

# NORTH HIGHLAND ONSHORE VISION: 10 POINT ACTION PLAN



## LÈIRSINN AIR-CLADAICH NA GÀIDHEALTACHD A TUATH: PLANA-GNÌOMH 10 PUING

November  
An Samhain

2013

This action plan focuses primarily on the land use planning of onshore development associated with the expected expansion of the marine renewables sector in North Highland. It has been developed by the Council in consultation with partners and includes both infrastructure and support industry requirements. As a result it will make a practical contribution towards ensuring a coordinated planning approach to the delivery of onshore development for the marine renewables industry in Caithness and North Sutherland.

The aim of the action plan is to provide a clear framework for delivery by showing timescales, who will drive forward pieces of work and other partners involved; however it does not attempt to list everyone that could ultimately be involved such as Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), Dounreay Site Restoration Ltd (DSRL), Skills Development Scotland, Caithness Chamber of Commerce and the North Highland Initiative. The Council will seek agreement from partners that they will contribute to delivery of the actions.

The Council intends to finalise this Action Plan by working with partner organisations including Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership to ensure that the proposals fit well with their work streams and working arrangements.

Key:

THC	The Highland Council
HIE	Highlands & Islands Enterprise
OIC	Orkney Islands Council
Key Agencies	Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Transport Scotland, Historic Scotland
CNSRP	Caithness & North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership
NDA	Nuclear Decommissioning Authority
DSRL	Dounreay Site Restoration Ltd
SG	Scottish Government
CaSPlan	Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan

	Action	Description	Lead Agency	Other Partners	Timescale	Current Status
1	<b>Business and industrial land audit</b>	Update and review the Caithness and North Sutherland Business and Industrial Land Audit.	<b>THC</b>	HIE	Mid 2014	A summary audit was prepared in 2012, and information will be published in the CaSPlan Monitoring Statement. However it is likely that a new audit will be carried out across the Highland area in 2014.
2	<b>Call for Sites</b>	Carry out a “call for sites” exercise for business and industrial sites which may be capable of supporting the development of marine renewables and take forward for consideration through preparation of CaSPlan.	<b>THC</b>	HIE Renewables industry Landowners Key Agencies	Spring/ Summer 2014 (CaSPlan Main Issues Report)	Call for Sites consultation was carried out between August and October 2012. Site suggestions received have been published on Council website. These sites will be taken forward for consideration through preparation of CaSPlan.
3	<b>Enterprise Areas</b>	Work closely with Scottish Government to progress Scrabster Low Carbon & Renewables Enterprise Area.	<b>HIE</b>	THC SG CNSRP NDA DSRL	Ongoing	Scottish Government established Scrabster as an Enterprise Area in summer 2012. HIE and THC are continuing to work with Scrabster Harbour Trust to facilitate development of the Enterprise Area. A feasibility study for the road access is nearing completion.

4	<p><b>Delivering Development</b></p>	<p>Continued use and promotion of the pre-application advice service.</p> <p>Efficient determination of planning applications through the use of Processing Agreements and agreed timelines for delivery.</p> <p>Investigate opportunities for joint working arrangements with Orkney Islands Council/ sharing of expertise and resources.</p> <p>Implement the protocol for handling planning applications for small businesses.</p> <p>Pursue high speed broadband provision to support economic growth</p>	<p><b>THC</b></p> <p><b>HIE</b> (broadband)</p>	<p>Key Agencies</p> <p>OIC</p> <p>Developers</p> <p>CNSRP</p> <p>NDA</p> <p>DSRL</p> <p>Broadband provider</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Progress is continuing to be made to improve the efficiency of the planning process for applications relating to the marine renewables sector. THC is working with OIC and Marine Scotland to prepare a Marine Spatial Plan; Issues and Options Consultation was held in summer 2013. THC have succeeded in promoting 'Orkney, Pentland Firth and North Caithness' as an 'Area of Coordinated Action' in National Planning Framework 3's Main Issues Report. THC and OIC planning officers have begun regular liaison meetings with a focus on delivering marine renewables.</p> <p>HIE awarded roll-out contract to BT. Caithness/ N Sutherland Exchanges not included in initial roll-out communities. Indications that Caithness exchanges may be enabled early 2015. N Sutherland exchanges may not be enabled until 2016.</p>
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5	<b>Siting and Design Guidance</b>	<p>Draft Supplementary Guidance to address the location, siting and design considerations of the onshore requirements related to marine renewable energy developments.</p> <p>Pursue potential for joint working with Orkney Islands Council on broad siting and design principles.</p>	<b>THC</b>	HIE OIC Key Agencies	Mid 2014 (draft guidance)	The Crown Estate has published an onshore infrastructure information note which raises awareness, in broad terms, of likely infrastructure requirements. Initial work has been carried out on siting and design issues; we are discussing this and sharing knowledge with OIC and it will be further developed in 2014.
6	<b>Masterplan for Scrabster/ Thurso West</b>	Provide an updated development framework for Scrabster and West Thurso, taking into account recent development and infrastructure constraints.	<b>THC</b>	HIE SG Landowners Scrabster Harbour Trust Key Agencies	Mid 2014 (CaSPlan Main Issues Report)	Some of the key issues were taken forward through a whole-town charrette for Thurso carried out in February 2013. The outcomes will inform the CaSPlan and any accompanying Supplementary Guidance required.
7	<b>Masterplan for Wick Harbour and Lower Pulteneytown</b>	Provide an updated development framework for Wick Harbour and Lower Pulteneytown, taking into account recent development, regeneration opportunities and infrastructure constraints.	<b>THC</b>	HIE SG Key Agencies Landowners Wick Harbour Authority	Mid 2014 (CaSPlan Main Issues Report)	Some of the key issues were taken forward through a whole-town charrette for Wick carried out in February 2013. The outcomes will inform the CaSPlan and any accompanying Supplementary Guidance required.
8	<b>Community Benefit</b>	Deliver Community Benefits from marine renewables for North Highland in line with Highland Council community benefit policy.	<b>THC</b>	Developers	Early 2013 (policy)/2017 (delivery)	THC has now agreed a Memorandum of Understanding with a major tidal energy provider for the delivery of Community Benefit from the Pentland Firth beyond 2017. Further work is now required on the signing of a Minute of Agreement with this provider. Community Benefit from off-shore wind developments remains a challenge but discussion is ongoing with developers.

9

**Housing Demand Assessment**

An audit of projected housing needs to meet demand from marine energy, offshore wind and grid upgrades to include analysis of the type and tenure required and location preference.

**THC**

HIE

Ongoing

A full housing needs and demand assessment is expected to be carried out for the lead up of the review of the Highland-wide LDP. In the interim a briefing note has been prepared summarising the information which is available and the key conclusions. This will inform CaSPlan and will be included in the Monitoring Statement for the Plan.

10

**Promotion of Caithness and North Sutherland**

Targeted marketing to support potential investment in the energy sector.

**HIE**

THC  
Caithness Chamber of Commerce  
CNSRP

Ongoing

A number of initiatives have been or are being carried out to support and promote investment. Particularly noteworthy is the creation of the Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters Marine Energy Park. CNSRP events being held in Aberdeen, Edinburgh and London to reach key influencers with message regarding opportunities in the area.