

Minute note - Cross Party Group on Oil and Gas

Held on Wednesday 20 May, 12:30-14:00

Committee Room 4, the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

In attendance

MSPs:

Dennis Robertson [Chair]
Lewis Macdonald
Nanette Milne
Christian Allard
Graeme Pearson
Kevin Stewart
Mark McDonald
Richard Baker

Maggie McGinlay, Scottish Enterprise
Martine Nolan, Xodus Group
Mark Whittet, Scottish Energy News
Neil Michie, Oil & Gas UK
Richard Crossick, Shell
Robert Orr, Skills Development Scotland

Apologies

Non MSPs:

Alan Motion, Met Office
Alix Thom, Oil & Gas UK
Ally Rae, BP
Amy Brown, Skills Development Scotland
Andrew Gill, Weber Shandwick
Brian Donaldson, Semco Maritime
Brian Mcleish, Scottish Enterprise
Christine Jones
Deirdre Michie, Oil & Gas UK
Frances Johnston, Scottish Parliament
Gareth Williams, SCDI
Gordon McGuinness, Skills Development Scotland
Janis McCulloch, PPS Group
Jenni Ross, Scottish Parliament
Jenny Stanning, Oil & Gas UK
Kevin Misell, Xodus Group

MSPs:

Alison McInnes
Tavish Scott
Jackie Bailie

Non-MSPs:

Ian Furneaux, Oil and Gas Authority
James Hamilton, OPITO
John McDonald, OPITO
Les Linklater, Step Change in Safety
Meg Wright, Engineering Development Trust
Nigel Jenkins, Decom North Sea
Norman McLennan, Sasol Exploration & Production International
Roger Salomone, ExxonMobil
Tracey Exton, Application Recruitment

Dennis Robertson MSP (DR) welcomed MSPs and non-MSPs members to the Cross Party Group and opened the meeting with round table introductions.

Deirdre Michie (DM), the newly appointed Chief Executive of Oil & Gas UK, was the first speaker, outlining her priorities for Oil & Gas UK. DM stressed that this was a challenging time for the industry, but that the industry still presented many great opportunities. DM highlighted that recent fiscal and regulatory changes would help in securing a sustainable future for the industry, but now the cost challenge was the main focus for industry. It was noted by the group that DM would be based in the Aberdeen for her new role.

DR noted his appreciation for the work of DM's predecessor, Malcolm Webb, and wished to record his thanks to Mr Webb for his efforts during his tenure at Oil & Gas UK.

Gordon McGuinness (GM) and **Robert Orr** (RO) from Skills Development Scotland then presented on Scottish Apprenticeship Week, which was being held that week. RO outlined that the Week consisted of a

series of targeted events, looking to highlight modern apprenticeships in Scotland. RO stated that encouraging uptake in STEM subjects was a key growth area and that SDS was looking to increase engagement with oil and gas companies. RO highlighted the work they were doing with organisations such as OPITO and ECITB to facilitate the 2,200 oil and gas modern apprenticeships that exist. RO also emphasised SDS' Energy Skills Investment plan, which has recently been refreshed, and is a document that provides a framework for the development of skills provision to meet industry's needs.

Maggie McGinlay (MM) from Scottish Enterprise then talked the group through the work that the Energy Jobs Taskforce had been doing to promote skills and talent in the oil and gas industry during the currently challenging environment. MM highlighted the 3 key themes the Energy Jobs Taskforce had been focussing on – (1) to retain and grow talent and skills in the industry; (2) to identify and support those who are facing redundancy; (3) to enhance partnership and collaboration across industry and the public sector. A video, outlining the work of the Energy Jobs Taskforce, was then played.

MM then spoke about events that have been organised, in collaboration with the Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE), to reach those affected by redundancy, as well as Match People Skills, an initiative aimed at matching the skills of workers with those required by employers. MM highlighted the PACE Oil and Gas Event being held on the 17 June at Aberdeen Beach Ballroom.

MM outlined the cost efficiency challenge that the industry was facing, and that while Oil & Gas UK were focussing on this and the taskforce does not want to duplicate work, they were looking to add value to this issue where possible. The key issues of leadership through change and promoting balanced messaging were also touched upon by MM.

DR then opened a Q&A session by asking industry how it was striving to achieve balanced messaging at this time. MM outlined they the industry messaging should be evidence based, using facts and case studies. DM highlighted that it was a tough balance to strike, but that the UKCS is still a considerable prize worth pursuing.

Questions following included whether job losses in the industry are being tracked and monitored; whether redundancies are being made prematurely, resulting in a skills gap in the future; how industry and government can attract more new entrants to the industry; the current uptake of apprenticeship programmes; the need to improve cross over in competences in industry workers; opportunities for pan-industry recruitment; perceived gender inequalities in the industry; and the need for role models and mentors in the industry.

Neil Michie (NM) then confirmed that the dates for the next cross party group were:

- Wednesday 2nd September, 18:00-19:30
- Wednesday 11th November, 18:00-19:30

DR thanked all attendees for their input, before formally closing the meeting.