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renewables

COMMUNICATIONS CONFERENCE

DRIVING SCOTLAND'S ENERGY JOURNEY

JOIN THE CONVERSATION



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Jack Norquoy
Director of Public Affairs & Communications
Scottish Renewables

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Powerful messaging: finding industry's voice

Chaired by Jeremy Grant,
Business Columnist, The Scotsman



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Jeremy Grant
Business Columnist
The Scotsman

Allister Thomas
Head of Energy
True North Advisors

Lesley Riddoch
Freelance Journalist

Jess Ralston
Head of Energy
Energy and Climate
Intelligence Unit

Raymond Buchanan
Director of Corporate Affairs
Scottish Water

Now

1215-1315: **Networking Lunch**

Coming up next

1315-1415: **Breaking through the noise: energy in modern media**



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Breaking through the noise: energy in modern media

Chaired by Kirstin Gove,
Communications Manager, Thistle Wind Partners



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Kirstin Gove
Communications Manager
Thistle Wind Partners

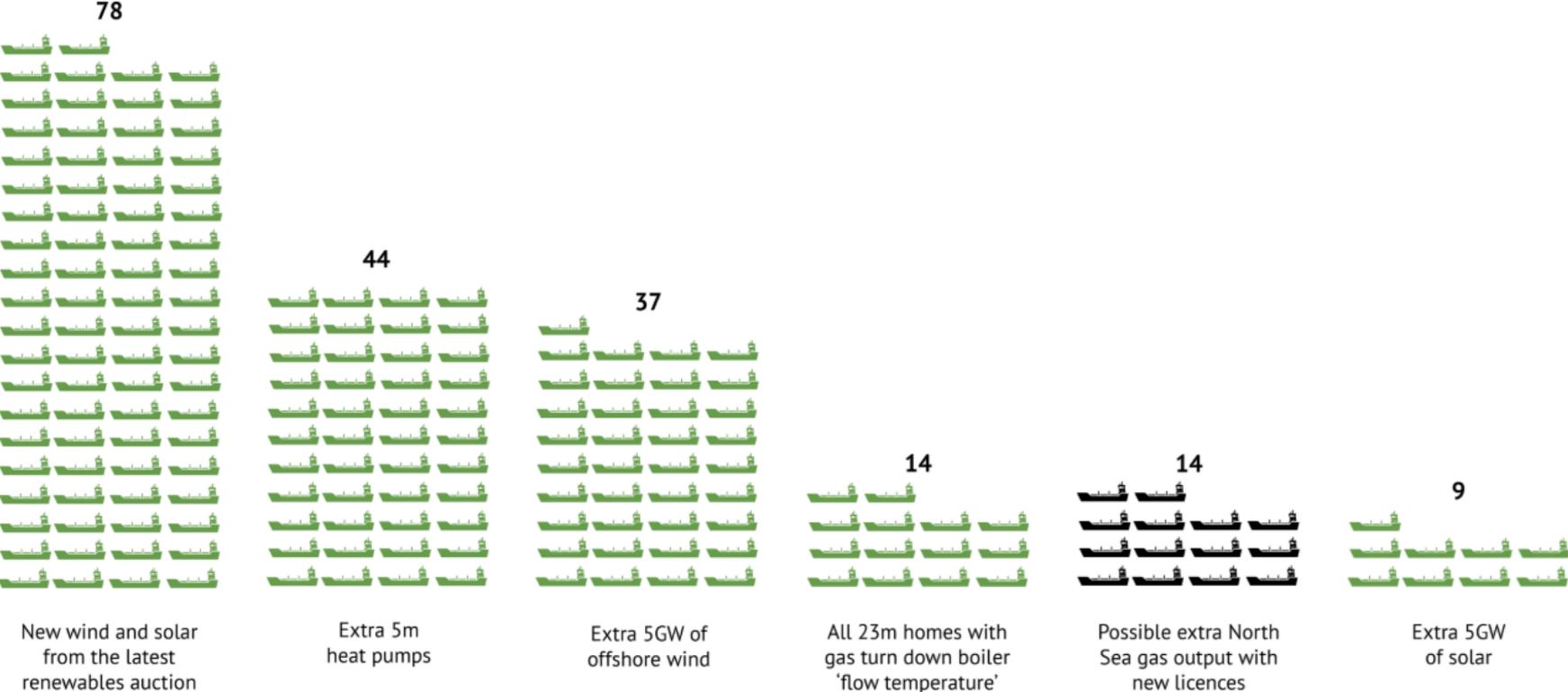
Stephen Dunne
Editor
reNEWS

Josh Gabbatiss
Climate Policy Correspondent
Carbon Brief

Vicky Allan
Environment Correspondent
The Herald

Clean energy will cut UK gas imports by more than North Sea drilling

Number of LNG tanker deliveries **avoided** in 2030



Source: Carbon Brief analysis

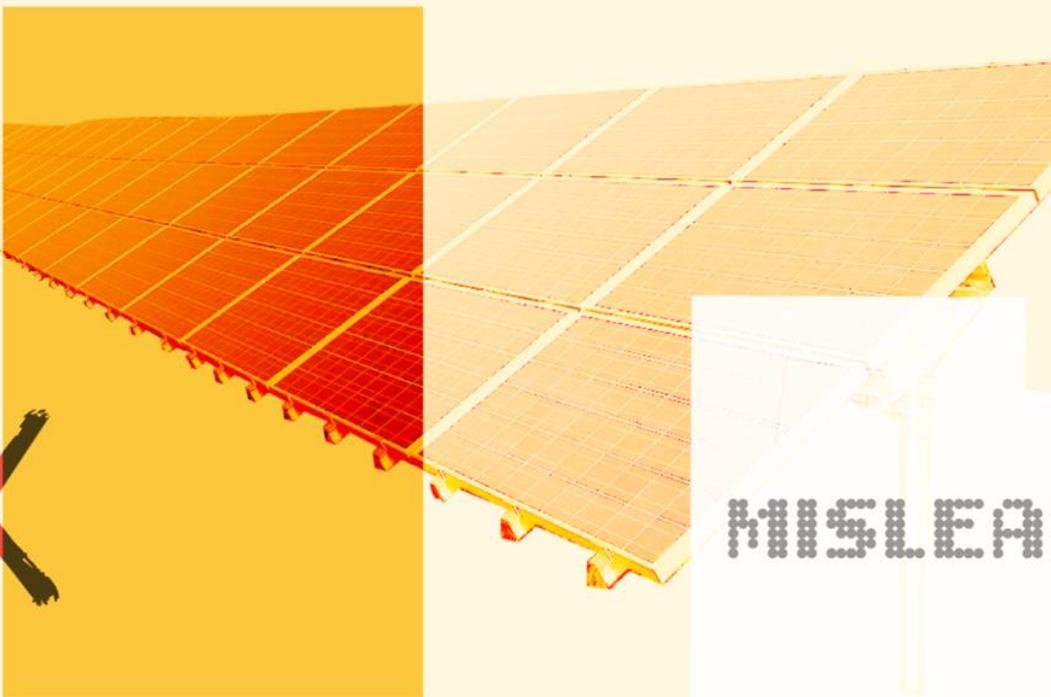
FALSE

Factcheck: 16 misleading myths about solar power

By [Josh Gabbatiss](#) and [Molly Lempriere](#).

Design by [Tom Prater](#), [Joe Goodman](#) and [Tom Pearson](#).

28 August 2025



MISLEADING

US and UK net-zero solar plans would take up 'at most' 1% of farmland

Estimates of land area required in each nation's net-zero plans by 2050, compared to current agricultural area, km²

United States

One hexagon
~7,000km²



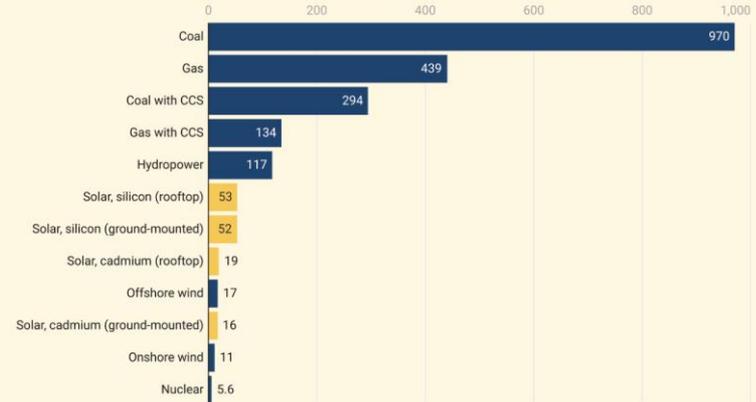
United Kingdom
One hexagon
~500km²

Source: CIA, Corine, USDA, Blaydes et al. (2025), US government, Carbon Brief

CarbonBrief
CLEAR ON CLIMATE

Solar panels cut emissions by 88-95% compared with fossil fuels, including the CO₂ from manufacturing them

Lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions from electricity sources, kgCO₂e/MWh

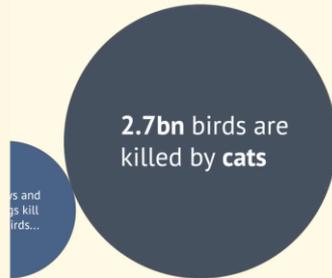


Source: UN Economic Commission for Europe

CarbonBrief
CLEAR ON CLIMATE

Birds killed by solar panels in the US are a 'drop in the bucket' compared to other causes of death

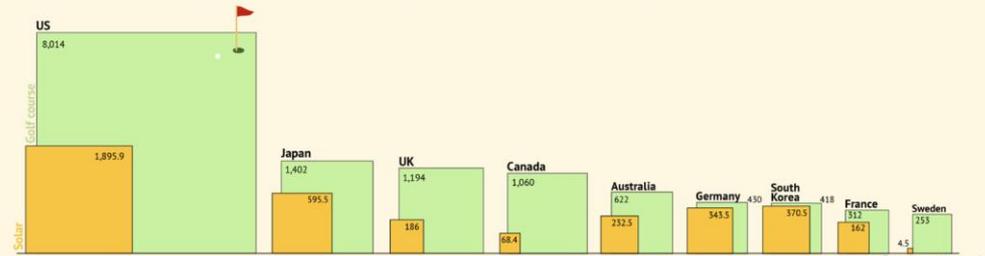
Estimated bird mortality in the US



CarbonBrief
CLEAR ON CLIMATE

Far more space is taken up by golf courses than solar power in many countries

Ground area, km², used for ground-mounted solar and golf courses in a selection of high-income countries



Source: Weinand et al. (2025)

CarbonBrief
CLEAR ON CLIMATE

- “Wind turbines ‘send energy costs through the roof’”
- “Wind farms are awash with billions of subsidies every year”
- Wind farms “kill the birds”
- “Wind farms are inefficient and unreliable”
- “Wind energy requires vast expanses of land”
- “Wind turbines take thousands off the value of your home””
- “The carbon footprint of wind is significant”
- “Falling blades from failing wind farms could be launched your way”
- “Windfarm turbine fires pose a significant risk”
- Blackouts “caused by an over-reliance on wind energy”

Kirstin Gove
Communications Manager
Thistle Wind Partners

Stephen Dunne
Editor
reNEWS

Josh Gabbatiss
Climate Policy Correspondent
Carbon Brief

Vicky Allan
Environment Correspondent
The Herald

Now

1415-1445: Networking Break

Coming up next

**1445-1600: From people to projects: own the narrative,
sponsored by Fred. Olsen Renewables**



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Fred. Olsen Renewables

From people to projects: own the narrative
Sponsored by Fred. Olsen Renewables

Chaired by Steven Flanagan,
Vice President, Client Affairs, Weber Shandwick



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Cris Thacker
Communications Manager
Fred. Olsen Renewables



From People to Projects: How Crystal Rig IV Built Trust, Kept to the schedule and shared the Road.

Cris Thacker

Communications Manager



Fred. Olsen Renewables – CRIV traffic – some wins

FOR have worked with the local community, the traffic management group and the council to agree on the following:

- Review of the traffic management plan (TMP)
- 20 MPH speed limit and installation of GPS trackers for construction vehicles
- Text alert service
- Continual point of contact
- Ongoing dialogue with the community throughout the construction period,
- Lessons learned document to be reviewed by the community and other developers

Crystal Rig IV



- Consented 2021 (Phases I–III 2003 – Present).
- 11 turbines (Now 102)
- 49.1MW (Now 260MW)
- Construction Q3 2024 – Q4 2025
- Generation Early 2026



