



**Aberdeen &
Grampian
Chamber of
Commerce**

Jim Savege
Chief Executive
Aberdeenshire Council
Woodhill House
Westburn Road
Aberdeen
AB16 5GB

—
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

04 February 2026

Dear Jim,

I write on behalf of Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce to express profound disappointment – and serious concern – at Aberdeenshire Council Infrastructure Services Committee's decision to reject the Hurlie substation application.

We believe this represents a fundamentally anti-growth, anti-jobs and anti-investment planning decision, taken despite clear evidence of significant economic, employment and community benefit to be realised. More troubling still, it undermines the very foundations of a credible transition to a new energy economy at a time when our region urgently needs one.

The recently published independent [What the North Thinks](#) survey – the largest ever assessment of public attitudes to the energy transition in the north of Scotland – is unequivocal. Communities understand that the future of the region depends on investment in new energy infrastructure that delivers real jobs, local spend and visible community benefit. Grid and infrastructure upgrades are widely seen as a necessary enabler of that future when they support employment and economic opportunity locally.

The report highlights that a majority of respondents associate electricity grid upgrades with job creation, and that support increases significantly where projects are clearly linked to local economic outcomes and long-term community benefit. In short, the public expects leadership that enables investment – not decisions that block it.

This context matters. The decline and ongoing uncertainty facing the oil and gas sector presents arguably the greatest challenge Aberdeenshire has ever faced. Thousands of highly skilled jobs are in jeopardy, the supply chain is being put at terminal risk and younger people are questioning whether the region offers long-term opportunity.

Those challenges cannot be solved without a viable new energy industry to transition into. And that new energy industry cannot exist, let alone grow, without major investment in electricity transmission infrastructure.

SSEN Transmission's planned £22bn+ investment programme, including up to £7.2bn in Aberdeenshire, is exactly the type of investment required to support that transition. It would deliver up to £820m in economic benefit, support an estimated 1,140 jobs across the region, inject up to £1bn of local spend, and significantly boost the construction economy. It also includes £500m in enabling works such as roads infrastructure, over 300 new legacy homes to support affordable and social housing delivery, and £32m in community benefit funding.

This is not theoretical future value – it is tangible, near-term economic opportunity aligned with what communities want: jobs, investment, infrastructure and a future for the next generation.

Against this backdrop, the refusal of the Hurlie substation is deeply concerning. It sends a damaging signal to investors at precisely the moment when Aberdeenshire must demonstrate that it is open to business, committed to transition and serious about protecting jobs.



Registered in Scotland as a company limited by Guarantee
Registration number SCO 000 791
VAT Number 265 3165 59
Registered Office: The Hub, Exploration Drive, Aberdeen
Energy Park, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen, AB23 8GX

The approval of Hurlie would have enabled major new offshore developments, which represent a transformational opportunity to anchor the offshore wind supply chain to the region and secure regional economic value. Projects from the ScotWind and INTOG leasing rounds, the type of which this infrastructure can support, are expected to generate over £96bn of investment over the next 15 years, according to Crown Estate Scotland, with the North East proximate to the majority of those sites.

We are clear: planning decisions that block essential energy infrastructure actively undermine the region's ability to replace declining oil and gas employment with new, high-value opportunities. They risk leaving Aberdeenshire with fewer jobs, less investment and no credible pathway to a just transition.

We urge councillors to reflect seriously on the wider economic and employment consequences of this decision and to engage constructively with SSEN Transmission to ensure that critical infrastructure, and the very real benefits it brings, are not lost to Aberdeenshire.

Yours sincerely



Russell Borthwick
Chief Executive