

CAITHNESS AND SUTHERLAND LOCAL ECONOMIC FORUM

Minute of a Meeting held on 30th July 2001

In the Royal Marine Hotel, Brora

PRESENT: Jack Watson (CASE) Interim Chairman
John Banister (Caithness and Sutherland Chamber of Commerce)
George Bruce (Caithness Partnership)
Pat Buchanan (Highlands of Scotland Tourist Board)
Carroll Buxton (CASE)
John Dennison (Employment Service)
Francis Keith (Highland Council, Sutherland Area)
Hugh Logan (North Highland College)
Angus McCall (NFU/SCU)
Alison McGee (Sutherland Partnership)
Hilda Morrison (Caithness Business Club)
John Rosie (Highland Council Caithness Area)
Winifred Sutherland (Federation of Small Business)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Christopher Brocklebank Fowler (Caithness Partnership)
Alastair MacDonald (Highland Council, Caithness Area)
Graeme McLaughlin (Highland Council, Sutherland Area)
David Noble (HOST)
Brian Whitelaw (Highland Council, Caithness Area)

1 INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Jack Watson, acting as interim chairman until the Forum appointed its Chairman asked those present to introduce themselves for the benefit of others.

There were no apologies.

2 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Jack Watson asked for nominations for the chair.

Francis Keith reported that it had been suggested in discussions between David Green, Convenor of the Highland Council and Alasdair Morrison that joint chairmen are considered.

Jack Watson reported that an independent chairman had also been proposed and that the Scottish Executive had agreed that this would also be acceptable. He also reported that Robert MacLennan had been proposed as a potential independent chairman.

John Rosie intimated that Highland Council, Caithness Area, would be satisfied with a single Forum with an independent chairman and two working groups, one for Caithness and one for Sutherland who would appoint their own chairmen. This was agreed.

There was lengthy discussion on both proposals and a general consensus was reached to proceed on the basis of an independent chair. It was also agreed that it was important that the chairman was fully involved with the work of the Forum.

There were two nominations for Chairman; these were Robert MacLennan and George Bruce.

A ballot was taken and Robert MacLennan received the majority of the vote.

It was agreed that Jack Watson would invite Mr MacLennan to chair the Caithness and Sutherland Economic Forum.

3 MEMBERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION

The issue of representation on the Forum had been raised. Jack Watson clarified that initially, in the period leading up to the establishment of the LEF, the senior representative of each organisation had been invited to meetings, however it was agreed that it was the responsibility of each organisation to nominate their preferred representative on the Forum.

4 PROGRESS IN OTHER AREAS

It was noted that the progress of LEFs in most other areas was greater than in Caithness and Sutherland due to the fact that they had been established for longer.

The mapping exercise had been completed in Ross and Cromarty and there was an opportunity for Caithness and Sutherland to benefit from this. It was agreed that this was a sensible way forward in order to achieve deadlines set by the task force.

It was agreed that Carroll Buxton would circulate information on the mapping exercise.

ACTION: Carroll Buxton

5 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Caithness and Sutherland Local Economic Forum will be held on Friday 17th August in the Royal Marine Hotel Brora. Membership and remit of the working groups will be an item for discussion at that meeting.