



Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

Michael Shanks MP
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Russell Borthwick
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Our ref: MCB2025/11105

2 September 2025

Dear Russell,

Thank you for your letter of 4 July regarding energy sector issues, including my recent appearance at the Scottish Affairs Select Committee. I also appreciated our recent meeting and your continued advocacy on these issues. I hope we can continue that dialogue.

On the issue of the Scottish Affairs Committee, I have already written to the Chair of the Committee to clarify my remarks. It was not my intention at all to suggest UK-based production does not make a material difference to the UK – I was referring to issuing additional licences, but I fully appreciate I was not clear, and I am happy to say so and correct the record.

As I hope was clear from other answers I gave during the session, and from the engagement that we have had on my trip to Aberdeen in June, it is my own and the Government's view that the North Sea, its workers, businesses and communities have a proud history in powering our country. It is correct to say that oil and gas production will remain part of our energy system for decades to come, and we will deliver a phased and managed transition by supporting existing fields for the full extent of their lifespan.

The point I was seeking to make was that this transition away from oil and gas production from the North Sea is already underway and has been since production peaked nearly 25 years ago. While it is right that we continue to recognise the role of domestically produced oil and gas, new licenses to explore new fields will not make a material difference to the decline and we must focus on delivering a prosperous transition in the North Sea. I regret that my answer was not clearer, as I take my responsibilities as a Minister to give accurate answers to Parliament seriously.

Thank you again for taking the time to write, sharing your recent reports including your 41st Energy Transition Survey, and for your continued engagement as we work together during these important times for the energy sector. We were also grateful for the evidence and response that Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce's provided to the Building the North Sea's Energy Future consultation, which the Government is currently developing a response to, which will be published in due course.

Let's catch up again soon.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael Shanks" with a period at the end. The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

MICHAEL SHANKS MP
Minister for Energy