



## GBE ABERDEEN ENERGY TASKFORCE 9 OCTOBER MEETING

### Executive Summary

The inaugural meeting of the GBE Aberdeen Energy Taskforce convened on 9 October, with a civic welcome from the Lord Provost, who emphasised Aberdeen's role as a global energy hub and pledged support for the Taskforce's work.

Juergen Maier, GBE opened the session by outlining the Taskforce's remit: to define strategic priorities and deliver tangible outcomes for Aberdeen and the wider region. He reaffirmed GBE's commitment to an inclusive 'all-energy' approach and announced the appointment of Graeme Sword as Chair and Iain Anderson as Co-Chair, highlighting the importance of combining business leadership with local engagement.

Members reviewed the draft Terms of Reference, with strong consensus on the need for measurable goals - particularly around jobs, skills, and supply chain development. The Taskforce agreed to publish the Terms of Reference and align them with existing regional work and national policy.

Dan McGrail presented GBE's emerging Strategic Plan, inviting feedback ahead of its planned launch in later in the year. Key themes included early-stage funding challenges, the need for legislative reform to accelerate delivery, and the importance of aligning supply chain actions with broader energy system outcomes. The Taskforce committed to identifying projects/high-impact initiatives that can be delivered within six months to demonstrate momentum.

The next meeting will be scheduled for the end of November, following refinement of the Strategic Plan and identification of priority projects, which members are invited to share offline.

## **Attendees**

### **Members**

- Bob Ruddiman – Co-Head of Energy, Burness Paull
- Dan McGrail - Chief Executive Officer, GBE
- David Whitehouse – CEO, OEUK
- Donella Beaton – Vice Principal, RGU
- Iain Anderson – Co-Chair of Taskforce
- Graeme Sword – Co-Chair of Taskforce
- Jeff Corray – CFO, D2Zero & Head of Energy Private Equity, Piper Sandler
- Juergen Maier – Chair, GBE
- Maggie McGinlay – CEO, ETZ
- Michael Love – Head of Policy, Opito
- Myrtle Dawes – CEO, Net Zero Technology Centre
- Neil McCulloch – CEO, Adura / Spirit Energy
- Nicola McLeod – [Job title not specified], D2Zero
- Nick Dalgarno – Managing Director, Energy, Power & Infrastructure, Piper Sandler
- Steve Gray – CEO, Ventex

### **Invited Participants**

- Paul Addison - Director Policy and External Affairs, GBE
- Cllr David Cameron - Lord Provost of Aberdeen, Aberdeen City Council
- Padraig McLoskey - Head of Corporate Relations, Shell
- Julie Wood - Chief Officer City Development, Aberdeen City Council
- Holly Garland - Senior Private Secretary, GBE

### **Secretariat**

- Megan-Rose Duffy - External Affairs Lead, GBE

### **Apologies**

- Allan Pirie – CEO, Ashtead Technology
- Bob Keiller – Chair of Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce and Our Union Street
- Roy MacGregor – Chairman, Global Energy Group
- Simon Roddy – SVP Upstream, Shell UK

## Minute of 9 October Meeting

### **Civic Welcome from the Lord Provost**

The Lord Provost welcomed the group and emphasised the importance of maintaining and protecting Aberdeen as a key global energy hub. He welcomed GBE's engagement and offered support for the work of the Taskforce.

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Juergen Maier (JM) opened the meeting by welcoming members to the Taskforce and outlining the primary purpose of the meeting: to define the group's remit and establish clear priorities. He acknowledged the significant pressures facing Aberdeen, while also emphasising the unique opportunity the energy transition presents for the region. He reaffirmed his commitment to an inclusive, 'all-energy' approach.

He shared his vision for the Taskforce, stressing the importance of complementing existing efforts in the energy space. The Taskforce, in partnership with GBE, should focus on identifying and removing barriers to progress. JM underscored that the core objectives must remain centred on delivering benefits for jobs and communities.

JM also announced the leadership of the Taskforce, extending a warm thank you to Graham Sword (GS), who will serve as Chair, and Iain Anderson (IA) as Co-Chair.

JM noted that while the Taskforce is business-led, it operates within a policy context, making this dual leadership both practical and powerful. GS will lead the delivery of the work, with IA supporting political navigation and stakeholder engagement.

## Review of Group Remit and Terms of Reference

IA suggested that the Taskforce may wish to meet bi-monthly initially instead of quarterly to maintain momentum and drive progress.

JM confirmed that a project office will be established to support the work of the Taskforce.

Maggie McGinlay cautioned against an over leveraging specific policy outcomes and having clear objectives. JM agreed, noting that while jobs underpin GBE's mission, it is important that the Taskforce is comfortable with the published goals.

Bob Ruddiman stressed the need to explicitly recognise the existing work, skills, and research in this space within the Terms of Reference, and to reference the intention to engage with that work.