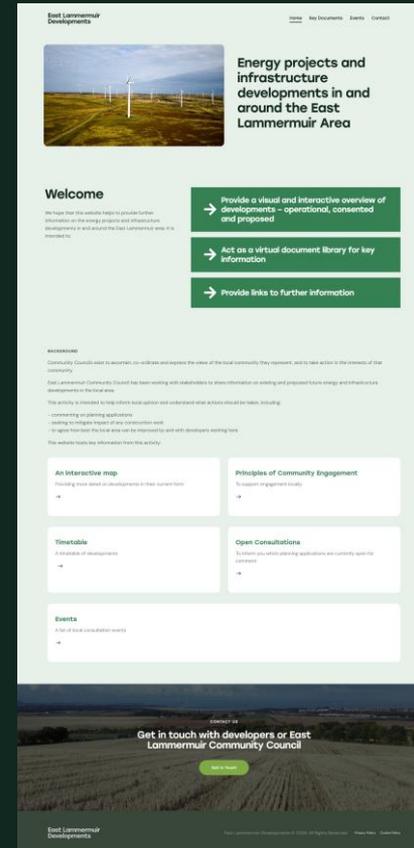
What's at Stake



Community First Measures



Community First Measures (2/2)



Schedule Reality (Not Drama)

- Nesting pheasants
- Landslip risk surveys
- Limited police escorts (~5 weeks delay)
- Weather was planned for: 50 standby days planned;
Delays are normal; silence is the risk

Partners



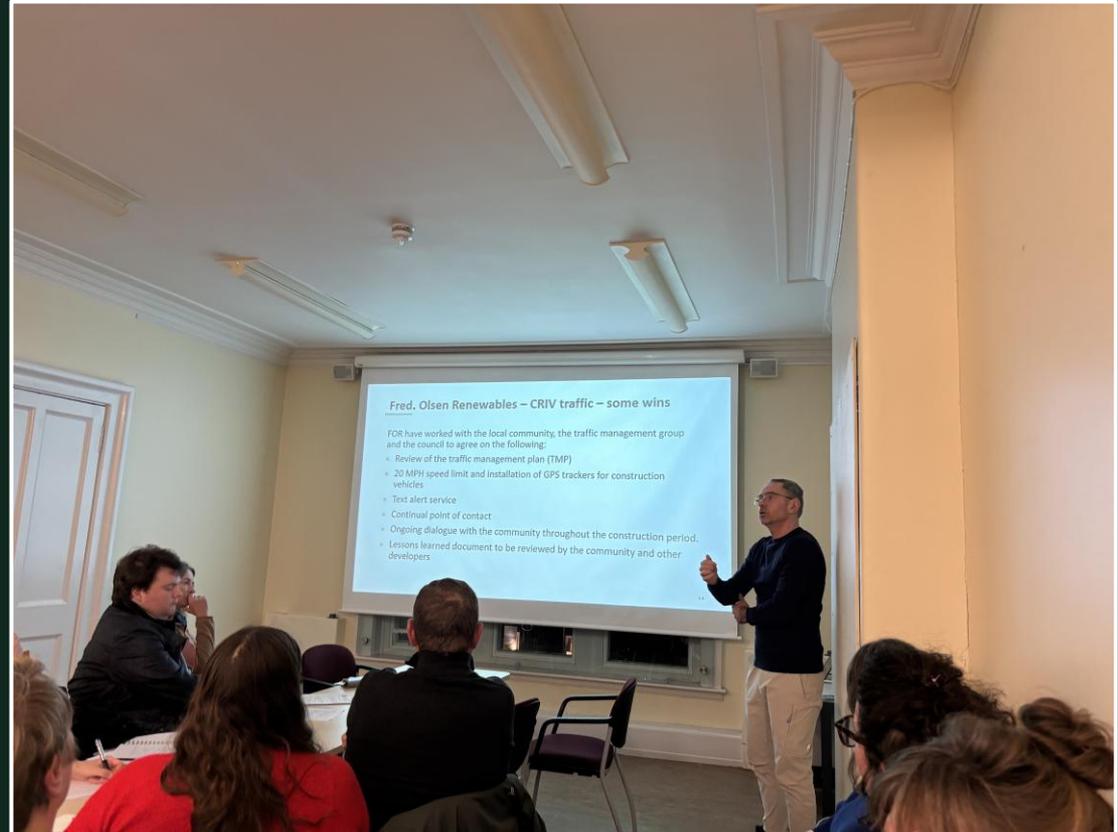
Local Value

1. Local value community benefit fund £240k/year
>£8m lifetime.
2. 2–3 local use cases people care about. Linked to LDP.
3. Media-ready assets: shared library of cleared stills/clips captions, factsheet—easy for local outlets to use quickly.



