

Minute note - Cross Party Group on Oil and Gas

Held on Wednesday 13 August 18:00 - 19:30

Committee Room 4, The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

In attendance

MSPs:

Maureen Watt
Lewis Macdonald
Kevin Stewart
Dennis Robertson
Nanette Milne
Chic Brodie

Non MSPs:

Francis Johnson, Scottish Parliament
Richard Crossick, Shell
James Bream, AGCC
Susana Bras, Dana Petroleum
Tyra Dempster, Optimus
Christine Jones
Nigel Jenkins, Decom North Sea
David Rennie, Scottish Enterprise
Jennifer Ross, Scottish Parliament
Neil Michie, Oil & Gas UK
Jenny Stanning, Oil & Gas UK
Alix Thom, Oil & Gas UK
Gail Gibson, SDS
Mike Duncan, SDS
Gordon McGuinness, SDS
Morven Spalding, OPITO
Mark Whittet, Scottish Energy News
Chris Wallace, Scottish Parliament

Apologies:

Tavish Scott MSP
Mark Macdonald MSP
Alison McInnes MSP
Richard Baker MSP
Christian Allard MSP

Emma White, Statoil
Gordon Macrae, Which?
Nadine Milne, Scotland Office
Ian Armstrong, SCDI
Carol Barbone, Talisman Sinopec
Iain Brotchie, Total E&P UK
James Trolland, Spae Consulting
Ally Rae, BP

Ola Morten Aanestad, Statoil
Malcolm Ricketts, Scottish Government

Maureen Watt MSP welcomed the group and led introductions around the table.

Alix Thom opened the presentations with an overview from Oil & Gas UK about skills in the industry, the need to fill the mid-career skills gap, action Oil & Gas UK had and was taking to tackle the skills shortage (Skills and Education Summits, work with local schools, work with the Earth Science Education Unit and the Labour Market Intelligence project).

Morven Spalding explained the role of OPITO and outlined the collaborative efforts the organisation was making, in partnership with Oil & Gas UK and other trade associations, local authorities and Skills Development Scotland to address the skills shortage in the oil and gas industry. She explained in depth successful initiatives to enthuse school children about the industry, including extensive work experience programmes with in industry and National Oil and Gas Skills week on 11 November. Morven also highlighted the fragmented nature of the skills landscape and gave examples of partnership working such as events in the Glasgow Science Centre, the Labour Market Intelligence project and the new portal to pull together all the information a would-be employee might need to work in the oil and gas industry.

Mike Duncan explained the role of Skills Development Scotland and outlined how the agency planned to support existing industry action to tackle skills shortages in oil and gas, including: the Skills Investment Plan and awareness events in Ayr, Falkirk and Inverness and programmes like Tomorrow's Talent. Mike also pointed to national unemployment statistics to show how STEM employment shortages could be filled.

Maureen Watt then chaired a question and answer session, which included questions about extending work experience schemes to younger school children, flexibility in the school curriculum to enable longer periods of work experience, extending the work experience programme to more school children, changes to the chartered exams for structural engineers, the campaign to preserve Higher Geology, soaring costs in the oil and gas industry, the fact that the skills issue includes mid-career gaps not just graduates and apprentices, gender imbalance and action to tackle the low numbers of women in the industry from an earlier age, later-life learners, enhanced pressure on the workforce as a result of growing exploration in Northern Ireland.

Administration:

The group agreed the minutes of the last meeting. **Maureen Watt** reminded the group that the next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday 29 October** and the topic is yet to be set. Members of the group who would like to present should send suggestions to **Jenny Stanning** who can then circulate to the co-conveners for a decision.

Maureen Watt thanked all MSPs and members for attending and the meeting closed at 7.30 pm.

Ends.