



Nuclear
Decommissioning
Authority

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Supporting our communities towards a healthy local economy

Today sees the publication of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's Socio-economic Policy and an immediate practical application of the principles behind it with the launch of the North Highlands Regeneration Fund in Thurso.

The North Highlands Regeneration Fund will provide pump-priming money to new ventures and existing organisations aimed at bringing to realisation entrepreneurial ideas which will lead to job creation beyond the nuclear industry in the area around Dounreay.

The fund will have an initial capital of £500,000 and will look to offer unsecured, low-interest loans of between £5,000 and £50,000. This initiative brings the total socio-economic funding already committed to Scotland by the NDA to over £2 million, and this is only the start.

Other Scottish initiatives already supported include:

- The Caithness Horizons project to modernise the town hall and library at Thurso for community use including a high quality museum telling the story of the area
- The Annan Regeneration project to convert two listed buildings in the town centre to modern office accommodation and retail use
- The Gretna Landmark project to raise the profile of the area through the creation of a spectacular landmark
- The Determined to Succeed project aimed at primary and secondary students, stimulating them in a way that encourages students to learn about and be prepared for a life of work

The Socio-economic Policy published today for consultation will provide the route for local organisations around all our sites and regions to bid for funding across four main themes. These are;

- Employment
- Education and Skills
- Economic and social infrastructure
- Economic diversification

The NDA intends to focus assistance where it is most needed and four priority areas have been identified:

- West Cumbria
- Caithness and Sutherland
- Anglesey and North Wales
- Dumfries and Galloway

To maintain a focus on strategic objectives we intend to channel resources to local communities through appropriate, accountable bodies and to focus on projects which have a transformational effect and are sustainable in the long term. We expect to rely on collaborations between local bodies to develop proposals for projects

We are seeking efficiency savings on our site work programmes that could, over time, provide significant amounts of money for socio-economic support.

To ensure openness and transparency in this process the NDA has established a Socio-economic sub-committee of the Board with an independent Chair. He or she will be appointed shortly.

Communities and organisations around the 20 sites being decommissioned will now have the opportunity to comment on this policy. The consultation period starting today will end on 19th January 2007. We will submit a revised draft policy to Ministers for their approval and expect to publish the approved Socio-economic Policy in April 2007.

Dr Ian Roxburgh, NDA Chief Executive said:

“Mitigating the impact of decommissioning on the communities around our sites is a challenge we readily accept. It is not for the NDA however, to drive the regeneration agenda. What the new fund offers is a huge opportunity for groups to work in partnership with the NDA to meet joint goals.

Today’s launch of the North Highlands Regeneration Fund is a perfect example of these principles in action. In targeting small businesses and new ventures we are offering support to those who often find it difficult to raise funds in the normal way. This seed-corn money will help deliver the new businesses and jobs which will assist the diversification of the local economy.”

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