Lessons Learned

1. Work shoulder-to-shoulder: align partners; shared channels.
2. Say it before they ask: predictable, plain-language updates beat rumour.
3. Design for the school run: build empathy into TMPs and timing.







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Nikki Keddie
Head of External Affairs and Policy
Ocean Winds

Ocean Winds: Communicating in the Moray Firth

Nikki Keddle – Head of External Affairs
and Policy, OW UK

AGENDA

1. Our communities
2. How we engage
3. Recent experience with Moray West
4. Challenges of communicating offshore wind
5. Example: Beyond Energy series



Our Communities

- Local residents
- Local supply chain
- Fisheries
- Ports
- Skills institutions

Why is communication essential?

- Projects are long-term -> legacy and future projects
- Reduce misinformation and backlash

Northeast Scotland context:

- Strong oil & gas identity
 - Highlight opportunities for O&G supply chain and workers
- Historic fishing communities
 - Engage with fisheries stakeholders



How We Engage

- Public consultation events
- Operations & Maintenance Base Visits
- Community Open Days
- Skills initiatives & relationships with local schools
- Supply chain events
- Active presence on UK & Ireland fisheries groups
- Digital comms: websites & LinkedIn





Recent Experience with Moray West

Proactive and clear communication during construction

- *Variety of communication channels to engage **all** stakeholders*
 - Newsletter
 - Website updates
 - Virtual & in-person village hall exhibitions
 - One-on-one meetings with residents at their houses
 - 24/7 helpline
- *Communication lines between community, projects, and contractors*

Local skills and supply chain engagement

- Demonstrate **local value** and increase **trust**

Outcome: trusted by community and positive track record for Caledonia.



Challenges

Misinformation -

- Particularly on community Facebook groups
- Offshore wind uses highly technical language

Focus on **clear, consistent, and accessible information**

- What we're doing, why we're doing it, positive track record



Logistical barriers to communication -

- Caledonia consultation flyers delayed in the post
- Importance of multi-channel communication



Example: Beyond Energy Series

Ocean Winds video series designed to:

- **Simplify** technical offshore wind topics
- **Explain** the **full lifecycle** of offshore wind projects
- Give a '**behind the scenes**' look at OW
- **Combat misinformation** and **sensationalism**
- **Show** how offshore wind creates long-term value



OW

OCEAN WINDS



Ruth Shewan
Senior External Affairs Manager
EDF power solutions UK and Ireland

NnG OFFSHORE
WIND



The trials, tribulations and opportunities of NnG Offshore Wind Farm

Ruth Shewan
Senior External Affairs
Manager



Overview



450MW – 54 turbines
Joint venture with ESB



Contributed >£200million
to economy through
direct contracts



>£1.8billion invested in
infrastructure



>£6million in Community
Benefit Funding over
project's life

The Big Stuff – Our Approach



Be transparent and honest

Plan ahead – mark key milestones and mitigate reputational issues

Focus on building strong and lasting relationships – internally and externally

Look wider than NnG – collaborative approach with industry

Community focus

Capture big kit and real people and businesses

Neart na Gaoithe – Our Communications



Overarching aims: Tackle misinformation; showcase positives; navigate ongoing challenges



5 local authorities, over 57 councillors and 15 community councils, fishers' association



Issued more than 52 press releases and over 100 traffic updates; gained over 22k social followers



THE TRIALS & TRIBULATIONS



Port of Dundee turbine towers vessel leaves city with offshore wind farm work incomplete

The huge turbine towers at the Port have become a familiar sight – and they won't be leaving dry land any time soon.



The turbine towers measuring almost 90 metres at the Port of Dundee. Image: Steve Thomson

THE COURIER

High profile supply chain issues

COVID-19 pandemic



Neart na Gaoithe commissioning delayed to 2024

EDF Renewables and ESB's 450MW offshore wind farm off Scotland was originally planned to be co

28 February 2022 Offshore Wind

Unions 'furious' after BiFab and EDF offshore wind farm deal breaks down

Scottish Construction Now



COVID-19: Neart 'committed' to Scottish suppliers
EDF Renewables, ESB to support supply chain through pandemic, secretary

reNEWS.BIZ

Political scrutiny

"Time for Scotland to take control of its renewable assets" says MacAskill



Financial impact on JV partners

reNEWS.BIZ

ESB facing €135m hit on delayed NNG

Saipem hires Cathie for Neart geotech study ... Irish developer ESB has made a provision for a €135m "exceptional finance cost" in relation to the...



