

Caithness site included for evaluation in major clean energy development

Plans for Caithness to become the host site for a prototype generator for one of the world's most efficient, cleanest and lowest carbon forms of energy have taken a step forward.

A bid to host the Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production (STEP) prototype fusion power plant was submitted by the Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership (CNSRP) in March.

This has now been included in a list of 15 sites for further investigation by the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA), who launched the open call in December 2020.

If the Caithness bid is successful, the development could create hundreds of high-quality jobs locally, drive wider economic growth and attract further investment to the region.

Fusion technology is being developed worldwide as a transformational source of low carbon energy. It seeks to replicate the energy production process of the sun by fusing hydrogen into helium, producing huge amounts of clean energy, with virtually no emissions or waste.

The development would ultimately produce electricity for the national grid and could be instrumental in achieving Scotland's net-zero targets and a carbon neutral economy.

Ian Ross, chair of the CNSRP, said:

"This is a great opportunity for Caithness and North Sutherland. We already have significant expertise in highly regulated technically challenging developments. We also have an existing supply chain, a welcoming community and support from all CNSRP member organisations.

"The fusion prototype development would dovetail perfectly with the decommissioning of Dounreay and complement our area's existing wind and tidal forms of renewable energy generation.

"All of this and more means Caithness is ideally placed to host this development and make sure it delivers widespread long-term economic and community benefits, as well as wider progress towards the country's net zero targets.

"I am delighted we have made it to the next stage and look forward to working with the UKAEA on evaluating our bid."

ENDS.

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NOTE

The CNSRP is a partnership of the main public sector bodies and key private sector organisations established to combat job losses that will result from the decommissioning of Dounreay. The partnership co-ordinates the inputs to the Major Projects and Infrastructure that have the greatest impact on the future of the area and then communicates this to the stakeholders and the general public. The partners are: Dounreay Site Restoration Ltd, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), The

Highland Council, The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), Caithness Chamber of Commerce, Skills Development Scotland (SDS), and the Scottish Government.