Jeff Corray emphasised the importance of referencing oil and gas jobs, transition, and skills. He advocated for setting measurable goals early on and tracking progress regularly to demonstrate impact to the public as part of the GBE strategy.

Michael Love highlighted the need for unified messaging and suggested the Taskforce could play a convening role in representing the sector to government departments (e.g. Department for Education [DFE], Department for Work and Pensions [DWP]).

JM summarised the discussion:

- The Terms of Reference will be published, and the work of the Taskforce will be transparent.
- Metrics - particularly around jobs - must be considered carefully.
- The Taskforce will act for 'all-energy'.
- Policy alignment should be referenced in the Terms of Reference.

**ACTION** – All members to feed in further thoughts on the Terms of Reference

**ACTION** – Secretariat to circulate updated Terms of Reference

## Member Priorities

Members introduced themselves and shared their objectives for the Taskforce. These can be summarised as follows:

- **Deliver Tangible Local Impact:** Focus on real, measurable outcomes for Aberdeen and the wider region.
- **Strengthen Industry Engagement:** Reset communication with the business community. Provide a platform for honest feedback and shape meaningful action through an "all-energy" approach.
- **Anchor Success in Aberdeen:** Success locally will serve as the cornerstone for national impact.
- **Embed Economic Development and Regional Passion:** Ensure regional growth and prosperity remain central to the mission.

- **Leverage Academic Expertise as a Strategic Asset:** Engage universities early to embed innovation and research.

## GBE Strategic Plan

JM introduced the Strategic Plan as the first substantive agenda item. GBE has published its Statement of Strategic Priorities; the focus now shifts to translating those priorities into action.

Dan McGrail (DM) presented the emerging strategy and invited input from Taskforce members ahead of final publication, targeted for launch before Christmas. The discussion focused on identifying interventions and capital deployment, especially around supply chains and job creation in the North-East.

### Feedback from Members

- Early-stage funding remains the biggest hurdle. Despite the availability of infrastructure funds, risk aversion limits investment in the initial phases.
- More can be delivered by connecting green ambitions and the willingness to fund early-stage projects.
- A market reset is underway. The decline of legacy industries is a concern, creating a steep transition curve.
- JM and IA emphasised the need to identify areas for strategic acceleration.
- Steve Gray suggested that cutting through barriers could unlock rapid progress, and that this group would be well placed to draft a plan to this effect.
- Jeff Corray proposed a reverse-engineering approach: define desired outcomes, then build the structures to achieve them. He also advocated for creating local champions across the energy sector.

JM confirmed that the strategy is moving into its deployment phase, with upcoming announcements including the launch of the Supply Chain Fund.

**ACTION** – Secretariat to circulate Strategic Plan slides (completed 13/10)

**ACTION** – All members to provide further comment for incorporation into the Strategic Plan draft by 21/10

### Taskforce Moonshot Projects & Priorities

IA invited the Taskforce to identify high-impact projects from GBE's strategic priorities over the next six months. This is defined as a bold, action-oriented push—something tangible that demonstrates GBE's momentum and delivers results.

One of the core themes is the energy supply chain, and the group is encouraged to identify a project that could be accelerated.

Myrtle Dawes highlighted the importance of rapid technology deployment, referencing a potential "Deepwater Hub" project involving up to three demonstration centres. She noted that individual actors cannot de-risk technologies alone. Even with funding, confidence in the technology remains a barrier. She shared her experience from an investment board where capital was

available, but the technology underperformed. Her recommendation: commit to launching the demonstration centres quickly to build trust and momentum.

**ACTION** – All members to identify key projects for prioritisation and delivery within the next six months, and return these to the Secretariat

### Reflections and Next Steps

JM outlined the need to reflect on existing work in the North-East and identify what GBE can accelerate. The group should distinguish between short-term deliverables and longer-term ambitions.

Key areas for deeper focus include decommissioning, skills development, and supply chain gaps.

DM noted the importance of aligning supply chain actions with broader energy system outcomes, under the remit of mission control.

IA emphasised the breadth of opportunity but urged focus: the group is eager for progress.

GS suggested that the finalised strategy would be a sensible point at which to reconvene, proposing the next meeting be scheduled by the end of November for December.

**ACTION** – Secretariat to schedule next meeting for end of November

### Action Log

#### Strategic Plan Development

- Secretariat to circulate Strategic Plan slides – Completed 13/10
- All members to provide further comment for incorporation into the Strategic Plan draft – Deadline: 21/10

#### Projects & Priorities

- All members to identify key projects for prioritisation and delivery within the next six months – Submit to Secretariat

#### Next Steps

- Secretariat to schedule next Taskforce meeting – Target: End of November, after Strategic Plan publication (complete, scheduled for December 10 2025 post Strategic Plan)

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