THE OPPORTUNITIES

Port of Dundee bids farewell to NnG wind farm project

9 APR 2025 | 🕒 Reading time: 3 minutes



ARB Wind Awarded Multi-Year Contract by NnG Wind Farm

Published Nov 6, 2025 5:57 pm ET



Collaborative working with other developers

deadline.

New community fund to bring investment to East Berwickshire

25TH FEBRUARY BUSINESS CHARITY SCOTTISH BORDERS

Border Telegraph

Positive supply chain and economic stories

First Minister marks completion of Neart na Gaoithe offshore wind farm

25 JUL 2025 | 🕒 Reading time: 5 minutes



Anstruther Philharmonic Orchestra

NnG supports St Andrews Men's Shed as part of sponsorship fund

Positive community engagement



EDF, ESB bring in Windcarrier to finish NnG drilling

Jack-up Blue Tern is mobilising in Scotland and is due to replace Sparrow crane-lift S7000

11 May 2022 | Offshore Wind

Focus on positive milestones

Trusted relationships with media and stakeholders

"I have engaging with NnG for c.15 years.... I have always found the team to be helpful, collaborative, and very community focussed... they addressed concerns face on and discussed solutions in partnership with communities. The NnG team have been an exemplar in the energy sector."

Paul McLennan MSP for East Lothian



Scots wind farm launches country's largest seabird monitoring studies

NnG OFFSHORE WIND

EDF renewables **ESB** Energy for generations

Top 6 things for controlling the narrative

Plan, Plan, Plan

Your people are your best asset

Don't underestimate a good relationship

Seek opportunities to work collaboratively

Counter the negative with positive

Accept the fact there will be negative headlines



Thomas Nicoll
Senior Communications Manager
SSEN Transmission



OUR 'PATHWAY TO 2030' INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

CURRENT CONSENTING STATUS

-  Consented
-  Awaiting determination
-  Under appeal
-  Scottish Power Energy Networks infrastructure



HAVE GOOD STORIES TO TELL

A woman with brown hair, wearing a black leather jacket and gold hoop earrings, is pointing her right hand towards a whiteboard. She is looking towards the right side of the frame. In the foreground, the back of a man's head and shoulders is visible; he is wearing a white t-shirt. The background is a blurred indoor setting, likely a public consultation event, with other people and whiteboards visible.

160+

face-to-face public
consultation events

10,000+

attendees

12,000+

formal feedback
submissions

Ultimately resulting in countless big changes to project plans – a great story to tell.

Boosting the Scottish economy and delivering for local communities

Investing at least **£29bn+** in transmission projects across the north of Scotland



Supporting **17,500 jobs** in Scotland, including **8,400** in the north of Scotland

Boosting the Scottish economy by up to **£7bn**, including **£3bn** in the north of Scotland



Contributing to the development of over **1,000** permanent homes, with **60%** unlocking affordable housing stock



Unlocking over **£100m** in community benefit funding to support local and regional projects



Delivering **10%** net gain in biodiversity and **no net loss of woodland** on all new projects



Investing at least **£100m** in nature restoration



Up to **£400m** forecast spend on roads and bridges to support local investment plans



Awarding up to **£13bn** of anticipated contract spend to Scottish businesses, with **£8bn** in the north of Scotland



