

eBRIEF

Bargaining and Campaigns

UNISON
Scotland

Draft Energy Strategy & Just Transition Plan – Scottish Gov Consultation - Feb 23

The Scottish Government is currently consulting on its draft [Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan](#). This short briefing looks at key aspects of the draft and some of the issues UNISON Scotland will be raising in our response.

Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan

The [192 page draft](#) is subtitled: **delivering a fair and secure zero carbon energy system for Scotland**. The Ministerial foreword says the key ambitions in the plan include:

More than 20 GW of additional renewable electricity on- and offshore by 2030. • An ambition for hydrogen to provide 5 GW or the equivalent of 15% of Scotland's current energy needs by 2030 and 25 GW of hydrogen production capacity by 2045. • Increased contributions from solar, hydro and marine energy to our energy mix. • Accelerated decarbonisation of domestic industry, transport and heat. • Establishment of a national public energy agency – Heat and Energy Efficiency Scotland. • By 2030, the need for new petrol and diesel cars and vans phased out and car kilometres reduced by 20%. • Generation of surplus electricity, enabling export of electricity and renewable hydrogen to support decarbonisation across Europe. • Energy security through development of our own resources and additional energy storage. • A just transition by maintaining or increasing employment in Scotland's energy production sector against a decline in North Sea production. • Maximising the use of Scottish manufactured components in the energy transition, ensuring high-value technology and innovation.

The consultation lists 50 questions on issues incl:

Preparing for a Just Energy Transition; Energy Supply - covering Renewable Energy & North Sea Oil & Gas; Energy Demand – covering Heat in Buildings & Energy for Transport & Agriculture & Industry; a Route Map to 2045; Impact assessment for protected characteristics, children's rights & wellbeing & those on lower incomes, at risk of fuel poverty, & opportunities for young people; and Just Transition energy outcomes.

UNISON will be commenting in most detail on some specific areas of interest, obviously with Just Transition as a core principle. We will be making our case on issues including the importance of public ownership and control of energy; municipal and community energy; energy efficiency and retrofitting; hydrogen; [decarbonising public services](#); public transport, public investment and more.

Getting energy and Just Transition planning policy and delivery right is not only much needed and long awaited, but utterly essential to ensuring a just and green recovery, leaving no one behind. UNISON Scotland has long argued for strong climate action and a transition to an economy that

won't destroy the planet. The consultation comes at a time when it is clear the energy system needs to change. It is immoral that energy companies once again enjoy "["obscene" record profits](#)", yet we have cost of living and energy costs crises leaving millions struggling financially, hard on the heels of the pandemic.

We work with the [Just Transition Partnership](#), whose conference on 21 Feb on Reclaiming our Energy focused on the consultation, arguing that "public ownership of energy production and infrastructure is an essential part of any plans to hit climate change targets. The privatised energy system is giving us fuel poverty, soaring energy prices and profits; and failing to deliver a Just Transition." We want the energy strategy to strongly support publicly-owned solutions. The STUC has also been [condemning major failings](#) to deliver strong offshore wind supply chains, with concerns about billions lost to the public purse, [highlighted](#) in this [Common Weal analysis](#).

There has been outrage from some that the draft strategy even asks questions about any new oil and gas, whereas [environmentalists](#) wanted to see this ruled out. Indeed, for climate action, a managed and just wind down of North Sea oil and gas production needs to happen as quickly as possible in line with keeping temperatures to 1.5°C. UN Secretary General Antonion Guterres [said this month](#) to the oil companies: "Your core product is our core problem. We need a renewables revolution, not a self-destructive fossil fuel resurgence."

As part of the [Stop Climate Chaos Scotland](#) coalition (SCCS), we believe Scotland and the UK must take an equitable approach to this process. SCCS has been calling on the Scottish Government to immediately start planning for a [credible managed wind down](#) as part of a Just Transition, with trade unions and communities fully involved in agreeing timescales. It is not helpful that key evidence vital for the consultation on a presumption against new oil and gas has not been published, as Friends of the Earth Scotland and others [told The Ferret](#).

While Just Transition is key to this, you would think that the Scottish Government's own Just Transition Commission (whose [July 2022 report](#) the [JTP/STUC praised](#)) would be consulted on the draft strategy but shockingly not. The JTC [published a letter](#) last month to Just Transition Minister Richard Lochhead, [stating pointedly](#) the Commission was not consulted and referencing the Committee on Climate Change's December [2022 Scottish Progress Report's](#) criticism about the credibility of climate policy and the need for a shift in pace, urgency and scale in the 2020s. The JTC has just published a [further letter](#) with "high level initial advice" on the draft plan.

This is an important consultation for all our futures and will be of interest to all UNISON branches, including of course our gas and electricity members.

Please send any comments on the draft plan, including relevant case studies, to Fiona Montgomery f.montgomery@unison.co.uk by Monday 20 March. The final deadline for the consultation is 4 April 2023.

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