regarding the Vulcan transfer.

Cllr Struan Mackie thanked DW for his update.

No further questions were asked.

NRS Dounreay: Dave Wilson reported:

The report was taken as read.

The group and operating key targets were confirmed early, with numerous reviews currently underway. A key priority remains asset intervention, with efforts focused on returning to standard performance levels. Sixteen asset care projects are in progress. Continued hazard reduction also remains a central focus.

Funding for Dounreay was confirmed at £221 million, which was positively received. Regulatory actions are ongoing, with a successful intervention involving alkali metals completed in May and expected to close in June. The COMAH action is scheduled for closure in December. An improvement plan addressing the laundry machinery fall is in place, with closure anticipated in July. Broader learning from across NRS is being incorporated into these efforts.

The Human Performance Capability (HPC) programme has been rolled out, and NRS is also implementing a Human Performance Organisation model, with a 12–18-month rollout planned.

The site has been active with visits, which is seen as beneficial both for Dounreay and the wider Caithness area. Recent visits from the Chair of the ONR, the NDA, and the Just Transition Commission were all positive.

A supply chain event was held with 90 suppliers in attendance, with plans to hold these quarterly and expand them across NRS.

Opportunities for young people continue to grow, with 20 apprentices expected in August, 9 health physics surveyors, 15 graduates in September, and 10 summer students already taken on this year.

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Mid-week site attendance is now around 1,000 people, reflecting a strong return to on-site activity post-COVID.

Additionally, £1.1 million in socio-economic funding has been secured, which will be carefully managed and is a source of pride for Dounreay.

Dounreay is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year and plan to be representing events such as the Mey Games, Halkirk Games, County show and others.

Questions were invited:

GC asked has the site had to take on more staff due to maintenance, or will you pull other staff off projects?

DWi reported that asset reviews are underway, with strategies being developed to reduce hazard and risk while balancing the priorities of care and demolition. Recruitment is ongoing, with efforts focused on attracting younger people to address a demographic shift. The team is also working to make the best use of the supply chain.

NW discussed the trade union's view on Dounreay's work with the local supply chain.

DA thanked Mac MacGill and Mike Potts for holding an early meeting to address the recent laundry lifting incident.

DA raised a question about the PFR roof project. DWi confirmed the project is on track, with more work planned on the opposite side.

Cllr Struan Mackie thanked DWi for his update.

No further questions were asked.

SEPA: Linda Buchan reported:

The report was taken as read.

Subsequent to the compilation of the April report, SEPA has undertaken inspection of NRS Dounreay's arrangements for compliance with EASR permit conditions relating to:

- Assessment of public exposure and impact on the environment resulting from disposals
- Transfers of radioactive substances

The conclusion of the inspection was NRS was found to be compliant with the relevant permit conditions.

SM thanked LB for her update.

No questions were asked.

ONR: James Francis reported:

The report was taken as read.

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The recent incident involving a fall from laundry machinery was discussed. It was noted that an appropriate risk assessment had not been conducted, resulting in a breach of Health and Safety at Work Regulations. Consequently, an improvement notice was issued. A response is being pursued, with the aim of closing out the matter by July.

The inspection of sodium storage was reported as successful, with improvements made in accordance with regulatory standards. However, regulatory scrutiny in this area will continue.

A Level 1 emergency exercise was observed and, despite being challenging, was handled with professionalism and competence. The exercise received an "adequate" rating.

The recent ONR visit was also noted to have gone well, with no significant issues raised.

Cllr Struan Mackie thanked JF for his update.

No questions were asked.

CNC: C/Insp Paul Gilmartin reported:

Recruitment challenges remain ongoing, though efforts to support Police Scotland continue to be effective. Meeting objectives, site visits, and reviews have all been positive. Training initiatives, including learning from Police Scotland and ongoing on-site firearms training, have also been successful and collaborative.

There are currently 15 candidates in the recruitment pipeline. Efforts to expand recruitment include encouraging training courses to be run at Dounreay and attending recruitment events as far south as Edinburgh. Consideration is being given to financial incentives and support to attract new candidates. Work is also ongoing to ensure consistency in the use of temporary officers and in managing site transfers.

The 20th anniversary of the Civil Nuclear Constabulary (CNC) is being marked, with volunteering activities continuing as part of the celebrations.

DB asked if all new recruits will be trained in firearms, PG confirmed that is correct.

GC asked about finding accommodation for temporary officers or officers who relocated to the area, PG said this is being explored by CNC.

Cllr Struan Mackie thanked PG for his update.

No further questions were asked.

5. MOD VULCAN:

MOD Vulcan: Cdr Ian Walker reported:

The report was taken as read.

There have been no lost time accidents reported, with only two minor hand injuries recorded.

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Work is ongoing to address a sewage overflow alarm issue. The site's boilers have been shut down, with permits submitted for new units, which are expected to be operational and ready for use by winter.

All inspections conducted by SEPA have been satisfactory. No regulatory inspections have taken place during this period.

Planning for the Lonestar exercise is ongoing, with the start scheduled for 07:00. The previous site exercise was reported to have gone well.

SM asked about the strategic defence review and if there is any information that can be given on this now. IW said he is not in a position to comment at the moment.

Cllr Struan Mackie thanked IW for his update.

No further questions were asked.

DNSR:

There was no one in attendance from DNSR.

SEPA: Linda Buchan updated:

There was nothing additional to update the group from the paper provided.

Cllr Struan Mackie thanked LB for her update.

No questions were asked.

ONR: James Francis reported:

The report was taken as read.

Routine discussions and conversations regarding the merging of sites are ongoing. The inspection that had been planned for March was cancelled, with the next inspection now scheduled for early July.

SM asked about the dates of inspections, JF clarified the distinction between site interactions and formal inspections, noting that the list provided refers specifically to interactions rather than inspections.

Cllr Struan Mackie thanked JF for his update.

No further questions were asked.

6. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:

Commented [IW1]: Suggest change to 'Work is ongoing to address the issues identified in the internal review of the conventional discharge permits; this include fitting an overflow alarm to the sewage discharge system and applying for a PPC permit for the Site Heating Boilers. The Site Heating boilers have been shutdown for the summer.

Commented [IW2]: Suggest Change to: SEPA undertook an inspection of our arrangements for compliance to the conventional discharge permits, no non-conformances, apart from those previously reported were identified. There were no further regulator inspections.

Commented [IW3]: Suggest change to: Planning for the Lonestar exercise is ongoing, scheduled for 25 June, due to the off site plan being tested the start of the exercise on Site is planned for 0700.

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Cllr Struan Mackie noted the minutes of the last public meeting (DSG(2025)M01) held on 19 March 2025 had been circulated to members in advance. He invited members to raise any issues from the minutes. These were proposed by SM seconded by JD.

The minutes of the DSG socio economic subgroup (DSG/SESG(2025)M01) held on 23 April were endorsed by the group proposed by DA and seconded by TM.

The minutes of the DSG site restoration subgroup (DSG/SRSG(2025)M01) held on 23 April were endorsed by the group, proposed by SM and seconded by DB.

7. STATUS OF ACTIONS

The status of actions were taken as read.

No questions were raised.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

There has been no correspondence since the last meeting.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

SM informed the group he had attended an IAEA conference in Vienna, it was all very positive. SM then thanked the NDA for the continued support and funding of the SSG's.

A member of the public asked if SM would represent Highland Council in DSG after his final year of chair. SM said this was something he would consider.

10. CLOSE

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

Cllr Struan Mackie
DSG Chair
4 June 2025

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING

No new actions.