Ambition to deliver at least **25%** local content through the supply chain



Enabling further **low carbon technologies** to connect to the grid



Supporting **local and national decarbonisation**



Strengthening **homegrown energy security** and boosting resilience

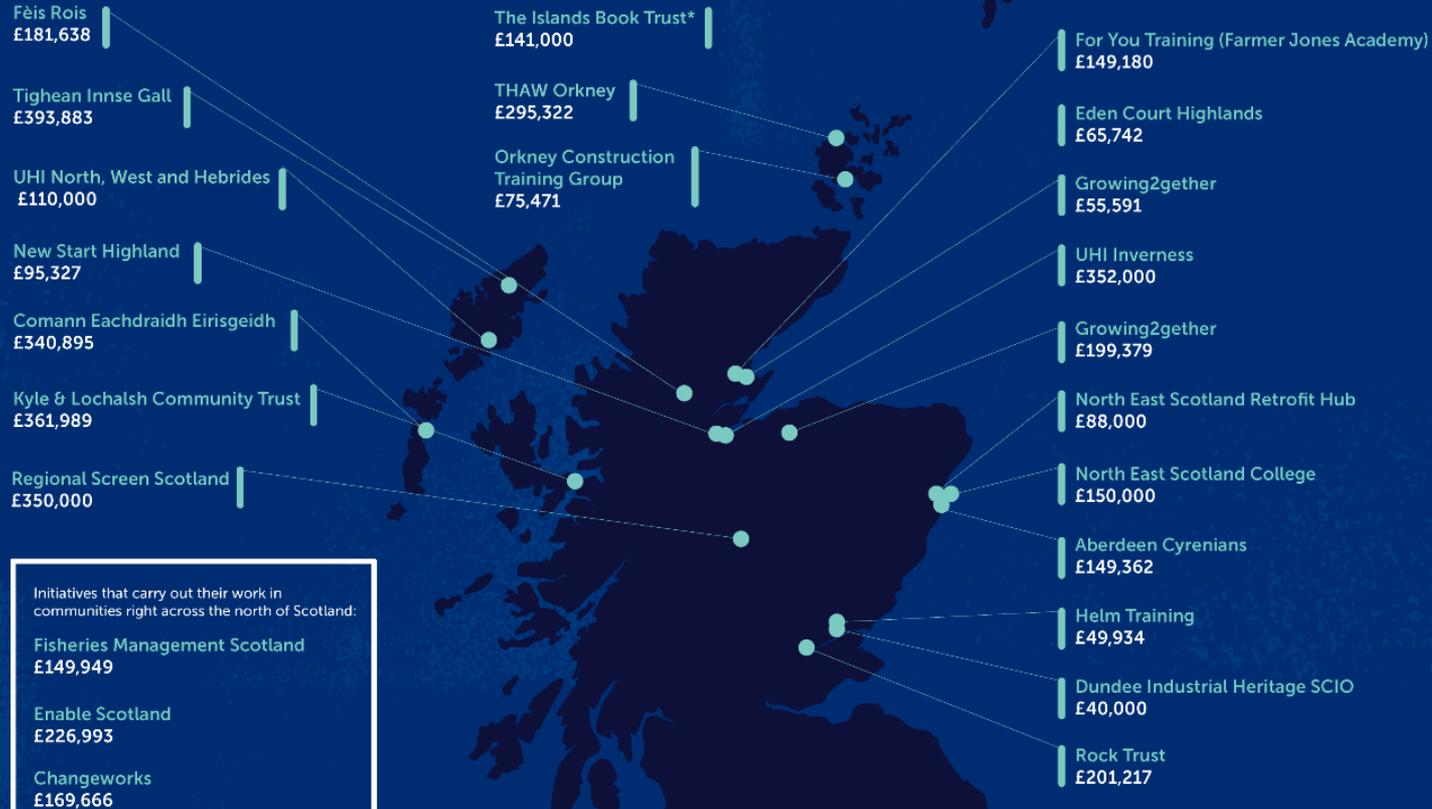


Delivering sector leading, first of its kind, **marine biodiversity research**



Community Benefit funding across the north of Scotland

Successful recipients from round one and two of SSEN Transmission's Regional Community Benefit Fund.



Initiatives that carry out their work in communities right across the north of Scotland:

Fisheries Management Scotland
£149,949

Enable Scotland
£226,993

Changeworks
£169,666

* The Islands Book Trust is designed to serve all of Scotland's island communities, from its base in Lewis.

