

PE2160/D: Introduce an energy strategy

Cabinet Secretary for Climate Action and Energy written submission, 30 October 2025

Further to your letter of 2 October 2025 regarding petition PE2160 on introducing an energy strategy, I am writing to provide an update on the Scottish Government's Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan, as requested by the Committee.

Since the draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan was published, there have been significant changes in the energy sector across Great Britain. Most notably, this includes the establishment of the National Energy System Operator (NESO), with a clear remit to lead on strategic energy system planning. On 22nd October 2024, the Scottish Government jointly commissioned NESO to produce a Strategic Spatial Energy Plan (SSEP) for Great Britain (GB). The SSEP is intended to optimise the transition to clean, affordable and secure energy by providing greater clarity on the shape of our future energy system. This includes setting out a long-term view of what energy sources are needed to reach net zero, and their most optimal locations across GB.

The SSEP is complemented by NESO's role in providing regional energy strategic planning. I welcomed Ofgem's decision to create Regional Energy Strategic Planners across Great Britain, including a Regional Energy Strategic Plan (RESP) for Scotland, in recognition of the need for democratic decision making in local energy planning and the need to improve understanding of network infrastructure requirements in local areas.

We will continue to work closely with NESO on the SSEP and the RESP as they develop to ensure they align with and respect devolved powers, planning mechanisms and ambitions, deliver real benefits for the people and communities of Scotland, and support our ongoing efforts for a just transition.

A further set of considerations for Scotland's energy strategy is the approach taken by the UK Government in key reserved policy areas for offshore oil and gas, including the regulatory and fiscal regimes for the North Sea. The judgements and issues in the Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan are, therefore, informed by ongoing developments in the UK Government's energy policy and by recent court decisions.

Whilst many of these key policy levers remain reserved, the Scottish Government remains committed to doing what we can to ensure the skills, experience and expertise of Scotland's valued oil and gas workers can support a just energy transition. More than £120 million has already been invested in the North East through our Just Transition Fund and the Energy Transition Fund to support the region's transition to net zero. This funding has helped create green jobs, support innovation, and secure the highly skilled workforce of the future.

I am also pleased to update you that we have recently published many policy decisions on energy, including publication of our Green Industrial Strategy last year (September 2024) which set out how Scotland can seize the economic opportunities of the global transition to net zero. We have also consulted on: Community Benefits from Net Zero Developments (December 2024); our draft Updated Sectoral Marine

Plan for Offshore Wind Energy (May 2025); an Update to the Offshore Wind Policy Statement (June 2025); and the Scottish Marine Recovery Fund (August 2025).

In addition, this autumn we will publish a draft Climate Change Plan outlining how the Scottish Government intends to meet emissions reduction targets up to 2040 across all sectors of the economy, including the energy sector. We will ensure the Plan aligns with our just transition principles. In February, we convened an Offshore Wind Skills Short-Life Working Group with industry and public sector partners to develop an Offshore Wind Skills Action Plan, which will be published imminently.

I note that the petition seeks to address issues related to land use, and I would like to inform the Committee that the Scottish Government is currently developing its fourth Land Use Strategy, due for publication by end of March 2026. This strategy recognises that Scotland's land and the natural capital it supports is one of our most valuable assets. It will focus on the integrated nature of our land and the many demands placed upon it. By understanding the multiple and sometimes conflicting relationships, we can look to secure the fine balance needed to allow our land to contribute sustainably to multiple long term national priorities. Scottish Ministers' decisions on energy and land use are also guided by National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), which was approved by the Scottish Parliament in 2023. This ensures that the planning system enables the sustainable growth of the renewable energy sector while continuing to protect our most valued natural assets and cultural heritage.

I understand the continued interest in issues related to energy given its importance to the economy and people of Scotland. I have therefore carefully considered the Committee's request to schedule a Chamber debate on the energy strategy. However, for the reasons outlined in this letter, I do not believe a Chamber debate is required at this time.

I note the Committee's invitation to me to provide evidence on the themes raised in a number of energy-related petitions and would be happy to meet with the Committee as required.

Yours sincerely,

GILLIAN MARTIN