

# Cross-Party Group on Maritime and Shipbuilding

Date and Time: Wednesday 10 December 2025 at 6pm

Minute

Present:

MSPs:

- Paul Sweeney MSP (Chair)
- Stuart MacMillan

Invited guests:

- **Blair Jamieson**, Business Development Director (West and Central Europe) - Babcock International Group.
- **Natasha Allan**, Head of Sustainability - Babcock International Group.
- **Stefan Garcia**, UK Government Relations Manager - Babcock International Group.

Non-MSP Group Members:

- Andy Harmer
- Blair Moglia
- Stuart Gallacher
- Malcolm Warr
- Mike Bullock
- Prof. Erkan Oterkus
- Leonore Frame
- Blair Jamieson
- Chloe Oakshett
- Patrick Carnie
- Mark Staig
- Vikki Halliday

Apologies:

- Dr Paul Little
- James Trolland

Agenda item 1: Welcome

- Paul Sweeney MSP welcomed everyone in person and online to the meeting and stated that it was the 2025 AGM for the CPG for Maritime and Shipbuilding and introduced guest speakers: **Blair Jamieson**, Business Development Director (West and Central Europe) - Babcock International Group; **Natasha Allan**, Head of Sustainability - Babcock International Group, and **Stefan Garcia**, UK Government Relations Manager - Babcock International Group.

Agenda item 2: Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes from last September 2024 were approved.

- The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and unanimously approved.
- A motion was proposed to reaffirm the appointment of SMC as the secretariat, ensuring continuity and support for the group's ongoing activities.
- It was agreed to retain the current office bearer structure, with no objections raised. Stuart

MacMillan MSP and Leonore Frame (Scottish Enterprise) formally seconded the motion.

### Agenda item 3: Babcock presentation: update on Babcock Marine business and programmes – namely the Type 31 frigate – and wider activity and contribution in Scotland. Presented by Blair Jamieson, Business Development Director (West and Central Europe), Natasha Allan, Head of Sustainability, and Stefan Garcia, UK Government Relations Manager - Babcock International Group.

- Paul Sweeney opened by congratulating Babcock on recent keel-laying ceremonies in Indonesia and Poland, noting the exciting international developments.
- Paul invited Blair Jamieson, Natasha Allan, and Stefan Garcia to present. Stefan provided an overview of Babcock's business. Blair highlighted the third keel-laying of the Royal Navy Type 31 frigates, the modular and adaptable design of the Inspiration Class, and Babcock's growing presence with 17 contracts in Poland and Indonesia. It was noted that HMS Queen Elizabeth is currently at Rosyth for maintenance.
- Blair also mentioned the receipt of the final business case for the Forth Green Freeport, with Sweden, New Zealand, and Denmark as frontrunners. Babcock's technical and engineering expertise was emphasised, with notable interest from Sweden.
- Natasha Allan discussed skills development, including accelerated apprenticeships and digital training, and highlighted the annual Festival of Engineering to introduce school children to engineering careers. She also referenced the Arrol Gibb Innovation Campus (AGIC) and the integration of new technologies with industry needs.
- Questions covered skills shortages, training capacity, and collaboration. Babcock works with Fife and Forth Valley colleges and receives around 5,000 applications for 500 roles annually.
- Patrick Carnie flagged the SMC Schools Outreach Programme (Maritime Pathways) and the future need for funding. There is recognition of the need to raise awareness of maritime careers among young people and to draw lessons from the energy sector.
- Competition with the oil and gas sector, particularly regarding salaries and workforce retention, was noted. Babcock is planning for workforce changes due to retirements over the next 15 years. Collaboration and technology adoption were identified as key to future skills development.
- Commercial shipbuilding was discussed, with Babcock's current focus on defence and offshore wind, though future opportunities in commercial vessels may arise. Financial and skills challenges were acknowledged. Plans for new facilities in America and potentially Sweden were mentioned, pending contract outcomes.

### Agenda Item 4: AOB

- Paul invited Patrick Carnie to discuss the Defence Growth Deal for Scotland and the SMC's role in supporting the maritime sector.
- Patrick noted the initial workshop with the <sup>2</sup>Royal Navy was recently completed, showing

promising engagement from both governments. Attendees were encouraged to contribute ideas to strengthen the cluster, with a report forthcoming.

- Discussion covered contract changes, evolving requirements from the First Sea Lord, and distinctions between complex and non-complex vessels, such as specialised uncrewed ships.
- Strathclyde University's maritime technology roadmap workshops were highlighted, with upcoming sessions scheduled, including one on Monday, February 16, 2026. More details are available on the Mari UK website.
- At the First Sea Lord's conference, Serco announced a contract with Damen for 24 workboats. As Damen faces legal scrutiny, there may be an opportunity for the contract to return to the UK depending on the legal outcome.

## Closing remarks

- Paul thanked all attendees, especially the presenters, for their contributions.
- The meeting closed at 7pm.