



Stephen Gethins MSP
Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Energy
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

—
The Hub
Exploration Drive
Aberdeen Energy Park
Bridge of Don
Aberdeen
AB23 8GX

—
T 01224 343900
E info@agcc.co.uk
www.agcc.co.uk

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Dear Stephen,

On behalf of Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce, I would like to warmly congratulate you on your appointment as Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Energy. We wish you every success in this important role at a critical moment for Scotland's economy, energy future, and international relationships.

As the voice of business across the North-east of Scotland, the Chamber represents more than 1,350 businesses spanning energy, supply chain, technology, food and drink, tourism, professional services, manufacturing, and the wider economy. Collectively, our members employ over half of the region's workforce. Our policy work is guided by our 2026 Manifesto, which sets out a clear call for economic growth as a central objective of government, alongside a competitive fiscal and regulatory environment and strategic, place-based investment aligned to regional strengths.

These priorities closely align with your ministerial portfolio, particularly in relation to energy, international engagement, and Scotland's external economic relationships. The North-east remains central to Scotland's economic success, and businesses across the region are keen to continue working constructively with government to ensure Scotland remains globally competitive while delivering a fair, pragmatic transition to net zero.

A consistent theme of the Chamber's manifesto and wider policy work is the need for policy certainty, investment confidence, and improved regulatory efficiency to unlock private sector growth. Businesses across our membership regularly highlight the importance of stable frameworks to support long-term investment decisions, protect high-value jobs, and sustain productivity.

This is particularly relevant to energy policy and the transition underway across the North-east. While recognising that many core elements of energy policy are reserved to the UK Government, there remains a vital role for the Scottish Government in shaping the conditions for investment, coordinating delivery, and advocating for Scotland's energy economy.

Consistent with the Chamber's 2026 Manifesto and our "New Energy Capital of Europe" ambition, our key priorities are focused on ensuring the energy transition is investable, competitive, and delivered at pace. In practical terms, this includes:

- Restoring investor confidence in the oil and gas sector, including pressing for the UK Government to end the Energy Profits Levy in 2026 and accelerate development of a stable long-term fiscal and regulatory framework, including the Oil and Gas Price Mechanism, to unlock future investment and protect jobs
- Maintaining support for responsible domestic oil and gas production as part of the UK's wider energy security strategy, alongside an orderly transition to low-carbon alternatives

- Doubling the scale and accelerating delivery of the Just Transition Fund to £1billion, ensuring funding is fully deployed by 2030 and refocused on strategic, job-creating investments rather than fragmented smaller projects, including reopening discussion on match-funding mechanisms with the UK Government
- Accelerating renewable energy consenting and grid delivery, with a particular focus on speeding up planning and regulatory processes for offshore wind, hydrogen and industrial decarbonisation projects
- Reforming transmission charging and Contracts for Difference arrangements to ensure Scotland's projects compete on a genuinely level playing field, and better reflect Scotland's role as a major generator of clean energy
- Ensuring the delivery of a properly resourced Offshore Wind Hub in Aberdeen, with real operational capability and decision-making presence in the region to support industry growth and supply chain development

Taken together, these priorities reflect the Chamber's long-standing position that the energy transition must be treated not only as a climate objective, but as a mission-critical economic transformation for the North-east. The region has the assets, expertise and industrial base to lead this transition, but realising that potential will require coordinated action across both devolved and reserved policy areas, alongside strong advocacy within UK-wide frameworks.

We are also keen to explore new opportunities that further strengthen the North-east's role in energy innovation and decarbonisation. You will be aware that, with the support of the Scottish Government and EventScotland, the region will host Rally Scotland as part of the FIA World Rally Championship from 2027 to 2029. The championship's adoption of sustainable fuel technologies provides an important platform for demonstrating real-world decarbonisation pathways in high-performance transport.

Building on this, and working with Motorsport UK, event organisers, and industry partners, the Chamber is keen to explore the potential for the North-east to act as a pilot region for the large-scale production and deployment of synthetic fuels as a clean alternative for combustion engine transport. This would align strongly with our manifesto priority of strategic, place-based investment and our wider ambition to position the North-east as a globally recognised "new energy capital".

This concept reflects the region's unique combination of industrial capability, energy infrastructure, engineering expertise, and innovation capacity. It also aligns with the Chamber's focus on turning existing energy strengths into scalable, exportable capabilities that drive long-term growth.

Your responsibilities for Europe, external affairs, and Scotland's international relationships are also of significant relevance to our members. The Chamber's manifesto highlights the importance of strengthening Scotland's international competitiveness and improving conditions for trade, inward investment, and global connectivity.

Many businesses across the North-east operate internationally and place significant value on strong international connectivity and trading relationships. There is considerable opportunity to further enhance Scotland's global profile, support export growth, and attract inward investment - particularly in sectors where the region already has internationally recognised capability, including energy services, subsea engineering, digital technology, and food and drink.

Alongside these priorities, our members also recognise the importance of ensuring that the benefits of transition are felt across communities. Our manifesto emphasises inclusive growth, skills development, and infrastructure investment as essential components of a just transition that delivers for households as well as industry.

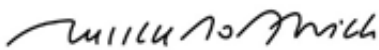
The Chamber would therefore welcome the opportunity to maintain open and constructive dialogue on these issues. We would be delighted to invite you to meet with the Chamber and/or a small group of members at a mutually convenient time in the coming weeks. This would provide an opportunity to discuss shared priorities, hear directly from businesses across the region, and explore how government and industry can work together to deliver Scotland's economic and energy ambitions.

We would be very pleased to host this at the Chamber offices.

Please contact heather.morrell@agcc.co.uk to make the arrangements.

Once again, congratulations on your appointment. We look forward to engaging positively with you and your team in the months ahead.

Yours sincerely,



Russell Borthwick
Chief Executive