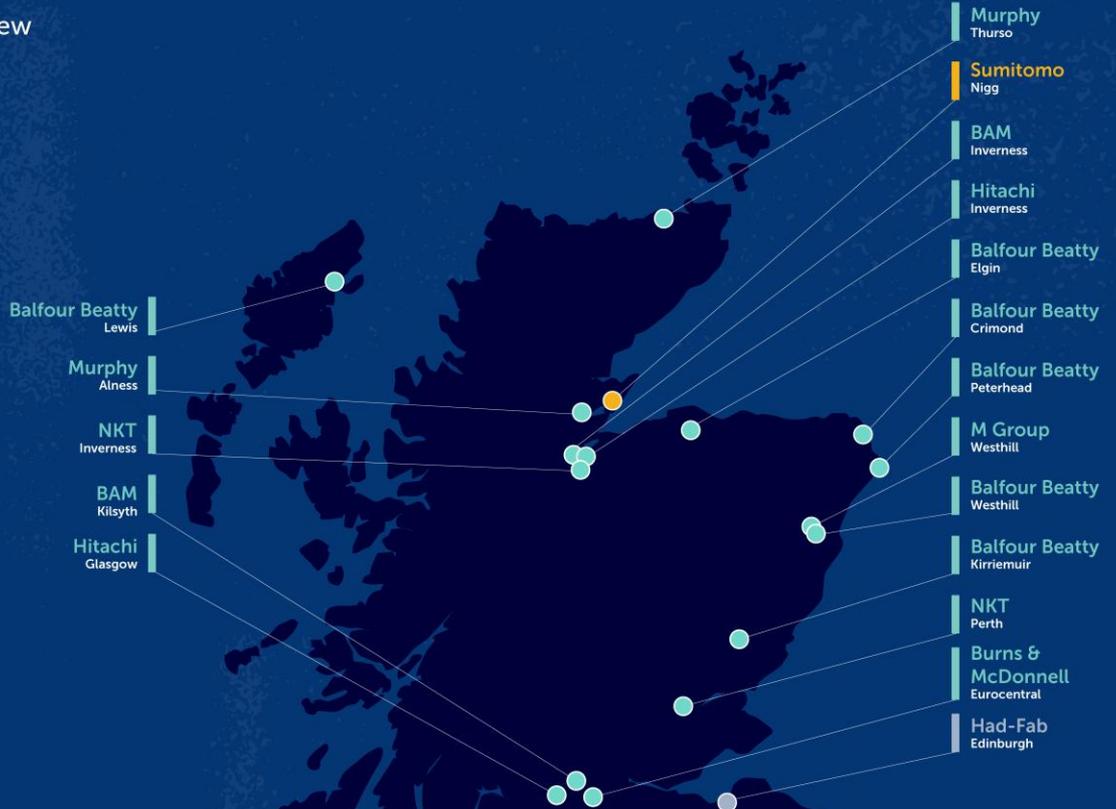
Pathway to 2030: Continued growth in the supply chain

Some examples of our Supply Chain's investment in new offices, facilities and factories

Jobs supported by region

North of Scotland: 8,400
 Scotland: 17,500
 UK: 37,000

- Offices
- Factory
- Sub-Supply Chain Contracts



AUDIENCE



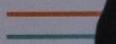
THIS DRAWING SHOWS THE INDICATIVE LAYOUT OF THE SUBSTATION SITE. IT SHOWS THE INDICATIVE POSITION SUBSTATION PLATFORM, EARTHWORKS, ACCESS FROM ROAD AND THE DRAINAGE ARRANGEMENTS, INCLUDING THE LIKELY POSITION OF THE DISCHARGE POINT TO THE FIT

LAYOUT KEY



SCREENING BUND. DESIGN AND VOLUME TO BE DETERMINED

OVERHEAD L



EMMOCK
FIELD TO EMMOCK

PUBLIC OPINION

Most people are positive about what we are working to achieve and more people become supportive as they learn about what the investment will deliver



69%

are either positive or neutral about work to upgrade Scotland's electricity grid

51%

say that grid upgrades are necessary for tackling climate change

47%

believe that projects aren't being delivered quickly enough

THIS DRAWING SHOWS THE INDICATIVE LAYOUT OF THE

A survey in January 2026 with people from communities across the north of Scotland - asked for their views on vital energy issues.

LAYOUT KEY

SCREENING BUND. DESIGN AND VOLUME TO BE DETERMINED

OVERHEAD L

EMMOCK FIELD TO EMMOCK



Steven Flanagan
Vice President,
Client Affairs
Weber Shandwick

Cris Thacker
Communications Manager
Fred. Olsen Renewables

Nikki Keddie
Head of External Affairs
and Policy
Ocean Winds

Ruth Shewan
Senior External
Affairs Manager
EDF power solutions
UK and Ireland

Thomas Nicoll
Senior Communications
Manager
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From people to projects: own the narrative

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THE SCOTTISH
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TO FIND OUT MORE



**INVESTING IN
RENEWABLES**
2026 **SAVE THE DATE**
4 JUNE | EDINBURGH



**ONSHORE WIND
CONFERENCE**
2026 **SAVE THE DATE**
1-2 SEPTEMBER | EDINBURGH





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