

North Sea Future Board – Thursday 18 June 2026

Attendees:

- Michael Shanks (Chair), Minister of Energy, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
- Stephen Gethins, Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Energy, Scottish Government
- Stuart Payne, CEO, NSTA
- Dave Whitehouse, CEO, OEUK
- Claire Greer, Regional Organiser, GMB Scotland
- Jane Cooper, Deputy CEO, RenewableUK
- Rich Denny, Managing Director, Northern Endurance Partnership
- Joanne Leng, CEO, NOF
- Olivia Powis, CEO, Carbon Capture Storage Association
- Sam Long, CEO, Decom Mission
- Sarah Moore, CEO, Peterson Logistics
- Rob Gilbert, Director of Supply Chain, GBE
- Ann Joss, Regional Officer, RMT
- Kevin Keable, Chair, East of England Energy Group
- Neil McCulloch, CEO, Adura
- Maggie McGinlay, CEO, ETZ Ltd

Supporting officials:

- Olivia Graham, Deputy Director, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
- George Howes, Deputy Director, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
- Rodney Berkeley, Director, Infrastructure and Technology, Department for Business and Trade
- Sean Neill, Director for Energy and Climate Change, Scottish Government
- Susie Townsend, Deputy Director, Energy Industries Division, Scottish Government

Apologies:

- Chris McDonald – Minister for Industry, Department for Business and Trade
- Dan McGrail, CEO, GBE
- Angela Scott (Aberdeen City Council)
- Jim Savege, CEO, Aberdeenshire Council
- Darren Procter, National Secretary, RMT
- Simon Coop, National Officer for Energy and Utilities, Unite
- Claire Mack, CEO, Scottish Renewables

1. Welcome and opening remarks

Minister Shanks welcomed members to the third meeting of the Board and thanked the hosts for their support in organising. He noted some changes in attendance and membership, and welcomed Stephen Gethins MSP, Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Energy of Scotland.

Minister Shanks reflected that the energy landscape had changed since the previous meeting. He said it was imperative to go further and faster to decarbonise power, electrify the wider economy, and strengthen protections for consumers. He emphasised the need to manage the transition carefully while moving quickly towards delivery, noting that progress should not be delayed in the pursuit of perfection.

Minister Gethins thanked Minister Shanks for the invitation to join the Board and said that he is looking forward to progressing work together. He reflected on the current sentiments within the oil and gas industry, including on the fiscal regime.

2. Progress update

The Board received an update on progress since the previous meeting, including the launch of a tender to procure an external delivery partner for the North Sea Jobs Service, the opening of the Clean Industry Bonus AR8 application window, and the announcement of the Energy Independence Bill in the King's Speech.

Members noted positive developments in carbon capture, usage and storage, including progress on investment decisions, supply chain contracts and international collaboration.

3. What success looks like

Members considered a revised paper setting out a Board vision statement and success measures to guide their activity. Members welcomed the paper as a pragmatic and inclusive statement of intent and noted that it would provide a useful framework for the Board's work.

The discussion covered the importance of delivery and the need for the Board's milestones to reflect what it can realistically influence and achieve. Also discussed was the individual and collective role of members in promoting the narrative, as set out in the paper, in their energy subsectors and regions. Members noted the need to reference energy security more clearly in the narrative.

The Board endorsed the paper subject to an addition on energy security. Members agreed that the Board should consider how the vision could inform future communications and potential published outputs.

4. Update on DESNZ forums and groups

The Board discussed a paper that mapped out relevant DESNZ forums and groups. Members felt this work was a helpful overview of the landscape and discussed the importance of avoiding duplication while maintaining groups that add specific value.

The Board agreed that links with relevant groups should be strengthened, including by ensuring that trade union membership of groups and DBT-related forums are captured appropriately.

5. Cross-sector procurement behaviours

The Board considered work that is progressing to develop cross-sector procurement best practice. Members discussed how common principles could improve supply chain opportunities, particularly by encouraging better behaviours among operators and developers.

Members highlighted concerns about tendering practices, including burdensome processes, limited feedback and costs incurred by unsuccessful bidders. It was clarified that the work was focused on behaviours and good practice, rather than looking into terms and conditions, or alternative contracting models.

The Board agreed that a more developed paper should be brought to the next meeting, setting out the purpose of the work, its scope, what it does and does not cover, and how it could be delivered. Members also agreed to consider whether this work could form a published output for the Board.

6. Barriers to project delivery

The Board discussed barriers to project delivery, focusing on where it could add value and where members could help progress practical actions. Discussion covered local content, access to capital, decommissioning, project pipelines, grid constraints, consenting, policy certainty and contracting structures.

Members noted the importance of ensuring that potential benefits in terms of local content are considered as part of investment and delivery. The Board also discussed the need for greater visibility of project pipelines and clearer signals to the supply chain, while recognising constraints around the visibility of future government spending decisions.

The Board agreed that further work should identify interim actions and clear recommendations for the next meeting. This would include bringing forward further updates on access to capital, inviting relevant investment expertise, and developing further work on decommissioning opportunities.

7. Supply chain activity plan and case studies

The Board received an update on supply chain work, including from the DESNZ Clean Energy Investment Directorate, as well as work the NSTA is progressing to develop a North Sea Activity Plan. Members discussed the need for the activity plan to provide consistent, reliable information for the supply chain and to be made available quickly in a usable format.

They then discussed the case studies that had been compiled by the Board showing how companies are diversifying and supporting the energy transition. Members welcomed the case studies as a useful way to demonstrate opportunities and lessons learned.

The Board noted that any outputs and communications should recognise both success stories and the challenges facing businesses, to avoid presenting an unbalanced picture.

The Board agreed that the barriers work and supply chain work should be brought together, with recommended further actions and potential outputs for publication, including case studies. Members also agreed that communications options should be explored ahead of the next meeting.

8. Wrap up and next steps

Minister Shanks summarised that the Board should decide on concrete steps and bring the barriers and supply chain work together into a clearer set of actions and outputs. Future actions could also consider other priority areas, such as skills and training.